Chapter 5: Tara

Mahesh Dattani, the first Indian English playwright to win the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998, is undoubtedly the greatest playwright of contemporary Indian English drama. John McRae has rightly regarded him as ‘the voice of India now’ as his plays mostly deal with the problems of the women and the marginalized. His plays are realistic, symbolic, unpretentious, memorable and thought-provoking. His powerful play Tara, first performed at the Chowdiah Memorable Hall, Bangalore on October 23, 1990 by Playpen, deals with the serious problem of the gender discrimination and exposes the hollowness of patriarchal social system.

This play also enlightens us that no matter how much a girl outshines a boy; she will remain in the background and can never be given an advantageous position. Being a man's world and the reins being in their hands, it is very difficult for the woman to fight out her way. Women should cling to each other and in consolidation; fight out the stranglehold of the men. It becomes a source of pity when such characters as Tara's mother worsen the conditions. If she had not shown indulgence for the male-child and had done justice with her female-child then both the children would have happily flourished and established themselves in the world. It is really shocking to read that Bharati, being an educated mother, showed such shortsightedness. Such incidents do much to hamper the mission of female - upliftment in a male dominating society. Mahesh Dattani has succeeded commendably to stir up the spirits of the readers to fortify themselves against any such biased measures in life.

Unreason and inhumanity make Dattani uneasy and angry. He stands up with the weapon of literature to fight for justice for the sufferers of social cruelty. Thus, On a Muggy Night in Mumbai pleads for the human right of a very small section of the society, the Hijras or the neutral gender known perhaps now where else in the world expect Indian. Bravely Fought the Queen highlights how women are exploited in male dominated Indian society. Tara similarly highlights unnecessary sufferings of the physical challenged beings. Incidentally, it also studies the gender issues in Indian where a male child is given preference over a female child.

But it does much more and most masterfully. Here we find a symbolic vie of general human situation in a dark universe alien and apathetic to human suffering. The existentialist
overtones such as those evident in the works of Kafka, Camus etc. are clearly visible here. At the conclusion of the play we hear as it were the authorial cry for justice for humanity at large addressed to the hollows of the skies. With all its evils and internal exploitation and inequity, it appears to be poor as a whole and pitiable in the midst of indifferent universe. There is no evidence in the drama to indicate whether there is any divine presence in the world. But it is only natural. It seems to Dattani for man to imagine eternal heaven hereafter in view of perishable nature of our terrestrial existence.

Tara is the story of the house which is trapped in complications after the birth of their twins. They are not normal twins. They are conjoined or Siamese children. The medical treatment of the children is costly. However, money is not a problem for them. They are emotionally tensed and troubled. That is the primary cause of all their suffering. The play also talks about the indispensability of medical science in the lives of the physically challenged people. It shows the marvels of medical science, and also how doctors may use its power for human welfare or abuse it for monetary gain.

Multiplicity of themes constitutes a complex web here. Physical action is slight. Most of the things have symbolic value. Inseparable male and female are separated from each other, and yet they inhabit each other. we are reminded here of Aristophanes’ tale from Platos’ Symposium about how the humans were conjoined once upon a time, how god separated them for fun, how since then the halves have been looking for their other halves to be complete. Says Aristophanes:

After the division the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came together, and throwing their arms about one another. Entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one, they were on the point of dying from hunger and self neglect because they did not like to do anything apart and when one of the halves died and the other survived, the survivor sought another mate, man or woman as we call them,-being the sections of entire men or women-and clung to that.

In a very vein, the myth pronounces a great psychological truth: man and woman not only need each other; each is also an inextricable part of the other as far as psychology is concerned.
The same truth is also evident in the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* where God is said to be both man and woman in one originally. Then just for pleasure one becomes two and looks again for unity. That is how male and female creatures come into being. Then why there is discrimination between male and female if Indian myths and classics believe that they both are the part and parcel of one being only. And if they are one then why one wants its own individual space.

Sigmund Freud quotes both Plato and the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad in ‘*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*’ in support of his theory that humanity is made up of the male and the female, the female in male and the male in female looking for their completion in each other. The entire play is in Dan’s nostalgic memories. Patel, Dan’s father, is the General Manager in the biggest pharmaceutical company in India, Indo-Swede Pharmacia. He is a Gujarati, Whereas Bharati, Patel’s wife, is the daughter of a powerful M.L.A. who might have become the C.M. of Karnataka had he not died. She is a Carnatic. So, this is an inter-caste marriage. Patel had to forsake these parents in order to marry Bharati because they did not approve of the match.

Chandan, their son, and Tara, their daughter, are surgically separated twins. Naturally they have their psycho-physiological problems. They have their own peculiar struggle for existence in which the sister dies and the brother continues to pull on his crippled being in all loneliness away from home and native land. His parents, too, it is suggested, die. In this tragedy, difficult to be described as anti known type, only the hero who is, in fact, an anti-hero, alone survives. The pathos of the play is deeply felt as much by the author as by the reader. The spectator would feel the intensity if it more keenly if the performance is acted and directed well. Patel’s and Bharati’s conjugal life was happy and peaceful. Patel recounts to his children:

> *Ours was a happy marriage. We were all overjoyed when we came to know Bharati would have twins.*

However this was a short-lived joy. Patel adds:

> *You looked like two babies hugging each other. It was only at a closer look...We were now prepared for the worst.*

Dr. Thakkar explains the reason for such a complex birth:
Sometimes we don’t know why a fertilized egg, destined to separate and develop into two different embryos, fails to do so fully. The result is a conjoinment in this case from the breastbone down through the pelvic area. It is indeed a marvel that they are born alive. Twins with a conjunction of such complexity are, in most cases, stillborn.

The case of Chandan and Tara is even more special among the history of Siamese children. Dr. Thakkar adds:

*You see, there is something even more remarkable about this case.*

Conjoined twins—your Siamese twins—developing from one fertilized ovum are invariably of the same sex. Well, almost invariably. But here these were obviously form different fertilized eggs.

The twins are of different sexes. Very, very rare.

According to Dr. Thakkar, such children do not live a long life. One surely dies by the age of four. This proves that we have rarest of rare variety of human beings presented in the play. As they are rare, their life also is shaped accordingly. The problems they are facing owing to their physical limitations are intense. They have to make greater efforts to live a normal life.

After the birth of the twins, it was decided that Dr. Thakkar would undertake the operation of ‘separating’ them. Dr. Thakkar is a renowned doctor for such surgeries. The operation to separate Chandan and Tara was indeed a risky one. However, modern research in the field of medical science has made the operation possible. In an imaginary interview taken by Dan for “Marvels in the World of Medicine”, Dr. Thakkar passes on information thus:

The parents were warned of the odds against survival. They were, understandably, totally disheartened in the beginning. But, soon, even the remotest chance for survival was received with hope once they were made aware of the facilities offered by modern technology. The twins did not share any vital electro-cardiograms. There were two livers, although joined. Each twin would have one
kidney—all this meant that there was a very strong more about was the pelvic region and the extent of conjoinment there….\textsuperscript{8}

Dr. Thakkar further informs about the complication involved in the operation:

\textit{Complications were expected. Our team of doctors was aware of that. The pelvic region, as I had mentioned before, was a problem. There was only one bladder and it belonged to the boy. So did the rectum. We would have to have an artificial one made for the girl. Later on, when she grows up, we can fashion one from her intestinal tissues. And the boy’s lungs aren’t fully developed….}\textsuperscript{9}

\textbf{Legs:} The vital issue was that the twins had three legs. After medical check up, it was revealed that major part of blood supply to the third leg was provided by the girl. Therefore, chances were that the third leg should naturally survive same result. However, Bharati and her father had a private meeting with Dr. Thakkar. They convinced him, out of his professional ethics and Nature’s design, to give the third leg to Chandan. The result was, in the words of Patel:

\textit{The leg was amputated. A piece of dead flesh which could have-might have-been Tara.}\textsuperscript{10}

About the reward Dr. Thakkar received from Bharati’s father for the unethical favour, Patel tells the children:

\textit{He had acquired three acres of prime land-in the heart of the city-from the state. Your grandfather’s political influence had been used.}\textsuperscript{11}

Incidents like this are a disgrace to the medical profession.

After the operation, Chandan and Tara have to wear one artificial Jaipuri leg each for the rest of their lives.
This makes their movements difficult. We sympathies and at times pity them on account of their physical challenge. But their strong Will to live overcomes all difficulties and manages to make do with artificial legs.

Dan is naturally angry with Dr. Thakkar. He speaks to Dr. Thakkar at the end of the imaginary interview:

*Thank you very much, Dr. Thakkar! It has been a real pleasure.*
*Now go, just...go away. (Breaks down.) Get out of my mind, you horrible creature! You are ugly and I don’t want ugly people in my memories!*

Through Dr. Thakkar’s character, the dramatist seems to point that the surface reality of everyone is different from the private reality.

The play calls for a careful analysis as thematically and technically it is a great innovation. First of all, let us examine its theme.

The most important question: why was the third leg given to Chandan when it looked like an organic part of Tara? The obvious answer is that the Hindu parents love their male children more than the female ones. That the Patels give Chandan what actually belonged to Tara cannot be disputed. But the appearance may not be a reality and what is obvious may be erroneous. The Patels, in fact, find themselves in the soup at the birth of the children. Throughout the play, we see that parents love both the children with equal intensity. In fact, Bharati appears to be partial to Tara. Later it is discovered that even Patel is tenderer towards Tara. He it was who objected to the proposal of giving the third leg to Chandan. Chandan himself loves Tara more than he loves himself. Yet, the Patels’ act of favouring Chandan is quite striking and can’t be denied.

We must note all the complexities of suggestions in our attempts at ascertaining and evaluating their motives.

Yes, in a way, male children are favoured in Hindu society. But at the same time we cannot be blind to the fact that parents love their daughters more. The sons are also taught to look after their sisters’ well, and brothers cherish great affection for their sisters. This is evident also in
their attitude towards the sister’s husband. The Raksha Bandhan festival provides an occasion for the expression of the love of brothers and sisters.

Hindu society in many parts of India has been rapidly changing. It is being westernized, modernized, and globalised. Women are coming out fast from their homes to earn independently their bread like men. Yet, the socio-economic conditions of Indian have not yet been altogether altered. Still, men appear to be batter placed than women. It is even more so in rural areas. Woman is just a subordinate helper in looking after home and hearth. Disabled man would not be able to struggle well. We should deny the possibility of such considerations in Bharati and her father and Patel when they decided to give the third leg to Chandan. That perhaps is the reason why Patel wants Chandan to attend his office and learn business. This may not mean that he discriminates between the boy and the girl and favours one at the expense of the other. These, however, are uncertain interrogations, not plain affirmations. There may be a partial affirmation in response to each of them, and all partial truths may constitute the full truth.

Moreover, the parents must be in terrible mental pressure on account of the condition of their children. The psychological pressure of what to do must be tormenting them at the time. So, the decision of giving the third leg to Chandan does not seem to be such a grave error. Anyone in the place of Bharati probably would have acted in the like manner. In view of all this, it may seem that the question of the third leg operation is hardly an issue here. There is a possibility that the readers might regard this episode as the central episode of the play and judge the play thereby, cannot, however, be precluded. Their reading then would not be incorrect. But it would not be at the same time adequate and altogether sound.

Tara has indeed suffered a great physical and psychological damage by this operation. But calculative bad motive of any person is not the cause of the damage. None did it deliberately.

One must overlook the fact that Bharati gives her kidney to Tara. Her father, too, loves her very much. Tara understands this at the end of the play.

In any cultured middle class house in India, a girl child is loved more than the boy child. This is not sign of discrimination. If the girls are trained to behave in traditionally acceptable ways, unlike the boy, it is because she has to enter and survive in another family after marriage. Parents and brothers love her before marriage and continue to look after her after marriage. The truth
exists with another truth, the truth that the Hindu parents feel happy when a male child is born and slightly depressed logic. But it is the essence of truth on our social behavior and the psychology behind it.

As considered above, the third leg issue assumes a symbolic significance. We have to consider how four different characters of the Patel family view it, how Dr. Thakkar views it, and how the authorial vision of the whole play is revealed by the inter-play of their actions.

Tara is the center of attraction for the family. She keeps everyone occupied with her playfulness. She is used to remaining the center of all round affection since her childhood. She recollects and tells Roopa:

*I really used to play hard to get. Sulking all the time. And when I smiled, it made everyone quite…relived! As if…if I didn’t smile I would just curl up die! Mummy said my eyes really twinkled when I smiled.*

Tara is more sincere in study than her brother. Yet Patel hasn’t made any plans for her. Bharati tells Chandan:

“I wish your father would pay more attention to Tara.”

“He is more worried about your career than hers.”

This shows the gender discrimination prevailing in the society. This is not altogether wrong. Chandan adds:

*She’ll make a great business woman.*

Chandan knows that Tara is capable of facing the world on her own. Therefore, when Patel insists Chandan to join him at office, “*just to get of it*, 16 Chandan replies: *We’ll both come with you.* 17

At this point, Patel shows reluctance to allow Tara to his office and says a big “No”. Tara, therefore, “*looks at Patel, slightly hurt*”. 18 She tells Patel: *I’m going to hate you anyway!* 19
But she misunderstands Patel. He loves Tara equally well. On an instance, he mimes talking to a doctor on phone:

Yes, Dr. Kapoor. I am happy to heart that...Indeed she is a very lucky girl...Yes. As soon as possible. Well, after what she has been through so far...Anyway, she will be glad she won’t have to go for her dialysis after the surgery. Don’t worry, doctor, she is a very high-spirited girl. Knowing her, she will probably joke about it. And her brother gives her enough moral support. Yes, I will call you tomorrow. Thank you, doctor. Thank you. (Hangs up.)

This is clear enough to show his affection for his daughter. His only drawback is that he does not believe in the show of affection. Therefore, he is misunderstood at times.

The action of the play proves that Tara is gradually sinking. She knew that after tenth standard, she will have to undergo kidney transplantation. She tells Roopa that they “knew it was going to happen. I was prepared.”

Would not have Patel known that Tara was not likely to live long? That is the reason why he wants to see her comfortable at home and to prepare Chandan for the struggle for existence. Time proves him right. Tara quietly sleeps the sleep of death and Chandan in spite of his being physically challenged, manages for himself, thanks to Patel’s having taken pains for the purpose.

However, Tara does not get frustrated. She tries to remain cheerful. After her kidney operation, she declares:

(Suddenly acting cheerful.) Right! Let’s get the act going. Come on, Chandu, let’s hear some more of your gags. I promise to laugh at all of them, even if I’ve heard them before. I promise to be cheerful all the time.

Tara is not happy with her father’s treatment of her mother. She believes, mistakenly of course, that her father in unnecessarily harassing her mother. Bharati protects Tara to such an extent that Tara starts believing that she cannot survive without Bharati. Patel objects to this and says:
Look at the way you treat Tara. As if she is made of glass. You coddle her, you pet her, spoil her. She’s grown up feeling she doesn’t need anyone but you!  

This is not altogether incorrect. Such over-indulgence would not toughen the child.

Tara is just a child and naturally behaves like a child. We can expect her to understand the complexity and contradictory tendencies of human mind. Bharati truly loves her and Bharati has really favoured Chandan with the third leg. On account of her guilt, her love of Tara increases hundred-fold. But Tara can see her picture only in black and white. First, she thinks that her mother loves her. That is other reason why she hates her father for being harsh to Bharati. But when she learns from Patel true account of her separation from her brother, her mind swings to the other extent. Love turns into hatred. She thinks she had been in illusion so far and has now been disillusioned about her mother’s love for her. She says:

And she called me her star!  

But Bharati’s love was no illusion. And her feeling of disillusionment is itself an illusion. Had she time enough to grow old, she would have learn to appreciate her mother’s genuine affection for her together with her initial guilt of giving away her leg to her brother. But unfortunately she dies young.

Tara befriends Roopa and subsequently Prema and Nalini. She gradually learns that they consider her status as secondary. They represent general humanity indifferent, at times even hostile, to hapless individuals among them without reason. Most humans are not humane. At their hands, Tara feels humiliated. She calls them:

The ugliest girls in the whole world.  

She knows by their company how cruel this world is towards people like her and her brother. She knows that she and her brother can do nothing but live as parasites, as burden to others. In an emotional speech, she tells Chandan:

Oh, what a waste! A waste of money. Why spend the money to keep me alive? It cannot matter whether I live or die. There are
Tara is a mature girl. She is more rational than her brother. She tells him, “We women mature fast”. Elsewhere she says:

…we are more sensitive, more intelligent, more compassionate human beings…

Tara dies at the end of play. The playwright does not show her death on the stage as a natural outcome of the sequences. The readers come to know about her death when Dan talks with Patel on phone from London. Her character wins our sympathy.

Dan, Chandan in younger days, is easy going. He doesn’t like to go out of home, make friends, and indulge in any kind of activities. He loves listening to western classical music, watching movies, and playing jigsaw puzzle. He is humorous. In comparison to Tara, he is more detached to the affairs of the world. He understands his father better than anyone else. He also knows that Tara has to face more difficulties than he.

Chandan is forced, against his wishes, to go to London to pursue higher studies. He may settle there forever after that. He does, in fact. He is different from Tara. He is a creative writer. He gives an expression to his anger, through his writings. If one compares the two, Tara seems to be smarter than Chandan.

The psychological union of the physically separated pair of brother and sister remains strong as ever. They always want to be together. When Patel wants to send him alone to college, he cries out:

I don’t want to go to college! (Fighting his tears) Not without Tara!
If she is going in for surgery, I’ll miss a year too!

Each prefers the progress of the other to his or her own in all matters. Chandan tells Patel when the later wants him to help in the office and thus learn his job,

You can take Tara, she’ll make a great business woman.
Chandan, in fact, resents Patel’s partiality for him on account of this love of his sister. But he is wrong. Patel is not partial at all. Usually fathers love daughters more. That is the Freudian truth. This is even more on in India where women are still economically dependent on their husbands and fathers have to give their daughters to strangers who may or may not be kind to them. Patel has all kindness for Tara. But probably he knows that Tara is not likely to survive and Chandan has to learn to fend for himself in a rough world after he is no more. That seems to be the only reason why he wants to prepare Chandan well. Patel tells Chandan:

*I can’t see you rotting at home!*  

Patel certainly has different plans for Chandan. He says:

*I have plans for him. Your Praful uncle will help him get into a good university in England. I know he can get a scholarship on his own if he tries. But Praful will take care of the…special requirements for him.*

Patel tells him.

*With a solid education you can’t just fail.*

This may sound very good of a father. Bharati tells Chandan.

*Your father has a lot of plans for you.*

Ultimately, Chandan goes to England and settle there. Interestingly, Chandan does not know all about the unethical operation, but he believes that whatever his father does is good for them all. He tells Tara:

*He’s not what you make him out to be.*

It is very interesting to note that Dan is able to write creatively only after throwing away his masks. He says:

*Tonight I drop everything I’ve desperately wanted to be in my years in England. (Mimes removing a mask and throwing it away.)*
Chandan is probably experiencing identity crisis and in want of his individual space. The dramatist appears to convey the idea that genuine creativity occurs only after the artist learns to be himself, free from all kinds. More often than not, personal experiences capture the writer’s imagination and they must find their outlet when they swell in the breast. Dan or Chandan wants to write all about himself. Naturally the memory of the conjoined sister cut apart from him would come to him first. He says:

To tell you the truth, I had even forgotten I had a twin sister.
(Music fades in slowly.) Until I thought of her as subject matter for my next literary attempt. Or maybe I didn’t forget her. She was lying deep inside, out of reach...³⁶

That is how he begins and brings in the whole family and its problems viewed from all possible angles of vision. Here, one finds “emotions recollected in tranquility”. His is the synthetic vision which includes all, excludes none and does justice to everyone concerned in his story.

The portrayal of Patel is quite satisfactory. It brings out the whole man, his inside and out. Initially, it appears that his behavior with Bharati is not quite decent. Then it seems that he loves Chandan more than Tara. But we soon realize that the appearance is not reality. He loves Bharati as husband should love his wife. He constantly and most be critical of her on account of her over-indulgence of Tara. Beside Bharati is not a mentally healthy character. The birth of abnormally conjoined children had been distress enough for her. And third leg to Chandan even when it was organically a part of Tara. The remorse of it subsequently seems to have mentally unsettled her. Is she right in being over-protective of Tara? Patel has to find fault with her on disgruntled under perpetual stress. That is why Patel is unable to behave with her in normal manner. Moreover, he does not like to exhibit affection. That is why a reader’s first impression would be that he is not a desirable type of husband and father. But a careful reader would not fail to see his soft-heartedness and selflessness after the whole of the drama is held in one view. Tara is so eager to have real legs not Jaipuri and Chandan is so romantic of his leg that both have
different wishes. When Chandan was asked for wish he thought of two Jaipuri legs while Tara wants the real and original legs.

*Tara: I would wish for both... I would wish for two of them.*

*Chandan: two Jaipuri legs?*

*Tara: No, Silly, the real ones.*

Patel finds himself in a difficult situation. The scope of amelioration is extremely limited. He does what he could. It is impossible to find fault with him. With scant regard for personal peace and happiness, he tries to make everyone happy. But how could he be blamed if the circumstances are simply impossible? We discern in this character the rhythm of tragic self sacrifice. The drama does not make it clear as to what exact point of time he dies. But it is easy to guess that there would be nothing of spectacular martyrdom in the death of this benevolent man. He might have died a natural death in due course. But his life possibly could not have earned anything of what is normally known as happiness except the satisfaction of having done his duty. His dutiful course of action successfully saves Chandan who prospers as a literary artist in London. But it fails to save Bharati and Tara.

It may be said that Patel should have protested against the joint decision of Bharati, her father, and Dr. Thakkar to be blamed even for this. None can be expected to be self-possessed and balanced when abnormal children who are not likely to live, are born. He did protest against the operation of the third leg. But looking to the sad prospect of their death within a short time, he did not insist on anything. His mind must have become naturally dull and despondent at the time. He must have been resigned to fate. Could he be blamed under the circumstances?

Patel has to look after three invalids- Bharati, Tara, and Chandan. Each he handles with stern affection. Bharati, who unjustly gave the third leg to Chandan, now wants to give her kidney. Patel does not permit her to do that. His authoritarianism is benevolent when he tells Bharati:

*You will have to obey me. It’s my turn now.*
This means that Patel had obeyed her when she took wrong decision about the third leg, and now she should obey him about donating kidney. He could not prevent her from doing a wrong thing once. But he is determined now not to allow her to make another mistake.

The foolish woman threatens that she would divulge the whole story of the third leg to children. Patel naturally has to warn against the imprudence:

(Looks at her suddenly with determination.) if at all they must know, it will be from me, Not from you.  

Patel does not permit children to meet Bharati alone when she is hospitalized. It is just because he does not want her to chew the past, to brood over her error which is beyond rectification now. The children naturally misunderstand it and Tara says that she hates her father because he is preventing her mother from telling something which she very much wants to say out. Tara tells Chandan:

Chandan, she is desperately trying to tell me something, and I want to know!  

At that time, Patel blurts out:

No, I don’t want to give her the satisfaction of confessing.

There is an obvious irony here in the use of the word ‘satisfaction’. Was Bharati likely to get any satisfaction in telling immature children about the situation which they cannot understand? The fact is that Patel does not want to allow Bharati to suffer any pain by constant thinking about an ethically incorrect decision. Past is past. What is the use of remembering it, keeping it always before one’s mind? Such habit can only generate a masochistic tendency which starts deriving satisfaction from pain. Patel does not want Bharati to have that satisfaction.

Then follows his own confession. Patel balmes himself more than Bharati when he says:

I suppose we were both to balm. Your mother and I. And your grandfather.
Yet, it is obvious from what follows that the real culprits were Bharati and her influential father. Both of them had bribed Dr. Thakkar to agree to give the third leg to Chandan against his better judgment:

The doctor had agreed, I was told. It was later I came to know of his intention of starting a large nursing home—the largest in Bangalore. He had acquired three acres of prime land—in the heart of the city—from the state. Your grandfather’s political influence had been used.43

Yet, Patel takes the blame on himself:

Maybe if I had protested more strongly! 44

His solicitude for Bharati is absolutely evident when he says:

Now listen! You need help. I’m going to arrange for a doctor to examine you thoroughly.45

He also advises her to be a bit extrovert and sociable:

Look at you. Do you ever go out? No. Have you made any friends? We’ve been here for two months and you haven’t talked at anyone. You just sit here rotting46

His concern for Bharati is clearly discernible when he mimes talking to someone:

I don’t look well because I’m not…Frankly I’m worried…about her. 47

And he thinks of the children in the same way:

I am thinking about them. That’s why I need to make you more stable.48

What he wants is that the whole family should live together happily with mutual affection and sympathy within the limits imposed upon them by the circumstances.
However, Bharati calls Patel a ‘liar’ and treats his concern for her as hypocrisy. Patel gets angry and says:

_How deviously clever you are! I’m the liar and I’m the one who is feeding them with lies when they’re at an impressionable age? I am the violent one and you are the ‘victim’ of my wrath. You don’t go out because I don’t let you. Go on, say it._49

But such fits of irritation do not last long, and they never affect Patel’s constant compassion for his afflicted family. He works that Bharati cannot change her behavior and he alone has to try to adjust himself with her. Her behavior is determined by her mental illness which leaves little freedom to her, whereas Patel heroically determines his behavior with free will.

_I cannot handle your moods any longer. Have you looked at yourself recently? Look at the way you behave, the way you react to…_50

Says Patel. Yet, he manages to handle her uncontrollable moods. And he is absolutely truthful when he says to Tara:

_Tara, please believe me when I say I love you very much and I have never in all my life loved you less or more than I have loved your brothers._51

Ethically speaking Bharati is a very good woman. Her conscience is quite sound. That is the reason why she feels so much repentance about one wrong she has committed, viz., her decision to give third leg to Chandan. She extremely loves. Her love of her children suggests that before their birth she must have loved Patel with equal intensity. That perhaps is one reason why Patel’s devotion to her never wavers.

But she is not rational. She is not amenable to reason. She is driven by impulse, and that fault of hers is responsible for her suggested death or insanity or death in insanity. Unintentionally she makes her husband also unhappy by her behavior.
Bharati is peeved with Patel over trifles. One can clearly observe that she is uncomfortable with herself. She tends to cry, talks repetitively, is deeply disturbed, and depressed. She even insults Patel and quarrels with him. During one such altercation, she says to him:

*What you’re saying just isn’t true! You-you can’t lie about me like that in front of my children. Now that they are at an impressionable age and might take your words very seriously.*  

This looks like raving. It means little. She is constantly afraid that she would fall every low in her children’s estimate of her and so she wants to deny what she cannot deny, namely the instance of her guilt. But outcome of her incoherent raving is that Patel looks guilty to Chandan and Tara. Her mental imbalance is brought out in the utterances such as one quoted above.

Still she lives in hope. She hopes that all would be well after she atones for her sin of depriving Tara of all her leg by donating her own kidney to Tara:

*Don’t worry. You will be fine. After the operation, we will all be happy together. And I will make up for...for...your father, and I will make up for all the things God hasn’t given you.*

She feels guilty as is evident in her word quoted above. But she does not want to confess her crime before Tara. Actually she feels like speaking out about how she would make up for her loss of leg. But she becomes conscious suddenly and restrains herself in the middle of the utterance. She changes her mind and says that she would give Tara the love of both the parents suggesting that her father is not loving enough. Patel understand that Bharati behaves like this because she is not confidential that Tara would love her. Her guilt is responsible for her lack of confidence. How could Tara love her at all when she has done her so much harm! That is her constant feeling. That is one reason why she makes an excessive show of her affection for Tara.

Bharati wants Tara to become healthy. The genuineness of her love for Tara cannot be doubted. She is quite right when she says:

*Tara! My beautiful baby! You are my most beautiful baby! I love you very much.*
She is rightly worried about Tara’s future. To Chandan she says:

*It’s all right while she is yourng. Is’s every cute and comfortable when she makes witty remarks. But let her grow up. Yes, chandan. The world will tolerate you. The world will accept you-but her! Oh, the pain she is going to feel when she sees herself at eighteen or twenty. Thirty is unthinkable. And what about forty and fifty! Oh God!*  

She prepares dishes of her choice. She takes care of Tara’s diet regularly by offering her milk and other things. She expresses concern for Tara to Patel:

*“She’s much too thin! She…she must put on more weight. This mornig at the clinc, Dr. Kapoor checked their charts. She’s lost half a pound in one week.*

*In one month she will lose a kilo! (Getting worked up) If I don’t force her to eat, how will she gain weight? She will keep getting thinner till she’s all shriveled…*  

When Roopa, a neighboring girl, approaches their house for the first time, Bharati forcibly requests her “be my Tara’s friend.”  

*Bharati: First promise me that you will be her friend.*

*Roopa: I don’t know. Can I think about it?*

*Bharati (hissing). Promise me now!*  

This frightens Roopa, Bharati, however, offers her various temptations to be Tara’s friend. Roopa, too, takes advantage of such circumstances and goes to their house regularly. Her real intention in visiting Patel’s house is to tell everyone about Tara and Chandan.

What is evident above in additional to her love of Tara is her own love of being loved by Tara. And this is the reason why she wants that Tara should hate her father and love only her:

*Bharati: I wish your father would pay more attention to Tara.*
Chandan: He does. He doesn’t like to show his affection.

Bharati: Don’t tell me about your father. He is more worried about your career than hers. 59

Patel’s advice to her:

You know she loves you. You’re sure of that. Don’t make her choose between us, for God’s sake! You’re ruining her life because you are sick. 60

The pity is that all her manipulations are done unconsciously, not intentionally. What is clearly discernible is that she wants to run away from her guilt and fails to take the right and straightforward course of courageous confession and correction. She is not sane enough to think as to what is right and what is wrong. She is simply driven under her impulse. And stranger though it may seem, she is angry with Patel for all his selfless and affectionate care of her:

Who are you to stop me? Just who do you think you are? 61

She says when he dissuades her against her decision to give her kidney to Tara. This is her normal pattern of behavior with her husband. She does not understand that the children need the love of both of the parents, and that they can love the parents only if they see parents loving each other. Her disorder is uncontrollable. Single-handedly Patel tries to establish some order in an extremely troubled family.

On one instance, when Bharati unnecessarily protects Tara, Patel tells her:

You want her to believe you are the only who loves her! 62

Bharati, we are told, had been a very healthy and normal person before the action of the drama begins. Her marriage with Patel is a love-marriage and they had their fill of joy before the birth of their children. But the birth of conjoined children proves to be a calamity too big for her healthily to face. The events that follow show what a mess she makes by her impulsive actions and reactions. Her sense makes her having unjustly given the third leg to Chandan makes her abnormally indulgent towards Tara. The reins of reason no longer work upon her uncontrollable
emotions. She herself no longer works upon her uncontrollable emotion. She herself becomes a sort of invalid in her care and worry of her invalid children. Patel is right when he say to her:

_You are in no condition to be taking major decisions._ \(^{63}\)

He is rightly worried about her health. This is evident when he mimes talking to someone:

_Maybe I'm expecting the worst, It may never happen-no, Things are getting out of hand. I must worry about her. Yes I am worried- about my wife._ \(^{64}\)

What is suggested above is that she may either go mad or die shortly.

Bharati, in course of time, becomes paranoid. Her sense of guilt eventually drives her to that state. She assumes that none can be kind to her and least of all Patel. Without any justification she assumes that Patel sets her children against her. Hysterically she cries:

_Don’t fill her (Tara) with nonsense about me._ \(^{65}\)

After donating kidney to Tara, Bharati completely goes mad. She has to live in the hospital till she dies. Roopa sums up the position of all the four members of the family in following words:

_I tell you that whole family is crazy._ \(^{66}\)

Tara learns from Patel about her mother’s madness in due course. Patel could not dissuade Bharati against her to give her kidney to Tara. Before her obstinacy he is helpless. The obstinacy Cassandra of Sahadeva of a sort understands what the outcome of such behavior would be, but is cursed in that none of the adults in the drama would pay heed to his words, and of the youngster only Chandan survives. But he is lucky in that at least one person, his son and the only living member of his family, understands him consistently.

The characters of the play could be divided into three distinct groups. We can place in the first group Tara and Chandan fated to suffer physically, domestically, and socially before they die. Tara dies shortly. Chandan survives as a cripple who has established himself as a winter of a short. In him we find a life struggling to keep alive.
Both the characters work look symbolic rather than real individuals. We have already mentioned that they represent bi-gendered humanity suggesting the Upanishadic and the Platonic vies. All humanity is unfortunate like them more or less, and like them is doomed to die. Thomas Mann in Magic Mountain uses sanatorium and its patients that are the characters of the novel as the representatives of all mankind and their difficult situation in an inanimate and unsympathetic universe. Dattani uses for the same purpose the conjoined children separated by scientific knowledge and surgical skill of Dr. Thakkar.

Patel and Bharati could be placed in the second group. They don’t cease to be symbolic. But they look decisively individual. We need not discuss here the characteristics of either, for each of them has been dealt with in details in the earlier sections. They are flesh and blood mortals and their and portrayal is absolutely convincing.

Roopa and Dr. Thakkar constitute the last group. They are altogether functional. Roopa represents the society, and she plays the role of the chorus. The complexity of the drama requires her as such. In the first capacity she exhibits the weaknesses of our society, its love of the gossip particularly. The taste for gossip is universal but right kind of compassion in social behavior in the Euro- American world. That is why Euro-American social attitudes are not only harmful to unfortunate individuals, but are also positively helpful and sympathetic today.

But unfortunately in our country authentic Enlightenment has not yet come. We have not been authentic to feel pain at the pain of others. On the contrary the misfortune of others causes some delight in us, and talking about it appears to be even more delightful. This attitude, the attitude which is unhealthy and undesirable, is exhibited in Roopa’s behavior.

In the beginning, Roopa visits the Patels’s house to acquaint herself with Tara and Chandan. She says:

_Oh, good, at least you two are at home. Let’s all sit down. Maybe we can watch a movie._

Watching movie is her ostensible intention to visit Patel’s house. She is allowed to watch TV for little time in her own home. That is why she goes to Patel’s. Roopa is almost of the same age as that of Tara and Chandan. They therefore, also like her company. Bharati, too, likes Roopa’s
coming frequently to her place for two reasons: The social life of the distressed family is meager, and secondly Tara in her invalid state needs somebody’s company.

She bribes Roopa to tempt her to visit her home regularly. Offer to watch TV as long as she pleases, delicious dishes, and sprays and cosmetics are the form of bribe she gives. Roopa gladly accepts all this from Bharati. She also understands her importance, understands that the Patel family badly needs her. Child though she is, she knows how to take advantage of the situation.

Roppa’s views about the physically challenged twins ate clearly expressed when Tara informs Roopa that Chandan is a creative writer writing stories. Tara enthusiastically adds:

“*Yes, he is going write a story- about me.*”

“*About me. Strong. Healthy. Beautiful.*”

Roopa promptly objects to this. She says:

*That’s not you! That’s me!*  

Roopa appears to believe that only physically fit people are strong and beautiful. She also firmly believes that Tara is much inferior to her. She says:

*I don’t think we are-you know-combatable.*

This is antipathetic of her. It is cruel. It is not even correct. Being physically challenged does not mean that one is inferior in every way to those who are physically fit.

Physically challenged persons have to work harder than ordinary people to stand equal to them. In such cases, it is our duty to appropriate the efforts and the struggle that they undertake. Moreover, a person must be judged by the qualities that he/she possesses.

Roopa constantly feels that she is in some sort of competition with Tara. She, therefore, looks for opportunities to humiliate Tara. But Tara outsmarts Roopa on every occasion. Roopa plays a trick on Chandan. She goes to meet him when he is alone. She sexually arouses him. And when Chandan tries to touch her, she screams and accuses him of being a ‘rapist’. 
Tara’s tussle with Roopa is noteworthy. Roopa tries to run down Tara by telling her that she is one-legged. Roopa hits back by pointing out her uneven tits:

*So how does it feel having one tit smaller than the other?*  

Again she adds:

*I'd sooner be one-eyed, one-armed and one-legged than be an imbecile like you. An imbecile with uneven tits.*

This is how one must face society which is suppose to help its individual members but which in reality seeks to stifle the unfortunate creatures of it.

Dr. Thakkar is present throughout the play offering his comments at various places. But he does not participate in the main action of the play. His presence on the stage conquest of nature. The feature which distinguishes man situation in nature. He tries to improve it. That is how he hands and vehicles for locomotion to movement of legs. That is how science and technology grow. But the conquest of physical nature is one-sided or partial. It adds power to man. But does it make man better as a moral and spiritual being? In spite of his marvelous surgical skill, Dr. Thakkar is corruptible. The ideal which Dattani suggests without making a clear statement about it is that man should be a better human being and also a greater master of nature with the power of ever improving science and technology.

Dr. Thakkar is the “surgeon –in-chief” working at the Queen Victoria Hospital, Mumbai, and also at the Children’s Hospital at Philadelphia. With science of surgery and how it is used to separate conjoined Tara and Chandan. He also tells us how they grow and how far there are chance for their survival.

In an interview with Dan, he tells us:

*“Conjoined twins-your Siamese twins-developing from one fertilized ovum are invariably of the same sex….But here these tow were obviously from different fertilized gees.”* 

*“The twins are of different sexes. Very, very rare.”*
Through Dr. Thakkar, we learn of the indispensability of medical support throughout the lives of Tara and Chandan. Chandan says:

*Doctors. Nurses. A painful necessity in our lives.* 74

We need them for our health as we need shoes to protect our footsoles. There is nothing individual about Dr. Thakkar.

All the characters – flat, functional and individual – together represent weak humanity struggling to live and destined to die under heartless Heaven. This appears to be Dattani’s overall existentialist vision of life and universe, of life turning into dead object, into dust, of dust being reanimated to die as an absurd phenomenon. Says Dan’s voice-

*Someday, after I die, a stranger will find a recording and play it. The voice is all that will remain. No writing. No masterpiece. Only a voice—that once belonged to an object. An object like other object in a cosmos, whose orbits are determined by those around. Moving in a forced harmony. Those who survive are those who do not defy the gravity of others. And those who desire even a moment of freedom find themselves hurled into space, doomed to crash with some unknown force. (Paused). I no longer desire that freedom. I move, just move. Without meaning. I forget Tara. I forget that I had sister – with whom I had shared a body. In a comfortable womb. Till we were forced out….and separated.* 75

In such a situation, it is natural for man to think of Heaven, to imagine a happy hereafter, where those who part here in sorrow may meet again in joy:

*But somewhere, sometime, I look up at a shooting star... and wish. I wish that a long-forgotten person would forgive me. Wherever she is.*

*Tara walks into the spot without limping. Dan also appears without the limp.*

*And will hug me. Once again.*

*They kneel, face to face.*

*Forgive me, Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy.*
Tara embraces Dan as the music starts. The explosive opening of Brahms’s First concerto. They hug each other tightly.

Slow fade out.

Shall we say then that Dattani subscribes to the religious belief in the soul’s survival in a better world after death? The answer is neither yes, nor no. Dattani is mature enough to know that the origin and end of life cannot be known to man. He emerges as a true agnostic who would never venture to move beyond the limits of knowledge, to hazard a guess about what is unknowable. He is content to describe the human situation in an alien universe and to express human longing for absolute life and happiness.

The scale of the play is at once microscopic and macroscopic as it involves miserable human creatures on the speck of dust that is our earth, of dust within cosmic immensity. It is readable and touching. It is that way a successful work of literature.

But is it stageable? That is the most important question as Tara is a drama and not a novel. Dattani is quite aware of the problem. Therefore, he tries his best with all innovations he is capable of to make the play an effective performance.

Consider the stage direction at the beginning of the act I:

A multi-level set. The lowest level occupies a major portion of the stage. It represents the house of the Patels. It is seen only in memory and may be kept as stark as possible.

The next level represents the bedsitter of the older Chandan in a suburb of London. There is a small bed, and, in the foreground, a small writing table with a typewriter and a sheaf of papers. A part of a wall covered with fade wallpaper can also be seen. This is the only realistic level.

Behind, on a higher level, is a chair in which Dr. Thakkar remains seated throughout the play. Although he doesn’t watch the action of the play, his connection is asserted by his sheer God like presence.

On the stage level, running along the cyclorama and in a L-Shape, downstage right is the galli outside the Patel’s house, which can be suggested by cross-lightening.
The play starts without any music. A spot pick up Dan at his writing table. He is typing furiously. He stops and removes the sheet from his type writer. He looks up and speaks to the audience.\footnote{77}

The four levels, however, are reducible only to two levels: the level at which Dan is writing “typing furiously”, and the abstract level where in flows the stream of his memories. One is realistic, the other is surrealistic. At the first level, there is little action. If writing and typing is a form of action, it is action. The place is one single room, and the duration of the completion of the writing, though not clearly specified, may be supposed to be very small. Thus, at this level, the unities of time, place and action are absolutely observed. One is reminded of James Joyce’s bulky Ulysses which is as far as the physical dimension of the action is concerned, is similarly confined to one single day.

At the physical level, Dan or Chandan is the fictitious author of the play. There have been classic novels written in first person singular, in autobiographical technique. But we have never heard of a drama brought out thus. The drama is Dan’s Stream of consciousness, his memories of past misery moving back and forth without any linear development. Evidently it resembles poetry rather than an objective fiction or drama. Dan says:

\begin{quote}
In a poetry, even the most turbulent emotions can be recollected when one is half asleep. But in drama! Ah! \\
Even tranquility has to be recalled with emotion. Like touching a bare live wire. Try distancing yourself from that experience and writing about it! A mere description will be hopelessly inadequate. And for me ….I have to relive that charge over and over again.\footnote{78}
\end{quote}

Dans’s memories are all externalizes. We See them playing on the stage. The abstract low level, consequently,

Becomes more concrete than the concrete level of Dan’s room in London, which is relegated into the background. Patels’ house, Dr. Thakkar’s chair and the L-shape “galli” – all belong to this
level. Dan visualizes his own past and then writes a story. In fact, this is Dan’s novel, the novel that has been dramatized. He remembers his home:

What is Tara? Kind, gentle, strong, her mother has given her strength. And daddy? Silent? Angry? And – mummy.  

Thus begins his poetry that is recollection in emotional excitement.

At this level also, the sense of action is one single room of Patel’s house. All that happens outside, or has happened in the past, is just narrated. The action is one complete whole with nothing superfluous. There are no side stories or diversions. What happens after the birth of conjoined children in the happy house of loving parents- that is the limited theme? The magnitude of action is absolutely manageable. The duration of time is also supposed to be very small. But there are two pieces of it. One is that when Bharati and her father against Patel’s protest decide to give third leg to Chandan. Another is that in which Bharati decides to give her kidney to Tara to atone for her sin. In one, the children are infants. In the other, they are adolescents. Yet one doesn’t feel that the unity of time is violated. It is because in this play, as probably in no other play, the entire action has already been past when the drama begins at the physical level of Dan’s room in London. The whole play of memories is presented in flashback manner. The stream of consciousness cares for no chronology. Anything may arise and vanish in it from the past without notice. That is how at the abstract level, which is the genuine dramatic level here, also the unities are strictly maintained. The play as a whole is a completed simultaneity of the past. There is no actual succession of events here.

One more innovation of Dattani must be noted here. In order to communicate to the audience the thought processes of the communication to the audience the thought processes of the characters on the stage, he does not use traditional ‘asides’ and soliloquies. He uses the ‘Voice-over’ device as in other plays so also here. But in this play, he uses in addition a miming which is the speech of a character addressed to an invisible interlocutor supposed to be visible to the speaker. All the miming scenes take place in the “galli” only. Patel talks to someone turning to the galli. We learn from his speech about deteriorating physical condition of Bharati and Tara. Roopa also mimes talking to invisible Prema and Nalini. Tara mimes showing her leg to invisible Roopa, Prema and Nalini supposed to be standing in the street.
All this is clearly readable. But would it be really graspable when the play is actually performed in the theatre?

The play is full of western music. It shows Dattani’s access to the western classical music, it is the combination or modern and classic. We have “the explosive opening of Brahms’ first concerto”. “The second movement of Brahms’ First Concerto, ‘Chaplin’s Prelude No 2 in a minor, or “Dinu Lipatti’s version, “Chopin’s Prelude No. 25 opus 45”, etc.

The play shows Dattani’s accurate study of medical science as far the phenomenon of conjoined children is concerned. The entire operation of separating Chandan and Tara has been described minutely. Few authors’ takes so much pain to master the disciplined involved in their works. But Dattani would not write a word about anything, it seems, without firsthand knowledge about it. This is evident not only in Tara but also in most of his other plays. However, the dramatist has taken enough care so not to make this technical. It remains enjoyable.

The play has effective use of the lighting. It is necessary particularly to distinguish four different levels of the stage. The light quickly cross-fades from one acting areas to another enables audience to shift their focus and adjust to the authorial intended time dimension. Occasionally, there is the use of focus beam. Lights also help in reflecting tension on the stage.

The play has several absent-presences. This is Dattani’s peculiarity to technique evident in other plays also. Some characters do not appear on the stage at all. They are, nevertheless, referred to and they are present elsewhere and their influence in the action of drama is clearly felt. Dr. Kapoor, Prema and Nalini are such Absent-present.

Tara and final solution are the best of Dattani’s plays. The first of these expresses the totality of Dattani’s vision of life. What we discover here is the struggle of humanity to live and to be happy in the midst of unsympathetic nature and society. Nature’s lack of sympathy is quite understandable it seems to Battani we feel for its dead. It is inertia of time and space and matter. But society can and should be sympathetic and helpful enough. But it is not so. This is what offends Dattani. Without being imitative of any foreign writers Dattani shows in all this his mature view of life that could be described as that of an authentic Indian agnostic or existentialist.
The task of amelioration is just social and simpler in Tara. Tara first may be described as a problem play. Both, Tara and Final Solutions, are pre-eminently the works of art unlike other plays which are more argumentative than artistic. The compass of Tara as we have noted earlier, is far wider than that of final solution. But the structural harmony of parts is tighter and more pleasing in final solutions than in Tara. The unity of action in the first is greater than in the second. That is what makes it more pointed and arresting. In short, Tara is more philosophical than final solutions, but Final Solutions is greater work of art than Tara.

Though Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Woman* (1869), Olive Schreiner’s *Women and Labour* (1911) had already been published and demands for granting equal rights to women had been raised from time to time in late 19th and early 20th centuries in the Western countries, feminism as a conscious literary movement began with the publication of Virginia Woolf’s extended polemical essay *A Room of One’s Own*” (1929) and simone de Beauvoir’s classic *The Second Sex* (1949). Through her essay Woolf drew our attention to the obstacles women writers face in the process of creation. In her opinion freedom of woman is not possible without her economic independence. She was firmly of the view that discriminations have been made against woman in relation to education, marriage and motherhood.

Simone de Beauvoir’s famous book *The Second Sex* became a significant landmark in the evolution of feminist movement. In her opinion woman occupies marginalized position in the society just on account of patriarchal culture which regards woman as the ‘other’ in the social structure. It is evident from her own statement in the English version of *The Second Sex* (1974):

“*She is not regarded as an autonomous being ... She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not him with reference to her. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute and she is the ‘Other’*’” (270).

She presents a clear cut difference between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. Sex (male-female) is a biological construct, determined by God but gender (masculine-feminine), which is of course a cultural construct, is determined by socially and culturally
acceptable behavioral patterns for men and women. Biological construct cannot be changed but culture construct can be altered in order to ensure the fulfillment of the aspirations of the other half.  

In her book *Sexual Politic* (1970) Kate Millet analyses the different modes of women oppression and explains the system of sex-role stereotyping under patriarchal system. In her opinion men adopt different devices in order to suppress and subjugate the women. In her book *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (1985) Toril Moi explains the terms ‘feminine ‘feminist’ and ‘female’ as “as set of culturally defined characteristic”, “a political position” and a matter to biology” respectively. Elaine Showalter in her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1982) suggests a different interpretation of these terms and tries to construct an alternative tradition of women’s writing and woman’s writing and woman’s experience. In the first Feminine Phase (1840-80) women writers imitated the prevailing modes of dominant male cultural tradition and internalized its standards of art. Its content, says Showalter, “was typically oblique, displaced, ironic and subversive”. In the Feminist Phase (1880-1920) women writes reject the accommodating postures’ of femininity and try to express’ the ordeals of wronged womanhood’. In the Female Phase (1920 onwards) women writers reject both the forms of dependency-imitation and protest and resort to the search for their own identity. They turn towards “female experience as the source of an autonomous art, extending the feminist analysis of culture to the forms and techniques of literature”. In her essay “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” Showalter has drawn our attention to the glaring distinction between male and female and regarded women’s literature as ‘the literature of the colonizes’.

Of all the three terms used by Moi and Showalter, feminism is probably the most popular and the most complex one. It refers to the prolonged struggle against the ‘tyranny of the patriarchal state’ and is based on the urge for the equality of women in every walk of life. It attempts to fight against the oppression of women on a number of levels – economic, social, political and ideological. As a conscious socio-political movement, feminism experienced resurgence in the late sixties and seventies in Europe, America and other parts of the world. In their writings women writers expressed their resentment against the negligence and oppression of women. In the feminist criticism of the 70s a significant effort was made towards the exposure of the inner mechanisms of patriarchy which were responsible for the emergence of a typical cultural
Feminist writers (female as well as male) have tried to highlight the weakness of the discriminatory patriarchal social order and successfully drawn our attention to the various issues relating to the miserable plight of women. Patriarchal social and cultural system is mainly responsible for discriminatory attitude towards women and their marginalized status in the society. Mahesh Dattani is one such writer who has exposed the weaknesses of patriarchal order and brought to our notice the discrimination and injustice done to women in our society. Dattani has regarded theater as an effective means of collective experience where people gather to pause, reflect and question the outdated customs and traditions of the country.

Dattani’s main purpose in writing the play is to highlight the discriminatory treatment being given to the male child over a female child in Indian rural or urban society. In Tanu Pant’s article “Mahesh Dattani: The Face of Indian Drama”, published in her jointly edited book The Plays of Mahesh Dattani (2005), Tanu Pant has rightly observed:

“Every girl child in an Indian family does suffer some kind of exploitation and if there is a boy child in the family, then the exploitation is very much visible as the privileges are consciously or but we are all aware of the fact that women have to go a long away in order to break the shackles of subordination and slavery.\(^{83}\)

The story of the play centers round Tara and Chandan who are the Siamese twins, conjoined from ‘chest down’. The fateful ‘leg’ would have been a complete success with the body of Tara, as according to the scanning report
a major part of the blood supply to the third leg was

provided the girl” 84

It would have not only saved the life of Tara but also made her realize the fullness of human existence. The leg, however, was attached to Chandan, though it lasted only for two days. Since the separation was manipulated by their mother, Bharati and maternal grandfather, they decided to favour the boy (Chandan) over the girl (Tara) for the simple reason that they wanted to ensure the survival of a healthy and promising son. Hence they had instructed Dr. Thakkar to

“risk giving both legs to the boy” 85

. This gender based discrimination left Tara crippled for life.

Though Chandan was in no way responsible for the untimely death of his sister, he wanted to absolve himself from the guilt of killing his own sister and bear the brunt of the cruelty of his mother as well as his grandfather. Hence he decided to escape to London, transform his name from Chandan to Dan and live a self-condemned life. Chandan changed into Dan becomes the narrator of the play, as it in fact the recipient of an ill-starred, unwanted tragic girl and is bound to carry the burden of the patriarchal sins if his parents (and grandfather). His sense of anguish for Tara is so deep that he apologizes to her for making her painful story the tragedy of his own life. He openly admits:

Like the amazing Dr. Thakkar, I must take something from Tara

and give it to myself. Make capital of my trauma, my Anguish, and

make it my tragedy. To masticate them in my Mind and spit out the

result to the world, in anger 86

Chandan thinks over the the pathetic fate of Tara and wants to project her as a character which is ‘strong, Healthy, Beautiful’. He realizes that

“She deserves something better. She never got a fair deal. Not even

from Nature. Neither of us did” 87

Dattani is extremely disgusted and anguished to see the discrimination being made against the female child or, as has been pointed out by Erin Mee in his introduction to Tara, against “the
feminine side of oneself in the world that always favours what is ‘male’ “ In one of his interviews to Lashmi Subramanyam, published in Muffled Voices. Women in Modern Indian Theatre (2002). Dattani provides his own explanation.

“I see Tara as a play about the male self and the female self. The male self being preferred... in all cultures. The play is about the separation of self and the resultant angst.” 88

Dattani questions the role of the society which treats the children of the same womb in two different ways on the basis of gender.

When Tara was included in the syllabus for a class on Indian performance at New York University, students were so much excited by the play that many of them wrote their final papers on it. Erin Mee, the famous theatre director, has mentioned in “A Note on the Play”, published in Dattani’s collected plays, that one of his students made a very relevant observation about the play.

“Dattani focuses on the family as a microcosm of the society in order to dramatize the ways we are socialized to accept certain gendered roles and to give preference to what is male” 89.

The other student, however, gave an entirely new interpretation and stated: “Tara and Chandan are two sides of the same self rather than two separate entities and that Dan, in trying to write the story of his own childhood, has to write Tara’s story. Dan writes Tara’s story to rediscover the neglected half of himself, as means of becoming whole” (320)

It is not very difficult to understand the logic behind their discriminatory attitude prevailing in society, in the patriarchal system it is the son who alone can carry the family tradition and family structure in future. It is believed that only the son provide Moksha (Salvation) to the parents by doing Kapaal Kriya (breaking of the skull while being cremated). Hence family members do not bother whether girls are killed at birth or abandoned in future. In the patriarchal system people normally believe that rearing a female child is just like watering somebody else’s plant. It is also evident from Roopa’s narration of an anecdote in which it has been stated that
“The Patels in the old days were unhappy with getting girl babies—you know dowry the things like that—so they used to drown them in milk.”

Nothing can be more pathetic than the treatment of a female child who is not only undesirable in the family set-up but disliked also.

Every female child has to pass through several kinds of limitations, restrictions and compulsions imposed by the existing socio-cultural system. She is not allowed to breathe freely or act independently. Tara becomes a victim of this kind of socio-cultural system. It leads to her prolonged suffering, humiliation and ultimately death. Being a handicapped girl, Tara feels insulted and embarrassed in the presence of the ugliest girls in the whole world. Prema and Nalini who laugh at her Jaipur leg. When Tara showed it to them, they reacted to her leg in a peculiar, insulting manner. Recalling the reaction of Nalini Tara Says:

“The duckling couldn’t believe her eyes. She started at my leg. She felt it and knocked on it. Silly as well as ugly, I thought”

Tara is very sensitive by temperament. She knows what hurts the people. She feels shocked when someone mentions that Tara is one-legged. In order to make Roopa realize the seriousness of her problem, Tara enquires—“how does it feel having one tit smaller than the other”? It stuns Roopa who immediately rises and says

“How dare you! You on-legged thing!”

And Tara firmly responds:

“I’d sooner be one eyed, one armed and one legged than be an imbecile like you. An imbecile with uneven tits”

Tara further reminds Roopa that when Nalini and Prema get this information, they will start looking at her uneven tits as they have been looking at her leg.

“You won’t be able to come out of your house, you horrible creature!”
Whereas Tara’s father, Mr. Patel is leaving no stone unturned to ensure a better and brighter future for his son, he is least worried about the future of Tara. When he finds his son Chandan helping her mother in knitting he is annoyed and disgusted. The following dialogue between Mr. Patel and Chandan clearly reveals the problems of gender discrimination:

*Patel: What are you two doing?*  
*Chandan: Mummy’s knitting and I’m helping her sort out her mistake.*  
*Patel: Let Tara do it.*  
*Chandan: Its okay.*  
*Patel: Give it to her.*  
*Chandan: Why?*  
..........  
*Patel: Chandan, leave that damn thing alone!....*  
*I can’t see you rotting at home!*  

Patel wants Chandan to go abroad for higher studies but what about Tara? Who has the time to think about her? When we compare Tara with Chandan, we find that Tara is full of Potentialities, while Chandan is not enterprising at all. Even then Mr. Patel favours his son at the cost of Tara. “Oh what a waste! A waste of money. Why spend all the money to keep me alive? It cannot issues of Feminist Discourse and Dattani’s Tara.  

*Matter whether I live or die....’* Even then Tara’s attitude is quiet positive and she feels determined to serve the starving millions. It is evident from her own statement:

“I will spend the rest of my life feeding and clothing those.... starving naked millions everyone is talking about... That may give ... purposes to my... existence”
Tara is aware of the fact that women are discriminated and suppressed. Gender roles and determined even before the birth. Tough men are given all the advantages of society. She is quiet confident that women mature faster and they are

“more sensitive, more intelligent, more compassionate human beings than creeps like you and daddy”. 97

Tara is so warm to her mother that she goes to the extent of saying:

“I don’t care for anyone except Mummy!” 98

Tara is aware of the glaring gender discrimination in her own family. Not only that she was deprived of the leg which ought to have been attached to her body but even her maternal grandfather had not left even a single penny for her, though he had left ‘a lot of money’ for Chandan. Tara used to hate her father also, because he was not as nice to her as he was to Chadan. Moreover he was so cruel that he had not permitted Tara to meet her mother all alone. Nurses in the hospital had been given strict instructions by her father that Tara “shouldn’t on any account be allowed to see mummy” on her own. When Tara is not permitted by her father to meet her mother all alone, she openly revolts and expresses her desire to meet her mother even without his permission. It is evident from the following dialogue:

*Tara: We will go without your permission.*

*Patel: You will not!*

*Tara: Chandan, will you come with me?*

*Patel: Chandan, you can’t?*

*Tara: Chandan*

*Patel: No! Don’ go!*

*Tara: Will you come with me or do I have to go alone?*

*Pause*

*Chandan: We’ll both go. 99*
Tara fails to understand why even Chandan has become so insensitive to his mother and to Tara herself. She openly says: “You don’t care about me, you don’t care about mummy; you don’t even want to see her. As far as you are concerned, she is already dead”. Tara is so puzzled with the behavioral pattern of the ‘normal’ society that she is willing to hear the music of Beethoven only. She identifies herself with the famous musician because in spite of the fact that he was incapable of hearing his own creation, he established his greatness in the world of music.

The problem of gender discrimination is also clearly visible in the life of Tara’s mother, Mrs. Bharati Patel. Though she was a party to the crucial decision of the attachment of fateful ‘leg’ to her son Chandan, she soon realized what a grave mistake she had committed by denying the legitimate claim of Tara. She suffered from this guilt throughout her life. Hence she was willing to demonstrate special affection for Tara and says: “Tara! My beautiful baby! You are my most beautiful baby! I love you very much”. In order to compensate for what she had done to Tara in the past, Bharati reveals her positive attitude and says:

“Yes, I plan for her happiness. I mean to give her all the love and affection which I can give. It is what she … deserves. Love can make up for a lot”  

Bharati’s sense of regret is so deep that she is willing to donate her kidney to Tara so that Tara may survive for a few more years and she may have the satisfaction of doing something for her. Bharati in fact wanted to donate something from her own life in order to purge off the sin committed by her in the past. It is quite evident from her statement.

“Now that I am giving you a part of me. Everything will be all right …. After the operation we will all be happy together and I will make up for …. For …. Tour father, and I will make up for all the things god hasn’t given you”  

Why was Bharati so worried about making up for Tara’s father? She knew that Tara’s father was much more worried about Chandan’s career and least bothered about the future of Tara. Moreover she was also aware of the problems Tara will have to face in due course of time. Chandan as a male will enjoy so many privileges in comparison to Tara:
“Yes, Chandan. The world will tolerate you. The world will accept you—but not her. Oh, the pain she is going to feel when she sees herself at eighteen or twenty. Thirty is unthinkable. And what about forty and fifty! Oh God!” Bharati wants a better and brighter future Tara. She wants Tara to “have a career … She can’t be --- aimless all her life”

Bharati is interested providing a happy and healthy atmosphere for the proper growth of Tara’s personality. She goes to the extent of bribing her inquisitive and garrulous neighbor, Roopa to be her daughter’s best friend. She expresses her feelings to Roopa in the following manner: “Tara is a very nice girl … She can be very good company and she has her talent. She can be very witty and of course she is intelligent. I have seen to it that she … More than makes up in some ways for what she … Doesn’t have”. Bharati is willing to sacrifice anything for the sake of Tara’s happiness. Bharati feels so much attached to Tara that while lying in the hospital she is speaking to Tara as if she is talking to an infant in her arms: “Tara! My beautiful little girl. Look at her smile! Smile Tara. Smile again for me! Oh! See how her eyes twinkle. You are my most beautiful baby!”

In the patriarchal system it is the husband who dictates the terms and conditions to his wife. Bharati’s husband is so cruel, vindictive, arrogant and revengeful that he does not permit his wife to donate her kidney to Tara. When Bharati insists on it, Patel bluntly refuses and boldly asserts.” Patel does not permit his wife to take any ‘major decision’ in the family. If the secret of the separation of Tara and Chandan is to be disclosed, it should be done through him and not through her.

“If at all they must know, it will be from me. Not from you”. 102

Patel goes on giving so much of psychological torture to his wife that it ultimately results in her mental breakdown. Bharati is finally hospitalized and as Roopa reports,

“finally gone loony. Stark naked mad”. 103

Whereas Bharati constantly suffers from her sense of guilt, Patel is bent upon rubbing her nose in.

Like men women also require proper space and atmosphere for the proper and healthy growth of their personality. There are, however, certain social elements which have been crating hindrances
in the free and fair development of women. Dr. Thakkar has been used as such an important social factor in the play by Dattani. Doctors are supposed to be the true messengers of God, as they save humanity from different sorts of diseases and sufferings. Even when common human beings falter and try to move in the wrong direction, doctors are not supposed to support the common people on unethical grounds. In the contemporary era female feticide has become so common that people kill the fetus in the uterus after detecting the gender of child. Dr. Thakkar who is supposed to abide by the ethical norms of his profession, becomes an accomplice in the bizarre act of severing the leg from Tara under the temptation of Tara’s influential maternal grandfather who had assured sufficient help to Dr. Thakkar in establishing a grand nursing home at Bangalore. Now the question is: Who is responsible for the suffering and subsequent death of Tara – Dr. Thakkar as a doctor or Bharati and her father as family members of the existing socio-cultural system? I think, the socio-cultural construct of the collective human psyche is much responsible for taking away Tara’s life than any other factor in our society. The human psyche which is rightly regarded by Simone De Beavoir as the cultural construct is to be radically altered for the balanced and healthy growth of women in our society.

The point which has been puzzling my mind after reading the text of Tara, is the issue related to the narrator of the play. Why does Dattani pick up the character of Chandan (Dan) as the narrator who narrates the agony of Tara’s life? Why does he not allow Tara to speak for herself? Has gender-bias not conditioned the mind set of Dattani himself? Why is Chandan interested in taking something from Tara and making capital of his own trauma, his own anguish? Is Tara incapable of giving expression to her own sufferings and frustrations of life? When we go through the texts of contemporary women writers, we normally find that they pick up female characters as their protagonists. Has Dattani not failed to ensure proper justice to the dimension of Tara’s character by providing very little time and space for the manifestation of her genuine grievances? If Dattani had allowed Tara to speak for herself and reveal the intensity of her own frustrations, the play would certainly have been much more powerful than it is.

Tara is an ideal character of Dattani which has been widely applauded the variedly interpreted. Dattani himself has tried to depict the feminine side of oneself which always has to come to terms with the society which favors male in a male-dominated world. No matter how much the world proclaims about woman enfranchisement and feminine liberation, subconsciously all
woman are aware of the fact that they have to go a long way to break shackles. If ever women will be considered equal to men by men, is a big question to answer.

*Tara* gives us a glimpse into the modern society which claims to be liberal and advanced in its thought and action. It is therefore evident enough to confirm male chauvinism prevalent in the present society. In a society which claims that its mothers are educated today and have ‘Denis’ like Durga, Kali, Saraswati, Lakshmi etc. whom not only women but men also pay obeisance, differentiate between a male child and female, equal opportunities to women in all the fields are belied. Dattani has attempted an uphill task of pulling out all the taboo subjects from under the rug and putting them on the stage for the public to review. Considering his foresight, it can be said that young playwrights like Dattani, having guts to bring forth such poignant issues and present them threadbare, should be spawned and encouraged.

Dattani’s *Tara* gives us a picture of the helplessness of woman in our society. It has received great applause in foreign countries where students have pointed out Tara and Chandan as two aspects of same personality. As Chandan exists, in writing about himself, writes about Tara to rediscover the neglected half of him. But Dattani’s aim in writing the play was to highlight the preference given to a male child over a female child. Whenever the question of choice comes between male and female, it is the male who is chosen.

The play *Tara* also brings forth the bizarre reality of the woman playing second fiddle to man. It opens with Chandan changed into Dan in order to absolve himself from the guilt of killing his sister. Though the poor soul had nothing to do with his sister’s untimely death but he bears the brunt of his grandfather’s and mother’s cruelty. He feels someway responsible for his sister’s death and decides to atone for it. For that reason, he escapes to London and transforms his name from Chandan to Dan and lives a self-condemned life. The viciousness of the grandfather and his mother not only takes away the life of the girl but also ruins the life of the boy who was very much attached to his sister Tara.

The fateful leg which was the cause of Tara’s bad health and consequent death could not be given to the boy as it became useless after few days. The leg would have been complete success with Tara’s body. It would not only have saved her life but also made her a complete person which she very much desired to be, more than Chandan. Chandan was more complacent with his
handicapped life while Tara craved every moment for a complete and normal life. The awareness that she has a handicap and the humiliation meted out to her by Roopa and her friend when she was forced to show her handicapped leg to them was like a dagger - jibe to her heart.

Dattani I is known widely for picking up scintillating social problems of which this is perennial and glaring. The preference for the beneficence of the male child while staking the life of the female child is pathetic and takes to culmination the feeling of rejection felt by women in our society. So much for the educational policies framed out for the literacy of the women folk and the society as whole. Self-reliance attained by many women in almost all the fields. If such differentiation is done as in Mahesh Dattani’s Tara, all the declarations and proclamations are bound to go to the drain.

Patel and Bharati are educated parents and the step taken by them is lamentable. Bharati’s father, a resourceful person, is also considered to be one of the factors in this mishap but I should say that it is the ultimate decision of the parents which is effective in the life of their children. If Bharati had been led astray by her father’s high-handed decision, why didn’t Patel put his foot down and stand against their decision? Isn’t a father strong enough to fight any hurdle, no matter how strong it is, for the benefit of his siblings? I strongly condemn such parents and would refute the privilege of parenthood to such parents. The incompatibility, which comes between Patel and Bharati after this operation and its futility, tolls heavily on their later life which becomes full of bickering and showdowns.

Having proved wrong in her decision on the fateful ‘leg’, Bharati tries to shed her burden of guilt by showing maternal love and concern for her daughter and to assert her moral superiority over her husband. She also tries to expiate by the act of donating kidney to her daughter which was ultimately futile. Patel on the other hand has no compunction for being party to the wrong decision, thanks to gender patriarchy. He tries to accommodate his son Chandan and plans out his education and career for him.

At one point when Tara refuses to fill forms for college and Chandan does likewise, Patel wants Tara to comply not for her own sake but for the sake of her brother. Patel seems to have ruled out the pangs of guilt from his heart of complicity in the injustice done towards Tara and conveniently shifted it on the shoulders of Bharati’s and her father. Bharati’s at least tries
throughout her life to make up for the damage done. Tara being a girl has been taken for granted by Patel and all his expectation and dreams rested on Chandan whereas Chandan has been shown a boy of a different mentality. When he finally comes to know about the injustice done towards Tara by their parents and grandfather, he is filled with self-guilt and takes up the burden solely on his own shoulders so much so that he leaves India and escapes to London under the name of Dan. Even today, the girls, most of the time, have to submit to the desires of their parents to see their brothers comfortably settled. The sons may be less talented and less intelligent than their daughters, but parents prefer spending money on sons for they believe that the sons are such assets which would stay with them while the girls would go away to their in-laws. Therefore money spent on girls would prove an unnecessary drain on their purse.

Ours has been a patriarchal society where men have always enjoyed a privileged position. Dattani has cleverly exploited this aspect which still remains like a pockmark on the face of our society.

Tara was more enthusiastic and full of zest and spark of life. She had high aspirations which she could not accomplish because of her handicapped state while the boy was comfortably ensconced and had come to terms with his handicapped life. Why was then Tara denied the privilege of the good ‘leg’? It would have remained workable if attached to Tara’s body. Its severance not only made Tara handicapped but also endangered her life and consequently she died an early death. Why? Is it because she was a girl? Is being a girl in this society a curse? But do not upholders of the society realize the fact that without girls, and consequently women, society will untimely come to a standstill. As it is, the ratio of women compared to men is much less in our country. Why so much partiality and differentiation done to women in a country which has a rich heritage and where women are otherwise placed on a pedestal. This seems sheer mockery and nothing of substance.

Like men, women need space to breathe freely and flourish. Mahesh Dattani has tried to show this by bringing in Dr. Thakkar as a social element with the play. Doctors are thought to be messengers of God because the save lives on this earth. Sometimes, when ordinary women beings falter, it is the doctors who show them the right path. Female feticide has become very common of late. People have degraded themselves to such an extent that they kill the fetus of female child even before it takes shape in the uterus.
The government has taken a commendable step by putting ban on such an atrocious practice. Many doctors deny revealing to the parents the identity of the gender just to save the murder.

There is a newspaper article on 6th Feb, 2014 in Times of India regarding a doctor’s practice of giving a birth to daughters. This doctor does not charge for giving birth to girl child. If the parents are bestowed by baby girl he doesn’t take fee and even helps the parents to lessen the burden of medical facility to them.

Ahmedabad: Alpesh and Hetal Prajapati got married two years ago in Mehsana. A few months ago, Hetal delivered her first child at a private hospital. Surprisingly, Alpesh, a peon at Sardar Dairy, was waived off the Rs 30,000 fee for cesarean section delivery. Gynecologist Dr Tejas Prajapati told the couple that since the child was a girl, the delivery was free of charge — the money should be used for educating the daughter instead. “This was such a special gesture. Dr Prajapati not only did not charge for the C-section, he also gave all the medications gratis. We have saved Rs 35,000 which is a huge sum for us. I have put this amount in the name of my daughter Kavya,” says Alpesh.

Reeling under skewed child sex ratio of 886 girls per 1,000 boys and its social manifestations since the past decade, Gujarat is witnessing unique initiatives to encourage the birth of girl child. “I have been supporting mass marriages in the community to lighten the burden of parents of girls by donating Rs 25,000-50,000 annually. Many times, since many people donate, there is duplication of gift items. It is then that I thought I should do something different and substantial,” says Dr Prajapati, father of a girl. Saving girls is a burning issue in Mehsana which had recorded the lowest ratio of 801 in 2001 when the district recorded 842 girls. Patel and Chaudhary are the most affected communities with sex ratio as low as 750-800 per 1,000 boys. The Prajapati community fares a little better with 850-odd girls per 1,000 boys. “Two years since I launched this mission, I have delivered 30 children of Prajapati couples. Of these 15 were girls whose parents were not charged any fee,” says Dr Prajapati.
In Ahmedabad, the Victoria Jubilee Hospital in Kalupur has started gifting a silver coin to every girl child born in poor families to welcome them as Lakshmi. Women from deserving families who deliver second girl child are waived off charges. In Uttarsanda in Kheda, octogenarian Mohan Patel, an industrialist and philanthropist, gifts Rs 1,000 to each girl born in the 100-bed general hospital in the village.¹⁰⁴

Such doctors also exist in this world, who gives more importance to baby girl. And in this case, Dr. Thakkar is completely contrary. In this play, Dr. Thakkar belied his godly profession and led himself to be bribed by Bharati’s father into becoming an accomplice in the bizarre act of severing the leg. He should have up-held his profession by denouncing the decision at its inception whereas he in a way took Tara’s life by severing the leg. His wise decision could have given Tara a safe, secured and complete life. His cruelty not only thwarts Tara’s dreams but fills her life with dejection and depression. Her depression made her wish for death then unnecessarily spends money on herself. She also started hating all males including Chandan and Patel. One person she cared for was her mother. Her father’s attitude toward their mother filled her with distaste for her father and on one occasion she told Chandan that their father was denying her access to their mother. When Tara comes to know about the complicity of her father, mother and gather father denying her a full a happy life, she is devastated and Chandan is filled with self-gilt. He is ashamed of what is a parent and grandfather did to Tara. Both turn to each other for support and are shown clinging to each other at the end of the play.

Though this is a play about the injustices done to women, it is also a play about injustice to men such as Chandan. For no fault of his own, he is forced to lead a life of guilt. He could not forgive himself for the atrocity done towards his sister. He considers himself responsible for his sister’s death which resulted into his refuge in London. When his father informed him about his mother’s death, he refused to come back to India.

Identity crisis is strident in our society. Tara is sacrificed because she was a girl and had no right to have a better life than her brother. The idea of a complete girl-child and an incomplete male-child is so shocking that sacrifice of the girl-child is acceptable than a handicapped male-child. Then the revelation of the futility of the decision is taken with so much coolness that no compunction is shown towards the injustice done to the female-child.
Ours has always been a male-dominated society. The senior male member of the family had made the rules on which the decision has been taken. Even if there happened to be a female member who was elder to the male member, she was not given so much authority as the male. In case of Dattani’s Tara too, Bharati’s father who was senior-most of the three and a powerful and rich politician, was the person who determined about the operation in which the leg was to be given to Chandan instead of Tara. He went as far as bribing the doctor with sanction of land in Bangalore. Dr. Thakkar fell from his high station of land in Bangalore. Dr. Thakkar fell from his high station and without giving a second thought, along with his team, instead of taking a sound medical decision of leaving the leg with Tara, sold out his conscience for his ambitions and the temptation, to people, who had decided on the basis of gender and not on medical grounds.

Bharati’s father further strengthened his indulgence for male grandchild by leaving his property after his demise to Chandan and not a single penny to Tara. He has been a consistent upholder of values pertaining to males. Patel’s attitude has also been negative. He remained a mute observer of the whole affair isn’t it because he too subscribes to the ideology patriarchal world? He blames his wife and father-in-law for the damage but his complicity in the whole operation cannot be denied.

The fact that the male is always given the greater changes obvious from Patel’s planning for Chandan’s education and future career, Bharati started fawning over Tara because of her sense of guilt but Patel doesn’t seem to have cared much about it. It is more of gender patriarchy which dominates the play to underline which Dattani makes Dan apologies to Tara at the end of the play: ‘Forgive me Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy.’

Even in the world there are many complexities related to gender discrimination. In Times of India the problem of gender preferences is shown in an article dated, 5th Feb, 2014, by Radha Sharma.

Ahmedabad: Arman was not destined to be a boy. He has a micro-penis which does not even respond to testosterone hormone injections. This means that when he grows up, he will be impotent. Besides, he has female reproductive organs uterus and fallopian tubes. It is surgically easier to make him a girl. But his parents want him to be a boy.
“When we told Arman’s parents that it is better if female organs are retained and created, they flatly denied saying that they had brought up the child as a boy,” says head of the pediatric surgery department at Civil Hospital Dr Rakesh Joshi.

For scores of children with disorder of sex determination (DSD) in the state, parents’ gender of choice is male. Experts say majority of parents insist the child is surgically rendered a boy though it is easier to create functional female organs. Surgeons say while penis can be created, sexual function cannot be promised.

“Patriarchal mindset of the society is clearly reflected when 99% parents insist on their child with DSD being made a boy. A sexually incompetent boy is preferred over a girl as he may still help fulfill the need of an heir,” says Dr Joshi who has seen 25 cases of DSD so far. City hospitals receive around a dozen such cases a year. Says Rashida, mother of two-and-a-halfyear-old Shahbaz who has undergone reconstructive gender surgery, “It is better to have a boy than a girl.”

Senior pediatric surgeon Dr Aniruddha Shah says especially from north Gujarat and Rajasthan, families prefer a male child for inheritance purposes.

Urology surgeon Dr Hemang Baxi says parents refuse to listen to logic that the child may become a psychologically disturbed adult when he is not able to perform sexually. Plus he may wish it was better he was left to be a woman. Cases like Ahmedabad-based Simran are few where parents opt for a girl who may not be able to bear a child but would have a normal sex life. “Our daughter had predominant female organs. We agreed with doctors that she would lead a better life as a woman,” says Simran’s father.

After the injustice done, the deficiency id tried to be patched up by love. What we see is that love is an instrument, not an end or a state of being. Men are practical, strong and less emotional than women. Women, when subdued, resort to emotional weapons of which love is one. Bharati uses his love for Tara as a weapon against Patel as well as an expression for her desire to compensate
to Tara. Female-children are more sensitive than male-children. Tara is also taken up by her mother’s concern and indulgence of her; little did she know that her loving mother was an accomplice in destroying her dreams. Bharati’s unnecessary bullying of Roopa into friendship with Tara and trying to bribe her into spending more time with Tara is disgusting and de-meaning. Such acts, instead of easing the life of a handicapped child, further push them into the depth of darkness and decline. Can parental love be taken for granted? Can any love be taken for granted as a natural given? Such relationship puts in jeopardy the chances for individual growth and fulfillment.

The revelation of the skeleton in the cupboard is the typical method of a Dattani play. Here the skeleton points towards the gender issue. The whole set-up leads inexorably towards the revelation, and the characters are seen struggling to meet the imminent moment of crisis. Dattani’s novels have the quality of unearthing secures of the family life of the present day. Each individual is a social element and cannot escape the societal dictates and familial choice.

*Tara* is neither Chandan’s tragedy nor is it really Tara’s. The tragic events depicted in the play are the tragic action belonging to everyday life. It is Dattani’s world where the playwright picks up various characters from the society as puppets makes society the background and displayed to us the fiery issues of today. In this play, Dattani became a juggler and juggles with husband and wife relationship, doctor and patient relationship, son-in-law and father-in-law relationship, parents and children relationship, brother and sister relationship, with special focus on father-daughter, mother-daughter and grandfather-granddaughter relationship.

The gender crises which have given rise to identity crisis among our women folk is heart-rending when so much social propaganda along with prospective marathon undertaking to strengthen women’s progress has been proposed in the country’s agenda. Dattani has just made the effort to highlight one of the atrocities done towards a female and belie all the hue and cry for female emancipation and equality with men on all grounds.

In *Tara*, physical deficiency has been given too much weight. Tara has been shown helpless because she has a handicap and is consequently denied the privileges of life. But Tara could have made her deficiency, her strength and fight the society to etch a place of her own. She was a bubbly and energetic girl who had all the qualities as a normal girl. If she had been given moral
support by her parents, especially her father, she might have shown like a star as a star as her name justifies. Her father’s eager planning for her brother’s future and total ignorance towards her forced her to believe that she was incompetent for any productive work. In short, her life was a burden on this earth. This made her lose interest in life altogether. Further she refuses to go to physiotherapy or fill forms for college.

Through Dattani’s *Tara*, we come to know about the sincerity and inclination of a girl to prove her mettle in the world of male supremacy. As he name Tara rightfully suggests a star, the girl was a bright and shining star which was a source of cheerfulness and happiness of the family. A complete life could have done wonders and surely she would have scored the limits which her brother Chandan couldn’t have. Chandan did not have the fire in him which Tara had. The character Roopa has been included in the play by Dattani to show the futility of fullness in that girl. Shem thought normal, was offensive and comic. Her presence makes the reader feel the waste of fullness in her and bitterness of Tara’s deficiency. Tara has been depicted as a female character with potential while her brother was not enterprising at all but the father of the two was bent upon securing the future of the boy. Tara’s potentiality was sacrificed on the altar of gender. Identity crisis becomes a chain with which a female is fettered when the question of choice between male and a female arises.

Dattani has been successful in hitting the target by writing the play *Tara*. He has not only focused on the futility of capacities in the girl but has also tried to show the pathetic humiliation faced by a handicap through the incident when Tara had to expose her artificial leg to the three girls in her locality. Tara is hurt and her moment of deep hurt and resentment caused by the ‘normal’ would she wants to hear only Beethoven. She identifies herself with the musician with a disability who established his greatness in spite of being unable to hear his own creations.

Thus, Dattani’s target -gender-identity leading to identity crisis in women- has been deftly revealed in this play. Certain questions spring up in our minds such as: How are men and women constructed in terms of gender? What is the definition? What is manly? And what feminine? Why it should be so? Why can’t women go out in the world? Why should men be masterly and women subservient? Why can’t men and women be open about their sexuality? Dattani raises these and host of other questions regarding gender and social stratification and hierarchy and sexuality but has left them to be answered by us. We have to ponder over these issues.
Tara and Chandan in the eponymous play *Tara* are Siamese twins, surgically separated. During separation, Chandan was unethically favoured just because of happened to be a male baby and Tara was unnaturally deprived of what is naturally due to her. Tara’s mother Bharati along with her father influenced the doctor to fit the third leg of the twins to Chandan. But the third leg was receiving blood supply from Tara. However, Bharati and her father had separate coercive discussions with the doctor to perform the unethical surgery. Patel was silenced that the doctor had agreed to do the operation. As a result, the leg lost life after two days and had to be amputated rendering both Tara and Chandan one-legged. Had the surgery been performed according to the medical ethics, Tara would have had two legs and Chandan would have had one leg.

The character of Tara exemplifies the Indian mindset that prefers a male baby to a female baby and the subaltern position of a woman or a girl child in the Indian society. Bharati’s recurrent guilt associated with discrimination of Tara against Chandan makes her show excessive love for her. Tara is a victim of gender discrimination.

Dattani shows that it is unfair to prefer a male child to a female one. He reiterates that though such a preference is common, it is unfair and leads to problems. Dattani himself best substantiates the general contention that Tara is a play on gender discrimination. To Laksmi Subramanyam’s question,

“*Tara* is interpreted as focusing on gender discrimination against the girl child. Is this how your envisaged the play?” 106

Dattani answers:

“I see *Tara* as a play about the male self and female self. The male self being preferred (if one is to subscribe to conventional categories of masculine traits and feminine traits), in all cultures. *The play is about the separation of self and the resultant angst:* 107

Tara stands discriminated because she is a female baby. Carmen Kagal opines,
Our concern for Tara reflects the central issue of the play, that of discrimination against the girl child.  

Kanupriya also gives a fitting observation in this regard:

\[\textit{Dattani has just made the effort to highlight one of the atrocities done towards a female and belie all the hue and cry for female emancipation and equality with men on all grounds. The way they’re treated by a society that values men and male qualities more than women and female traits gives a striking twist to Dattani’s Tara.}\]

Mahesh Dattani maps the life of middle class urban India. Mahesh Dattanis plays mirror the aspirations and the frustrations, the conflicts and the compromises that characterize the contemporary middle class Indians life. The pain of forced separation (due to partition of the subcontinent) and its lingering ill effects that surface in periodic communal riots and in confusion in our notions of modernity and our attitudes to the family and community mark Indian social reality. If the division of a country can leave us with so much pain and misery sixty years after independence /partition of Indian, then perhaps we should not be surprised by the pain and loss that is caused with obtaining the independence of Siamese twins through their surgical separation. If the nation seems to have been inserted by the force here in this beginning of a reading of Mahesh Dattani’s Tara, then perhaps one must point out that the play seems to stage a large part of our nation particularly our attitude to gender. And escape still lies across the black waters. Out of and far from our national borders. The play is about our sense of community as much as it is about money, power and patriarchy and the basic unit of the nation, the family. Most of the action takes place in Bombay. Now Mumbai and in that very contestation of the names we can understand what Dattani sees as the dramatic division of our country. The plays sets forth for us the deep fissures and conflicts that we have learnt to live with, all our identity markers being obstacle Tara

Dattani adds disability to this list, in play along with the idea of the beauty, the personal aesthetic. Advances in science and technology are of no import because they are tainted by their human associations- our own prejudices and desires will dictate how we ours scientific progress
and how we use our technological advances. The good dramatist Dattani alerts us to the important of the motive in the drama of our lives.

While there may be many reading or entry points into Tara, one cannot deny that the primary theme that one sees is the way we Indians discriminate between male and female children. We are a country with a long history of female feticide and an equally long history of material discrimination against girl children and women in general. However Tara is also a play that talks about how Indian society deals with the people who are different, including those who are differently labeled. At one level it is about the objective inhumanity of science and the perverse uses to which it can be put. At another it is about our search for the unified self. At the most basic level, it is a play about what we do to each other and to ourselves in our relationship, our first community. These entire themes are signaled by careful setting of stage by Dattani.

The multi level set has at it lowest level of the house the Patels, the family (consisting of Patel and Bharati and their twin children Tara and Chandan) that play is all about. This level is “seen only in memory” while the next level is a realistic one representing a babysitter in London, where the older Chandan lives. It is his memory that unravels the action of the play for us. The highest level is given to Dr Thakkar who had carried out the surgical separation of the twins. He remains seated throughout the play. As Dattani says in the stage direction, “though he doesn’t watch the action of the play, his connection is asserted by his sheer god like presence”. Science is almost the ultimate arbiter in their lives, the one that gives and the one that takes away. Also like god Dr Thakkar is an interested audience who is implicated in the action that he watches unfold; he is both the moving force and the objective witness.

The play opens with Dan (the older Chandan) typing furiously, He informs us soon that he is attempting to write a play, which is like “touching a bare live wire”. Dattani wrote about cumulative themes of the societal norms.

The initial reaction of one of the stalwarts of Indian theatre was indeed based on keen understanding and sound judgment though it came soon after the first viewing of one of the earliest plays of this Bangalore based dramatist. This and Dattani’s subsequent plays are intended to carry on “with the business of holding a mirror upto society”.

Tara deals with the boons and banes of our modernity and urbanity juxtaposed against the traditional sexual and caste proscriptions that govern our social emotional and intellectual consciousness. Primarily, it is about prejudices against the female sex in a predominantly patriarchal society as also about the gendered self Dattani avers that man’s essential nature has both, male and female aspects to it. In order to prove his point, he chooses a curiously new path wherein he makes a medical improbability an artistic possibility. Chandan and tara and male and female conjoined twins. Dr. Thakkar explains that in a medical phenomena these twins from ‘different fertilized eggs’ have become conjoined whereas normally, conjoined twins are of the same sex, born such, when a fertilized egg fails to separate and develop completely.

The Patel twins are conjoined from the breast-bone downward through the pelvic area. However, their vital organs are partially independent each child has a separate heart by them, one each. Through a series of complicated surgeries, the twins are separated and rendered capable of independent physical and emotional existence. However, they are reproductively sterile and in having them such, Dattani cancels any notions of superiority of the boy over the girl child.

In a successfully separating the twins Dr. Thakkar has performed a medical feat that fills him with a sense of pride. Medically the boy’s lungs are weaker than those of the girl there is only one bladder and one rectum, both of which belong to the boy, the girl has to be provided with an artificial excretory system. Of extreme significance is the fact that three legs have to be divided between the twins the division favours the girl to whom the extra leg naturally belongs. However, Bharati their mother, along with her father, industrialist and an M.L.A. are able or bribe the doctor into letting the boy have to legs. Soon after the operation the boy’s body rejects what does not naturally belong to it and the leg has to be amputated. Thus, each twin has one natural leg and wears an artificial one. Dattani highlights the fact that has conjoined twins Tara and Chandan complement each other naturally and that had they not been separated, they would have performed certain essential functions as one individual.

*Tara* is a problem play which centres round the theme of gender discrimination and identity crisis of a girl child in a family. It shows how women have been the subject of persecution and
suffering right from the birth to death. The play tries to study the various aspects of human sensibilities which have become today the prime need of the hour.

Gender discrimination is one of the prominent themes in Indian Writing in English and in other Indian vernaculars. Dr. Amar Nath Prasad is of the opinion that Anita Desai, through her novel *Fasting, Feasting* shows how women have to lead a life of suffocation and undeserved sufferings – both physically and mentally in a male-dominated patriarchal framework; how life in such a callous family trundles on at a slow pace under the prying eyes of the parents; how a girl child craves for parental affection but in the end, gets nothing but frustration, isolation and unhomely treatment and, above all, how the neglected child slowly develops the horrible sense of trauma and other associated psychological diseases. Arundhati Roy, in her beautiful novel *The God of Small Things*, portrays the truthful picture of the plight of the women in society and their marathon struggle for seeking the sense of ‘identity’ in a male-dominated conservative framework. Vijay Tendulkar’s *Kamala* also deals with the problem of women being treated as a commodity in the modern world. He shows that his two female characters, Kamala and Sarita, are commodities that can be sold off. This play universalizes the predicament of women who are always subjected to a life of suffering and humiliations.

It is interesting to note that women have been the subject of perpetual tortures by male-dominating society. In our rich books and scriptures, sometimes women have been praised and admired in hyperbolic terms. Manu, the great Indian saint of the Hindu, writes in his famous book, *Manusmriti*, that where there is worship of woman, there the gods dwell. But in most of the cases women have been treated as weaker sex or flower vase or a bird caught in the cage of patriarchy.

It is the matter of sorrow that for a woman, life is always a challenge and since ages she has been subjected to the many challenges thrown by society, customs, traditions and men. In all over the world, tradition has assigned a lower position to women in its social set up. However important
the functions and duties of the woman are, she is always relegated to the back ground. And woman I so obliged to subordinate her interests and desires to the collective will of her community and in particular to the male members. Women are not considered as an equal gender but their position is reduced to an object. All male-members try to possess them and they cannot tolerate even a slide deviation in women's part.

Man considers it as normal male behavior to satisfy his desires at both the emotional and the physical level outside marriage while at the slightest hint of any deviation on her part which may not involve sex, man turns violent and hostile towards his wife and starts persecuting her.

It is the matter of deep regret that verbally we provide the supreme position to woman. But from the time immemorial woman has never been in a position to demand or at least expect this ideal state from her male counterpart who deliberately expects the qualities of an ideal wife-Sita, Savitri – from his female counterpart. From the olden days to the present period women have been constantly under the pressure of living up to these expectations. Though nothing much has been changed in the status of women till now. This is what Mahesh Dattani shows through his play Tara. He tells the fact that we are living in the world of democracy but about half of the population of the world are not given their common rights to lead a smooth life. Here his presentation of women is very near William Shakespeare who in his famous play, Othello, Presents a very truthful presentation of a woman and feminine sensibilities. Emilia, a woman character, flings irony of male-domination and argues the freedom of woman, saying:

“Let husbands know

Their wives have sense like them; they see and smell,

And have their palates both for sweet and sour

As husband have. What is it that they do

When they change us for others? Is it sport?

I think it is. And doth affection breed it?

I think it doth. Is’t frailty that thus errs?
Women are still denied that rightful place in the society. They are subject to humiliations which reduced them to as position inferior to men. The average woman has always led a life not better than that of a slave. At all the stages of life, right from the birth to the death, she has been in a subordinate position to man. She has never been recognized as an independent entity free to select a course of her life at her own choice. Her goodness has always been said to be associated with the goodness of the husband whose service alone has been recognized as a way for her deliverance. To a wife, the only God-worth worshipping is her husband regardless of the fact whether he treats her will or ill. The irony is that man is born of a woman and yet the latter is dominated by the former. Our ancient scriptures say that the position of woman is above all relationships in the world. But in reality she has been enslaved, degraded and subjected to various types of atrocities and tyrannies in the hands of man and the male-dominated society. Even the modern age has not brought liberation for her.

The gift of democracy has not been fully presented to women. It is very recently they have got the right to vote. Education that enlightens a human-being has always been regarded as the sole preserve of men. In the whole-life she suffers: as a daughter in the hands of her father; as a wife in the hands of her husband; as a mother for her children. NO one cares for her feelings and wishes. We forget the fact that woman’s tenderness represents the constructive side of Nature. Her delicacy and the sense of dedication and devotion, her readiness to submit to the bitterest of trials and tribulations, her promptness to help and co-operate, have always been a source of inspiration to all humanity. It is common proverb that ‘behind all great achievements of men, there has been an unmistakable contribution of women.’ But at all places she met discrimination in society. Contributions of women through the ages in different fields of human Endeavour belie Shakespeare’s dictum “Frailty, they name is woman.”
The above passages describe the miseries of women they face in this world. To raise the problems of women many authors have contributed through various genres-poetry, novel, drama, essay, article etc. Mahesh Dattani, who is an observer of society, raises such types of problem in his play *Tara*, perhaps, the most performed play of Dattani.

The most often performed play, I think, has to be “Tara”. It used to be “Twinkle Tara” but Alyque Padamsee suggested that this might make it sound like a children’s play, which it isn’t. It’s about young people but the issues are serious. It’s performed all over the place, in schools and colleges, amateur groups and repertories.

He is a ‘reluctant playwright’ who chooses to direct the first edition of his plays to whom he writes. He wrote *Tara* in 1990 and directed it. Although the title suggests that the play revolves round Tara, a female character in the play but it is not the final observation. In this play all the characters get their due place. Dattani observes the society and exposers the maladies of gender discrimination and related issues through the play.

The story of the play *Tara* is centered on the issue of gender discrimination. Dan who is now living in London remembers the story of his childhood. He is a Siamese twin. His third leg is joined by her sister Tara. She is a very intelligent, attractive and talkative girl. But her parents prefer Chandan, who is later on known as Dan. They plan to separate their children. They visit the doctor and know the fact that the third leg suits Tara. Bharati’s father, a big politician, uses his influence and anyhow persuades Dr. Thakkar for this operation. Under the influence of money the doctor becomes ready for this operation. He performs his job; but this unnatural act got natural justice and after two days the leg was separated.

After some time Tara’s kidney is damaged and Bharati tries to amend her mistake and becomes ready to donate her kidney. But Patel does not give her permission for this act. He even beats her. But at last Tara went to the place from where she had come. Dan who has experienced the whole actions recalls them and writes that he feels guilty for the act commented b his parents and so he makes an apology for this shameful act.
Dattani does not believe in setting a trend in society but he is a writer who sets the problem of society before the world and his audiences. He takes his subject the complicated dynamics of the modern urban family. In the play *Tara* he sets his play under the background of a middle class family in which a girl child suffers because she is not productive for the growth of a family. She wants to blossom in the family but is pruned by her own near and dear. She fades before becoming a flower.

Dattani is a genuine writer. He takes the theme that prevails in our society but the people do not want to confront them. He provides a platform for the issue, so that the people could aware of the fact that it is a reality and not just the fantasy of a playwright. In our society the women never get their due share although we always put them on the highest rung. In *Tara*, the dramatist puts the reality that Tara has no problem but it is male-dominated society that bars her to survive in the world. In this respect he is inspired by Ibsen who puts the problems of women before the world directly in his plays.

Dattani’s play can be said to have been inspired by Ibsen, the Father of Realism, Ibsen dealt with a number of social problems in his plays like *The pillars of Society*, which deals with women rights, *The Doll’s House*, which deals with an incompatible marriage and *The Enemy of the People* deals with political and municipal corruption.

In the same way Dattani handles every problem from gender issues to sexuality. In his play *Tara* he deals with the issue of gender discrimination. Simply it seems that *Tara* is a play of a girl that suffers under the traditional of the society. “It is a play which flings a very harsh and rugged satire on the male-dominating society that believes in of upgrading the male-child in place of a female one. It is a play about a boy and a girl who is joined together at the hip and has to be separate surgically, an operation which will mean the death of the one of the two. This injustice is perpetrated by their own mother whose preference is to the male child make the play more powerful. It suggests that it is woman who continues the chain of injustice. The play is very close of Shashi Deshpande’s *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) in which Saru’s mother does not get
reconciled to the birth of a daughter. Saru’s birth is accompanied by terrible rain; the mother perhaps sees the birth as a catastrophe”.

*Tara* is about a boy and a girl, Siamese twins, I have taken medical liberty over here because Siamese twins are invariably of the same sex and they are surgically separated at birth. It was important for their survival and the play deals with their emotional separation.

The Story of *Tara* is very simple absorbing deep meaning. The play opens with a scene in which Dan, changed name of Chandan, a playwright, recalling his childhood with his sister, a Siamese twin. He himself, like Dattani, and also seems the mouthpiece of Dattani, tries to distance himself from the experience which he has felt in his childhood. He prepares himself to express the incident truly.

Although Dan is living in London but he has all the memories of his childhood. He begins to write his story of past. Bharati has two children-Tara and Chandan, Siamese twins. They share third leg. Now time comes for surgery and the big question is with whom the third leg will be belonged to. All know that the third leg suits with Tara. It is not possible for anyone to operate and fit that with Chandan. Even Tara’s parents and her influential grandfather know the fact very well. It is clear that all the members of family were familiar that the third leg can survive only with Tara and not with Chandan. Even the second god on the earth, Dr. Thakkar knows the fact scientifically. But under the influence of money he becomes ready for this unethical operation. Tara’s grandfather persuades him to do the crime and instead of this act he will arrange ‘three acres of prime land’ in Bangalore. For this he will use his influence.

At last the doctor performs surgery and it is recognized that it has been an unequal, unfair operation. Bharati and her father with the collaboration with the doctor organize the whole act. They try their best to make the third leg suitable for the male issue. Even Dr. Thakkar knows that ‘it was complex case.’ But he tries to make the unnatural act possible on the basis of modern technology. But all these thoughts proved wrong and God rejected this heinous act and the second leg of Chandan is removed after two days.
She is born from the same womb from which Chandan is born. But in her whole of her life she never gets her due share. She never gets a chance to fulfill her desire. Her whole life is manipulated by his parents and grandfather. Even the second god shows his intention that he does not favour a girl child. He forgets his medical ethics. She is just like an object in a cosmos, whose orbits are determined by those around. But this forced harmony can remain for long only when one object does not disturb others.

It is very interesting that Tara is born in the society. But he society does not think that she is the other part of the same coin. A girl is not thought productive for a family as well as for society and *Tara* is doomed to oblivion. Tara’s parents use her for a male-child and doctor uses her for money and all where the looser is Tara whose only mistake is – she is a female. It shows that miserable condition of a female. Such act that stakes the life of the female child for the sake of the male child is pathetic. As Sangeeta Das writes:

“… The preference for the beneficence of the male child while staking the life of the female child is pathetic and takes to culmination the feeling of rejection felt by women in our society. So much for the educational policies framed but for the literacy of the women folk and the society as whole. After self-reliance attained by many women in almost all the field, if such differentiation is done as in Mahesh Dattani’s *Tara* all the declaration and proclamations are bound to go to the drain.” 110

Tara is a beautiful girl. In any respect she is not less intelligent than Chandan. When Tara and Chandan play, it is Tara who wins the game. Even Bharati accepts that ‘Tara is a very nice girl.’ She has many qualities that excel Chandan.

Tara is a cunning and talkative girl. When Roopa comes at her home and teases Chandan, he could not protect himself from her. But Tara teaches her lesson indirectly. She has many hidden
facts to which she knows for time-being. When Tara thinks that Roopa many humiliate her, she says indirectly: “So how does it feel having one tit smalle than the other?” At the statement Roopa is stunned and comes under very sarcastic situation. She criticizes Tara’s mother and leaves the place forever.

Bharati knows the talent of Tara but she never leaves her free to flourish in the world. Tara is a young girl who is very cute and comfortable in all circumstances. Her remarks are full of wit. But Bharati herself is not optimistic about the future of Tara. Thus the locus of Tara is described in this play. The cart driver of her emotions is shown beautifully. Oblique expression of female gender is pronounced by Dattani.
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