CHAPTER V
SUMMING UP

5.1 Observation on Sri Aurobindo’s Plays

Through the study of the five complete plays of Sri Aurobindo, the researcher comes to know that he is a thorough verse playwright. His plays deal with various themes and use different legends and tales taken from various countries. His use of romance and symbolism are more remarkable features. He completely controls the various aspects of dramatic art. His handling of diverse characters, vivid themes and different tales are evident in his craftsmanship. Sri Aurobindo has presented deep psychological insight into his characters. Through psychological aspects, he desires conscious and spiritual development, perfect evolution and self-realization with divinity in human beings. Sri Aurobindo has conceived that external action is not important but inner action is more vital. He specifically concentrates on man’s divinity, consciousness, spiritual evolution, self-realization and patriotism.

The present study and analysis of Aurobindo’s plays show his skill in the literary art. In each of his plays, Aurobindo has skillfully handled various themes and used different tales, romance and symbolism. He has successfully dramatized ancient Greek myth, ancient Indian tale, history of Iraq, Syria and Scandinavia, and made them relevant to the contemporary times. He has also designed various dramatic devices and reconstructed all plays on the Elizabethan model. His dramatic world is varied and he presents different personages, different stages of life and various aspects of nature and disposition. Aurobindo’s plays contain all relevant aspects such as plot, characterization, dialogue and dramatic devices. For plot, Aurobindo goes to myth, legends, tales and history. Because of his eloquence and diversity, his plays get a distinctive place among Indian verse plays.
Aurobindo’s purpose of writing is to create moral, social, political, spiritual and patriotic awareness in the contemporary fellowmen. At the time of writing of these plays India was under turmoil. She was crying for deliverance and peace. Aurobindo had observed and experienced this turmoil and he chose to light the patriotic kindle of nationalistic feelings amongst his fellowmen through playwriting. He was a voracious reader who could easily select such tales and adapt them to suit his purpose of spreading spiritual, moral and patriotic feelings.

He dramatized the Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda in Perseus the Deliverer to kindle the fire of patriotism and cherish love, morality, humanity and peace. It developed a moral and evolutionary consciousness. By using the Indian legend of Vasavadutta and Vuthsa in Vasavadutta, Aurobindo gives the important message of love. It is only through love that human heart can be won. Love helps establish peace and harmony.

The history of Syrian War is altered and adapted in Rodogune to dramatize the role of fate in the life of every character. Because of love, faith and fate the most ambitious and proud woman gets transformed into a ruthless one. In the same play the playwright dramatizes Syrian history in order to create a sense of social reformation among the contemporary world.

The historical story of Iraq in The Viziers of Bassora reveals the importance of morality, ethics, religion and familial values. All these are great aspects of Eastern culture which are very valuable for cultivation of good and moral generations. Without familial values man cannot understand the importance of love and faith in life.

The historical story of Scandinavia in Eric points out the value of democracy and unity among the people. The playwright proves that love always gets victory over
conspiracy, pride and hate. Each play of Aurobindo is most useful and important for everyone to know that love unites people and unity creates patriotism and peace. This is how Aurobindo has used different tales, legends and history in his plays and ignited patriotism in order to free India from the shackles of British rulers.

Aurobindo has very effectively presented intensive romance by experimenting with the Elizabethan dramatic model. He interweaves adventurous and beautiful romance between the Greek hero Perseus and heroine Andromeda. The playwright has very effectively romanticized the tale of Vuthsa and Vasavadutta through their intense love and physical longing. He has also reconstructed tragic romance between Syrian Antiochus and Rodogune. In this tragic romance, the haunting beauty of the female protagonist becomes the cause of tragedy. But through this tragic romance, the playwright has focused on the power of divine love. The romance between Nureddene and Anice-Aljalic presents social equality. In this romantic play, the hero belongs to aristocratic family and the heroine belongs to a downtrodden caste. In the same play, the playwright has described nature and its beauty of flowers and gardens to enhance the beauty of romance. The romance between the Scandinavian hero Eric and heroine Aslaug presents platonic love. It is only love which creates evolutionary consciousness, morality and spiritual power. Love is the only means to bind heart, humanity and harmony.

Sri Aurobindo’s plays are a great contribution to Indian English literature because of his vision of patriotism, spiritualism, consciousness and humanity. He was aware that such things are best conveyed through symbolism. Symbolism plays a vital role in conveying uncommon thoughts and experiences. Symbolic theme, symbolic characters and symbolic words simply convey and suggest the philosophy of love. His use of symbolism enriches his dramatic works and manifests patriotism, spiritualism,
consciousness and humanity. His symbolism is a cultivation of the spiritual heritage and culture of the East and the West. With symbolism, Sri Aurobindo has constructed myth and legends with new meanings and infused them in Indian Classical literature. Except *Rodogune* his every play has a happy ending which is a typical element of the Indian Classical drama. Aurobindo’s *Perseus the Deliverer* symbolizes the contemporary condition of captivated India and the position of its leaders. Andromeda’s being chained to the rocks symbolizes captivity of India. Perseus symbolizes deliverer who leads people to the goal of deliverance. This symbolic play created deep awareness in the contemporary fellowmen about the captivity of the nation. The playwright desired to raise these fellowmen from slavish mentality and ignite patriotic fire in them.

*Vasavadutta* symbolizes the power of divine love which creates morality and consciousness. Through dramatic romance between Vuthsa and Vasavadutta, the playwright has framed the idea of evolutionary consciousness and the power of divine love. It shows man’s ascent from lower to higher point of psychic consciousness. Vuthsa symbolizes man of faith, heart and sense whereas Vasavadutta symbolizes woman of pride, ego and mind craft. But Vuthsa defeats her ego, pride and beauty and his power of love transforms her and she becomes conscious about love, harmony and peace. The marriage of Vuthsa and Vasavadutta symbolizes unification of heart and mind.

*Rodogune* symbolizes loyalty, beauty, divinity and love. She is captivated by Cleopatra. Her waiting for freedom symbolizes the waiting of India for freedom from the British rule. Queen Cleopatra and Antiochus symbolize passion and selfishness, but the divine love of Rodogune transcends them from darkness to light.
The Viziers of Bassora symbolizes two opposite personalities; one is good and the other is evil. But the good personality possesses faith and surrenders to the Will of God. Because of these qualities good always gains victory over evil. It is true that evil leads to suffering, while good leads to peace and harmony.

Eric symbolizes seeker for peace, harmony and national unity. This play shows the most psychological transformation. King Eric possesses worldly power, but he looks beyond his power and desire to establish peace and unity. By using his high consciousness and divine power of love, he brings about a psychological transformation in all proud and egoistic characters, and convinces them that only love can unite and establish peace and harmony.

The remarkable feature of Sri Aurobindo’s plays is that he has handled different varieties of themes. Each play thematically concerns to the contemporary condition of India as existed in the days of Aurobindo. Along with the theme of love, evolution, faith and fate, he has constituted the theme of deliverance. It may be considered that love is the most important theme in all his plays. Aurobindo believes that love is a great force or divine power. It burns all evils in human nature such as ego, pride, jealousy, selfishness, hate and enhances spiritual power, humanity, peace, unity and harmony. Actually, love begins at the physical level in all his plays. Love between Perseus and Andromeda, Vuthsa and Vasavadutta, Antiochus and Rodogune, Nureddene and AniceAljalice, Eric and Aslauge is the result of their beautiful personalities and fair physical appearance. But divine love transcends the limits of physical beauty and reaches the pure heart. It develops something pure, higher and deeper than physical thirst. Love transforms passions into immortal spirit. When love attains higher level the physical passions fade away and a single soul unites two
bodies. Such is the unique power of love that liberates a person from slavery of passions, shackles of ignorance and all evils.

Evolution is the dominant theme in the plays of Sri Aurobindo through which he manifests the true consciousness in human beings. Because of the evolutionary theme, Aurobindo’s every play ends with harmony, peace and happiness. In fact, all his plays start with disharmony, conflict, confusion and tension. Conflict results in evolutionary changes that create consciousness. *Perseus the Deliverer* begins with storm and red memory of blood. But the dark world of Poseidon is replaced by brightness of Athene. The dark cult of violence gives place to new bright ideas of humanism. *Vasavadutta* opens with disharmony and craftiness of Mahasegn. But it ends with the marriage of Vuthsa and Vasavadutta which symbolizes harmony, peace and humanity. *Rodogune* is filled with selfishness, passions and violence. But all these evils are transcended over into consciousness. Queen Cleopatra and Antiochus transcend from darkness to brightness. In the beginning of *The Viziers of Bassora*, Alzayni and his evil minded vizier Almuene have created disorder, violence and disharmony. But at the end of the play, darkness is overcome by Nureddene who establishes peace and harmony. In *Eric* Aslaug and Swegn give up their evil design and accept the power of love. They believe that only love unites hearts and humanity. In all his plays, Sri Aurobindo firmly concentrates on man’s conscious evolution. Man is the centre of consciousness and his transformation moves from the lower to higher consciousness. This is how the playwright focuses on man as an evolutionary animal.

Sri Aurobindo personally believes in God’s power – His mercy, His law, His will and His justice. Based on this he very effectively interweaves his idea of faith and fate in all his plays. He advocates victory of good over evil and the importance of faith in God. Man suffers because of his ignorance as he fails to realize the divine power. But
faith works to help him realize himself and divinity. But this process of transformation works through fate. Fate is another dimension of faith. Initially all characters ignore it but later on they realize the power of divinity and fate. They realize that divine power and fate are most important in keeping peace and happiness in life. Love, faith and fate play a very important role in the evolution of consciousness of human beings. They work to help man’s evolution from ignorance to enlightenment and from unconsciousness to consciousness.

The theme of deliverance is an integral part of his plays. It is a striking feature of his plays because of the playwright’s personal interest in the freedom of his captivated nation. He is a great seeker of India’s freedom. His mind was pre-occupied with the thought of freedom of India. He knew that slavery was a big obstacle in the way of the Nation’s progress. His plays depict such scenes in which the characters struggle for freedom from the clutches of tyrannical rulers. Often times they sacrifice their lives for it. This is how patriotism and deliverance are the dominant themes that prevail in his plays.

Sri Aurobindo pays close attention and follows all canons in the use of dramatic devices. Each play contains a main plot and sub-plots. All his plays have the plot which comprises of Exposition, Complication, Climax, Denouement and Solution/Catastrophe. His proper selection of incidents and situations are appropriate to plot construction. Aurobindo introduces various sub-plots which do not disturb the unity of action. The plot unites actions and incidents. The playwright has thoroughly concentrated on characterization and his characters exhibit great dramatic quality. He has interwoven flat characters and round characters. The prominent characters are endowed with the reality of life and distinguishing qualities. He has developed minor characters according to the need of action, and avoided excess characterization. He
has made perfect fusion of characters and plot. He has used dramatic devices which are comprehensive and which lend proper meaning to the plays. Along with parallelism, contrast, irony, music, song and humour, the playwright uses description, narration and reporting for the presentation of beauty of nature. By using such dramatic devices and the verse medium he has substantially contributed to Indian English literature.

5.2 Aurobindo’s Contribution to Indian Drama

The present study of the plays of Sri Aurobindo establishes the fact that he has given a new spirit to Indian English Drama. He is one of the major Indian writers who wrote directly in English during the nineteenth and twentieth century. He has been widely recognized as a man of letters. As a dramatist his knowledge of theatrical performances has enabled him to experiment innovatively. His poetic plays follow the Elizabethan model but he never makes slavish imitation. He has employed his own dramatic equipment along with his knowledge of English and Indian Classical literature for writing plays. Aurobindo interweaves features of Indian Classical drama, his ideas of evolution, divine power of love, spiritualism and patriotism and gives a new moral direction to his plays. His verse plays become something novel in Indian English Drama.

Aurobindo’s contribution to Indian English drama lies in his use of ancient tales, romance, symbolism, various themes, dramatic devices and country wise situation. He has examined myth, legend and history with a fresh insight and reconstructed them to suit the contemporary situation. He takes liberty with regards the sequence of events, names of characters and qualities related with legendary and historical figures. His aim of writing is not to gain reputation as a successful writer for the stage. But he wants interpretative vision in his plays and hence psychological evolution rather than
physical action. Aurobindo knew that external action is not important but inner action is more vital. So he revealed his philosophy of life, patriotic inspiration and spiritual experience through his writing and created unique and universal verse plays.

5.3 Scope for further research

It is not at all claimed that the present research is a complete study of Aurobindo’s plays and his dramatic world. Each verse play attracts the attention of researchers. All plays contain different aspects, various themes, dramatic devices and plot construction. The study of his plays in the light of language and style would be an interesting area for further research work and critical inquiry.