CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contemporary Indian Dramatists:

India has the longest and the richest tradition in drama. The origin of Indian drama can be traced back to the Vedic Period. As a manifestation of our national sensibility Indian drama came into existence as a means of exploring and communicating the truth of things and was popularly known as the “Fifth Veda.”

During the age of the Vedic Aryans, drama was performed in a simple way. Different episodes from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavad-Gita* were enacted out in front of people. Such type of performance is still very popular in India during the time of ‘dussehra.’ Bharata’s *Natyashastra* in Sanskrit is the most pioneering work on Indian dance and drama. It discusses deftly all major aspects of drama, namely stage-setting, music, plot construction, characterization, dialogue and acting.

Sanskrit drama flourished in its glory till the fifteenth century but thereafter Indian drama activity almost came to an end due to certain invasion on India. When Britishers came in India, the crippled Indian drama regained its strength. Thus, the western impact awakened Indian drama. However, K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar writes:

Western education was as yet carrying all before it. It was the ‘open sesame’ to knowledge, freedom, power; it cut the old bonds of convention and tradition; it let in light into the old dark rooms of an obscurantist faith; and it made a new world and a new life possible for its beneficiaries.¹

In 1920, a new drama in almost all the Indian languages came to the fore. It was a drama largely influenced by prevailing movements like Marxism, Psychoanalysis, symbolism, and surrealism for certain reasons and difficulties the growth of Indian English drama has not been able to keep pace with that of poetry and fiction. Many literary giants like Ravindernath Tagore, Shri Aurbindo, and Bharathi Sarabhai tried to overcome these difficulties and opened up new vistas in
the genre. These dramatists of the pre-independence period, despite the poetic excellence, thematic variety, technical competence and symbolic and moral significance of their works, did not give enough weightage to the acceptability and ‘stage-worthiness’ of their plays.

Indian drama got a new footing when Kendriya Natak Sangeet Akademi was started in January 1953, National school of drama set up Sangeet Natak Akadmi in 1959, was another development. In the 1960s by suitable mixing of various styles and techniques from Sanskrit western theatre, the modern Indian theatre was given a new, versatile, and broader approach at every level of creativity; the year 1972, was a landmark year for Indian theatre. Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad have contributed to the modernization of the face of the Indian theatre, these playwrights have made bold innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both thematic concerns and technical virtuosities. They used legends, folkelores, myths, history with splendid results. They broke the barrier of regional works at national level languages and produced many good works at national level. They do, however, represent Indian drama at national level for they dramatized universal aspects of human life in India.

**Asif Currimbhoy** (1928-1994) is perhaps the most prolific of the living Indian English playwright. Since 1959, he has written at least one full length play a year, making a total of about thirty plays. His plays, *Inquilab* (1970) and *Sonar Bangla* (1972) have a considerable theatrical impact of contemporary political events. His *Goa* (1970), the most widely staged play, enacts the last stages of a dying colonialism through symbolic characters embodying historical and social forces. One of the central characters is Senhora Maria Miranda who has not only accepted the colonial idealization of the mother country, but has also internalized the self-disgust reflected in White Colonialism. In other words, it is an allegorical love story takes for its theme the union of the Indians and the Portuguese only to be hastily destroyed by internal conflicts.

Currimbhoy portrays the social and religious conflicts existing in India which appear to be irresolute leaving the people hungry and suffering, yet smiling through the agony and seeing a ray of hope in the future. *The Hungry Ones* (1965) portrays the dramatist’s compassion and his deeply embedded feelings for the suffering motherland India. His characters are modern in their realization that no one is free in this world, every human being is in chains, in captivity of some external force or the other which could be family, society, country, religion.

**Mohan Rakesh** (1925-1972) wrote his first play *Ashadh ka ek din* (One Day in Ashadh) in 1958 which is now translated into English. During this period no dramatist could attain the
heights that Rakesh scaled so easily. In 1959 he bagged the first prize of the *Sangeet Natak Academy* with his very first play. In his lifetime Rakesh published three full length plays, *Ashadh ka ek din* (1958), *Lehron ke rajhans* (1963) and *Aadhe-adhure* (1969) which are translated into English. He also wrote some one-act plays, *dhwaninatya* (audio play), *Beejantya* (seed play) and radio plays, *Ande ke chhilke*, and *Raat beetne tak*. One play, *Pair tale ki zameen*, he left unfinished which was later completed by his close associate Kamleshwar.

Rakesh’s first play *Ashadh ka ek din* (*One Day in Ashadh*), 1958, a historical play, based on the life of the renowned Sanskrit poet Kalidasa is about his first love, Mallika—a moving portrayal of the destiny of a simple rustic girl who loves the poet intensely and dreams of his greatness. Her dream is realized but she has to sacrifice all that is valuable in her life. For her Kalidasa is her total existence but for Kalidasa she is only his inspiration. This juxtaposition between self love and total surrender of being in man-woman relationships is explored in the play. The play is also concerned with conflicts between art and love, creativity and environment, feeling and action, and artist and the state.

*Lehron ke rajhans* (*The Great Swans of the Waves*), 1963, also reflects the modern world but on an altogether different level. The problem here is regarding the relations between man and woman, the clash of their egos, divided personalities and the inability to communicate with each other. What stands out in this play is the loneliness of the individual, internal conflict, the pain of not being able to communicate. The inability to mould oneself according to the desires of the other even when one would like to do so, the insistence on treating one’s own ego and desires as all important instead of surrendering and compromising are modern, twentieth century modes.

*Aadhe-adhure* (*Halfway House*), published in 1969, also deals with the clash between the egos of man and woman, the tension, suffocation, and the disintegration of such a relationship, but on an entirely different scale. In this play, it is not only the bond between husband and wife, which seems to be breaking, but the whole family, is heading towards total disintegration. For the first time in this play Rakesh has placed man in a modern setting to deal with modern problems. The theme, here too, is of a breakdown in relation but in a different manner and on an entirely different level. Such a dispassionate, ruthless portrayal of our lives and our problems in a modern context is indeed rare. *Aadhe-adhure* is Rakesh’s best literary work. It is also regarded as one of the best dramatic literary works in Hindi theatre and an important landmark in Indian theatre.
Pair tale ki zameen (soil beneath the sole), too, was written keeping in mind the disruption, listlessness and suffocation of modern life. This play basically leans towards existentialism. The setting is not domestic but a tourist club in Kashmir. The characters are not related. Fate has brought them together for one day. Suddenly, a fearful flood begins to chip away the bridge that links the club to the city and the characters are cut off from the rest of the world. The changed psychological condition of these characters, overshadowed as they are by the possibility of sudden death, has been finely drawn and analyzed by Rakesh. A few hours later arrives the news of the receding waters, the telephone begins to ring and their safety assured, everyone returns to normally.

However, the contribution of Mohan Rakesh to the growth and development of Indian English Drama is undeniable for it is the creative effort of all regional writers producing plays in their respective languages that has enriched Indian Drama.

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008), a leading playwright, is fundamentally a social commentator. During his several observations of the post-independence Indian social setup as a journalist Tendulkar felt deeply concerned about the predicament of certain sections of society especially the marginal position granted to women. Though never claiming to be a champion of women liberation, yet he found that male’s suppression and exploitation and an uncalled for violence against women. In the Indian society, Tendulkar observes, that woman suffers largely as the victim of the institutional body of powers. Often there is a collision between the two i.e., women and society sparking off violence. In majority of his plays, Tendulkar appears preoccupied with the view that the woman as a victim subjected to violence whether physical or emotional because she is traditionally deprived of rights.

Tendulkar’s Kamala (1981), a play in two acts, projects the deplorable state of women who are treated as mere objects to be bartered, bought and sold. Jaisingh Jadhav, a well-known young journalist working as an associate editor in an English language daily, deciding to expose this racket, buys a woman named Kamala for a paltry sum of Rs. 250 in the Luhardagga Bazaar in Bihar. He is troubled by this bargain for he believes that even a bullock costs more than that. Jaisingh wants to take Kamala to the press conference to prove his point. Vijay Tendulkar, in this play, has dealt with the tragic event or issue of woman who suffers unnecessarily due to male dominance.
In *Kanyadan* (1983) Tendulkar presents the deep rooted malaise which the dramatist perceived in everyday life. The play won him the *Saraswati Samman* award. In this play, Jyoti, the 20-year-old daughter of Devalikar, an MLC decides to marry Arun Athavali, a boy coming from the lower stratum of society. While the father has no objection, her mother and brother are against the alliance. Jyoti has her way marrying Arun in spite of all opposition. The truth of the situation emerges soon when Arun proves to be a violent husband. Jyoti’s marital and social experiences teach her that it is almost impossible to change either people or society. The greater dismay for her is that she fails to bridge the gap between her section of society and that of Arun’s. The attitude of Arun in the play exhibits the misuse of power and violence. He thought that as a husband he had complete control over his wife—body and mind both. In no case was he prepared to compromise with the independence of Jyoti. In this way Tendulkar was able to maintain a semblance of reality right through his creative productions because, as he admitted, behind the creation of each character or incident was a real-life character of situation.

Vijay Tendulkar composed his first direct play in English entitled *His Fifth Woman* which has been regarded as a sequel to his earlier play *Sakharam Binder* and deals with the problem of woman. The play was performed in the Tendulkar Festival held in New York in 2004. The play portrays two friends in conversation with each other sitting near the mistress of one of them lying on her death bed, a destitute picked up from the streets. One of the friends often provides food and shelter to such woman, exploits them physically being careful at the same time not to get emotionally involved. Dawood, the other friend has a sympathetic attitude towards these destitute women and perceives them as persons having desires and capabilities and when the mistress dies, he requests the bereaved friend to arrange for a decent cremation eventually succeeding in this enterprise. In an apparently simple play, the message conveyed focuses on the fact that those claiming to uphold the law strictly are in reality tyrannical hypocrites. Real justice results out of compassion and love and not from hypocrisy, autocracy and selfishness.

Tendulkar’s *His Fifth Woman*, though written many years after the play *Sakharam Binder*, may be considered as a prelude to the later. The man giving shelter to the destitute women is called Sakharam Binder, a man in his forties and these helpless women are projected as the live-in mistresses of Sakharam who is a bachelor. The dramatist raises some relevant questions on the issue of morality and necessity of compassion through the play.
Mahesh Dattani is India’s first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his contribution to world drama. Familial relationships attracted him the most. His *Where There is a Will* (1988) discusses the negative love of a father for his son. The enigma of generation gap constitutes the crux of *Dance Like a Man* (1989) where Jairaj takes to dancing and marrying a dancer against his father’s inclination. The familial conflict continues till the death of the father enabling Jairaj to relegate each item from the ancestral house that reminds him of his father. In addition a hint is given about the prejudicial attitude of society against a male dancer discussing, at the same time, the plight of temple dancers. Family relationships tend to be prominently displayed again in *Do the Needful* (1997) where a suitable bride is being sought for Alpesh, a thirty plus homosexual divorcee while twenty-four year old Lata deeply in love with a Muslim terrorist elopes with him.

Mahesh Dattani’s play *Tara* (1990) portrays characters that suffer from repressed desires, bondage to unreasonable traditions and very often are victims of cultural construct of gender. In *Tara* Mahesh Dattani delves deep into the mind of such characters laying stress on their fractured psyche especially when they are living in an equally fragmented social set up. The play *Tara* revolves around the physical and later the emotional separation of two conjoined twins, Tara and Chandan. The surgical operation is manipulated by Bharati, the mother and the maternal grandfather as to favour the son, Chandan. The twins had three legs between them with the major supply in the girl’s side. However, as tradition required, it was essential for the boy to survive with two legs. Surgically the twins are separated in such a manner that Chandan has two legs while Tara remains with one leg though fate had its own plans and Chandan’s leg was not accepted by his body resulting in amputation. Perhaps it would have suited Tara’s body better. Consequently, both Tara and Chandan have one artificial leg each. Later several physical complications arise leading to the early demise of Tara. Tara is not merely an individual character but emerges as an archetype, an icon of the Indian girl child who is subdued in the mill of tradition.

Dattani’s plays have been acclaimed widely for their social realism more so because he brings out the plight of the subaltern woman who is no better than a second grade citizen in her own country. Another play concentrating upon woman as the second or lower position in the society is *Bravely fought the Queen*, first produced in 1991 in Mumbai focuses on an Indian family comprising of two brothers, Jiten and Nitin who are married to two sisters, Dolly and
Alka. And Baa, the aging mother of the two bothers. Jiten and Nitin are joint owners of an advertising agency. The father of Jiten and Nitin was a cruel man often harassing their mother. Incidents of cruelty on her are referred to time and again in the play. Baa sees the same kind of cruelty in her older son Jiten hence she likes Nitin more. Dattani, through the various characters in the play brings to the forefront certain issues like domestic violence, deceit, desire and fantasy. Through his plays, Mahesh Dattani succeeds in persuading the audience/readers to examine their individual and collective consciousness raising several questions about woman’s condition in Indian society.

**Badal Sircar** a great Bengali playwright, is among the three great contemporary writers- Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar and Mohan Rakesh. Badal Sircar delves deep into the problems of middle-class society. He uses contemporary situations to project the existential attitude of modern life. Popularly known as a ‘barefoot playwright’ Badal Sircar stands in the forefront of new theatrical movement in India. He has created a genuine people’s theatre known as Third Theatre, a theatre supported people. His later plays, *Procession* (1972), *Bhoma* (1974) and *State News* (1979) are based on the concept of the Third Theatre.

Badal Sircar’s three plays present philosophy and vision of making people aware of their social responsibility. He makes the theatre a medium of conveying individual responsibility of the people towards the society. Sircar’s *Procession* is about the search for a real home- a new society based on equality. It is about a new society where man does not have to live by exploiting man and in which each works according to his ability and gets according to his needs. These plays show Sircar’s deeper understanding of the problems of the nuclear age and of poverty, corruption, greed and the industrial and agricultural exploitation of the poor. Veena Noble Dass writes in praising words for Badal Sircar:

> If there is any play-wright in the contemporary Bengali theatre who is capable of creating a genuine people’s theatre a theatre supported and created by the people and not merely performed by the people, it is Badal Sircar.

**1.1.1 Image of Woman in Indian Society:**
The concept of Indian womanhood is based upon the mythic models from the *Ramayana* and the *Purans*. The whole image of the Indian woman has been personified by the character sketches of Sita and Savitri. Following the pattern of these ethical models, a woman can be justified as the earth mother, a silent sufferer and forbearance personified.

In Indian society women are supposed to decorate their personality with the echoing features of these ethical symbols, and they seem to be incarnating the virtues of devotion and dedication as the essential features of their personality. They patiently play the role of earth mother and of the protector. The primordial myths of womanhood established by these legends have carried out an unshakable implication of woman’s image in life and literature for centuries. However, going back to the Vedic age, women were enjoying the extra-ordinary position and honour. In Vedic age women were elevated to the height of a Goddess, and it has been accepted perception that a high idea of womanhood prevailed in Vedic India. But in the medieval age women seem to be despised and condemned to lower status in the society. From the glorified past to the diplomatic present, the position of women mostly belongs to the second category of the society. It is determined the complete surrender of females to male-dominated society. The mute acceptation of the norms made by the men is considered the most appreciative quality of a woman, who is expected to represent Sita and Savitri in her every step moving ahead towards life. In other words, under the impression of these legendary symbols, woman has no right to establish her individuality; rather her existence finds its shelter under the shadow of her male’s personality.

But modern concept of womanhood is altogether changed. Present order of civilization envisages a society where the women enjoy a higher status. The influence of feminist movement during the 19th century made deep impact on the status of woman. The process has been slow yet the women’s liberation movement has strengthened the upliftment of women in the Indian society. As a result the women have begun stepping out of the traditional boundaries. Breaking the traditional image of womanhood, they are succeeding to reveal a very different image projecting it as a motivating primal source- ‘Shakti’, which protects good and destroys evil. In the modern age, new phase identifies a woman as the director and moulder of the society. Now women are ready to rebel against all the vices responsible for their unjust exploitation, inflecting their place and honour in the Indian society. Today they are confident enough to wage a war against the social system which is adopting a diplomatic approach towards the equality of rights.
for men and women. This is a very satisfying picture considering the social need of man-woman equality for betterment of the society.

1.1.2 Image of Woman in Indian English Drama:

Many Indian dramatists projecting the rebellious image of women and breaking the barriers of age old image seem to be slowly blurring and gradually shedding of into a new image. This rebellious face of women has to be understood with a great care under the impression of moral and social codes and values. The modern concept of womanhood seems to take its origin with Ravindranath Tagore. A frequent emergence of women in all his literary work and notice them making a triumphant entry in the map of Indian-English literature.

Ravindranath Tagore, the creative genius of the Indian renaissance and the maker of modern Indian literature, strongly rejects the submissive role of women. Rather he feels the undeniable presence of women in the male-dominating society, and their significant role in the life of men. Tagore’s women boldly come forward to maintain their individuality and do not hesitate even to fight for their equal rights and position in the society. Chitra, Sumitra, Nandini, Aparna and Malini are all his female characters who seem to be breaking the age old tradition of womanhood, enrolling themselves in different backgrounds. These well-educated and thoroughly aware women characters employed by the writer are not ready to accept the inferior moral and social codes formed by the decadent society. They with their womanly grace and unchallenged potential are ready to affirm their dynamic participation in every walk of life. To represent varied facets of womanhood, Tagore has employed them in every form of womanhood as a mother, a wife, a beloved, daughter, a sister and above all a complete woman. To carry out the complete image of true womanhood, Tagore probes deep into the heart of women and lays bare their innermost emotions skillfully.

Tagore has implemented his idea of womanhood as ‘Shakti’, the living symbol of divine energy, whose inner shrine is in the subconscious depth and outer manifestation in sweetness of service, simplicity of self-dedication and silent heroism in daily sacrifices. His vast range embraces the women who symbolize humanity, love, sacrifice, determination, self-confidence and sublime beauty. Tagore has glorified woman as heroically patient as mother earth, undergoing untold sufferings and mutely justifying the traditional image of womanhood on the one hand and boldly establishes their opposition in terms of equality of rights and position in the
society on the other hand. Tagore’s women characters refuse to follow the diplomatic approach of society, which on the one side positions woman equal to the Goddess, ‘The Supernatural Power’, leading the whole occurrence; and on the other side seems to be putting the hard boundaries to limit their essential rights and considered position in the male-dominating society. They gracefully implement all the faces of womanhood in them and not only dedicatedly play the role of a mother, sister, wife and the beloved, but also seem to be asserting their individuality as a human being, participating skillfully in the functions of the society.

Sumitra, the queen, in the play *The King and the Queen*, symbolizes Tagore’s ideal of modern and dynamic woman. The king Vikram, for the sake of personal favours, neglects his duties towards his kingship, while Sumitra is sensible enough to realize the distinction between the personal affairs and the responsibilities of a human being. For the sake of society and to justify the multidimensional role of a woman Sumitra, refuses to dwindle between a mere mistress and a wife but is ready to wear the responsibilities of a queen mother.

Chitra is Tagore’s another attempt to justify the role of a woman, not only as a beautiful agent of nature but also as an interpreter of truth. This play is the first clear exposition of feminism in India by Tagore. Chitra is not a silent sufferer rather she knows well how to meet out her desires. She is an example of modern Indian woman, who dauntlessly denies from being a puppet in the hands of man-made destiny. She forcefully carries out the abilities of a creator and moulder of her own destiny. Chitra seems to be a representative of post-modern Indian woman, who wants to create the society aware of the beginning of woman and asks for her rights and position in the society as a complementary to man. She represents the every day life and matters of an Indian woman. Chitra declares that both man and woman have been awarded with same qualities by God and equal position in the world too. But it is the man who has drawn a line of limitations before the woman and wants to rule over her. And the truth remains one for all that allows no distinct identity for women and restricts them within their limited boundaries to act like the shadows of their male’s personality.

Mohan Rakesh was a famous Hindi playwright of India. His plays *Ashadh ka ek din* i.e. *One Day in Ashadh* published in 1958, *Lahron ke rajhans* or *The Great Swans of the Waves*, *Adhe-adhure* (*Halfway House*) and the unfinished *Pair tale ki zamin* or *soil beneath the sole* which are translated into English. In the *Halfway House*, right from the beginning, the picture of the house projected by Mohan Rakesh is a negative one. The entry of the woman into the house
after her return from the office sets the negative tone of the play. Obviously, she returns tired after a day’s long work in the office and easily feels annoyed to find that the house is not kept clean and tidy. She utters initial dialogues:

**The woman:**  Phe-e-ew...! No one’s ever at home! Kinni! Out I suppose!...Another torn book! And Ashok’s been...! Idle all day but he can’t look after his clothes...or even clear the table! Everything’s left for me to do.³

The initial dialogues of the first scene itself reveal the pessimistic atmosphere of the house. Far from being, the family strikes as a matriarchal family, the chief reason for which is the economic one. Instead of the man or husband being a employed person, there is a woman or wife in the family who is the breadwinner. The man being a non-earning member is reduced to a helpless position and is insulted. She (wife) exclaims while looking at the first man (husband), thus:

**The woman:** (picks up the pyjamas again) Whenever I come back, the house is in a mess.

**The First Man:** Here, give that to me.

**The woman:** What’s the point? Couldn’t you have thought of it earlier?

(opens the cupboard angrily and thrusts the pyjamas in) Who was here for tea?

**The First Man:** I was.

**The woman:** A whole pot of tea for just one person? Did you give Kinni her glass of milk? ⁴

The dialogues between husband and wife reveal how woman is dominating on her husband and the traditional roles of the father and the mother are reversed here and, therefore, the power of the house is shifted from the father to the mother, thereby converting the family from the patriarchal to the matriarchal system. Even she is unhappy with her husband for not
having been practical in his business partnership in the past. She complains that he was made to invest some money in a company with his partner Juneja but ultimately put to great loss though Juneja had his usual profit. He (husband) suffers from a sense of constant humiliation in the family.

Moulding themselves according to the wish of their male partners can be noticed as the most highlighting feature of Vijay Tendulkar’s women characters. But there is also the woman like Leela Banare in the play, *Silence! the Court is in Session*, who is young, single, unconventional, full of laughter and pride and is confident enough to live her life in her own terms and conditions. However, she is made to suffer variously not only by the men but also by hidebound female members of the society. Here a highly miserable condition of society has been drawn by the writer through the character of Mrs. Kashikar, who adopting a bitter attitude towards the boldness of Leela, reveals her fully conventional thoughts on the idea of woman as an individual and puts a question mark before a dignified survival of a woman who is alone.

Vijay Tendulkar going away from the traditional pattern of Indian womanhood creates the boldest character of Rama, in the play, *Gidhade*, who seems to be introducing that aspect of women’s life which is considered the ugliest face of the womanhood. Rama establishes her relationship with her brother-in-law, in want of love, which is definitely considered something of the most unsocial act on the part of a woman. However, her partner succeeds to escape himself on the ground of being a male, and poor Rama suffers alone for the act which is not so polluted on her part. Though she faces bitterness not only by the outside world but also inside the house by her brothers, yet she has determination to give birth her unborn child. Rama can not be addressed as the symbol of a bad woman rather through her; Vijay Tendulkar’s well known play ‘Sakharam Binder.’ It is a story of two women, who have been thrown out of their houses by their husbands. Both helpless women find shelter in the house of Sakharam, who is a book binder by profession. The irony of their ill fate does not stop here, rather it continues with their exploitation by the person who has given them shelter and this exploitation leaks them towards the horrible end of their lives. In this play Tendulkar shows how deep rooted women’s exploitation in the society is. Vijay Tendulkar’s one another woman character Kamala, through the play ‘Kamala’ reveals the bitter truth of society by claiming herself as an object, whose validity lies in satisfying her owner. To remove the mental conflict of Sarita, the another female
character of the play, what Kamala says to console her, shows her deep understanding of life and its demands.

Due to the ignorance and unfaithfulness of her husband Sarita decides to leave him but very soon her decision gets changed when she finds her husband in trouble and then not only she forgives him but also gives him a strong moral support. This strengthens the very concept of womanhood, which has been adding a divine grace to the image of the woman for centuries. Going through a brief survey of Vijay Tendulkar’s women characters, we find them neither fully bad nor good, they come out from the description of black and white and get their position somewhere between good and bad, and moreover, it would be more correct to see them as the real human beings with their inner potential and weaknesses. However, rooted in a specific culture, Tendulkar’s play asks every one today to look within one’s own life and society, examine some very complex aspects of human nature, and justify the reasons.

Having gone through a discussion on the changing image of women through the treatment of two outstanding literary personalities; it noticed certain changes in the image and concept both. Women emerging in the works of both the writers are the representatives of that particular era. Tagore’s women are mythical legends, it does not mean that they are away from the reality, but they work as the symbols of womanhood. They are extra-ordinarily powerful and have the courage to create new myths. However, the women represented by Vijay Tendulkar do not have any such potentialities, rather they promote the images of the women who suffer a lot in the life and finally reach to a very horrible end. No doubt, what Tendulkar represents is the naked picture of today’s society, where, on the one hand women are enjoying an honourable position and better opportunities for their natural growth, while on the other hand they are made to suffer for their every single wish. The position of woman and her right as an individual has been the matter of great concern for the writers of the modern Indian literature. However, drama has always been the constant mode of representing a society and its members in culmination with the true and actual analysis of that period. Contemporary Indian Drama offers us a wide spectrum of life where men and women both prove as complimentary to each other while approaching towards the journey of life with their matching steps. The modern women, as see them through Tendulkar’s plays appear as the victim of conflicting theories which divide the image of the Indian womanhood into two faces, the one is modern and the other is traditional. No doubt modern women have scored lots of power and progress in their name but threatening of
their free survival is still on. While playing the role of wife she gladly bears all the pain for making others happy and dedicatedly serves the needs of the family and the society both.

Tendulkar has created such unique women characters in ‘Shantata Court Chalu Aahe’ and ‘Sakharam Binder’ that leave an indelible impression on mind of audience. These are not just fictional characters but clearly prove Tendulkar’s competence in probing and portraying the intricacies of the female mind in his plays.

The journey of modern Indian woman which was started in the pre-independence era with R.Tagore reached at its acme in the post-modern period with the dramatist like Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh and Girish Karnad.

1.2 Place of Girish Karnad as Dramatist:

1.2.1 Hypothesis:

The researcher hypothesizes that Karnad’s *Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, The Fire and the Rain* and *Bali: The Sacrifice* reveal various woman characters who try to become mature. Similarly they go to the extent of discarding conventional male-dominance. They tend to resort to rebellious attitude in terms of opposing orthodox religious order. Karnad, through the plays, portrays modern women trying to achieve their unsatisfied passion.

1.2.2 Girish Karnad

Karnad is India’s leading playwright and one of the most outstanding practitioners of performing arts in India. He has directed feature films, documentaries and television serials in Kannada, Hindi and English. An actor-director, art-critic and film star Karnad is a multi-faceted literary writer. He has represented Indian art and culture in foreign lands. Born in Matheran, on 19th May, 1938, Girish Karnad comes of a Sarswat Konkani family of Mangalore. Karnad’s childhood was spent in a small village called Sirsi, in Karnataka. After his graduation from Karnataka University, Dharwad, in 1958, he came to Mumbai for further studies. Meanwhile, he received the prestigious Rhodes scholarship and went to England for further studies. He was at
Oxford from 1960 to 1963, where he developed his interest in literature and culture, play-writing and performing arts. Returning to India in 1963, he joined Oxford University Press, Chennai, which gave him an opportunity to get exposed to various kinds of writing. Again, he was awarded Bhabha Fellowship to study abroad from 1970 to 1972. He was appointed Director of Film and Television Institute of India, Pune in 1974. In 1987, he went to the USA as Fulbright Scholar in Residence at the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago. He worked as Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Academi from 1988 to 1993.

Karnad was awarded Doctor of Letters by Karnataka University, Dharwad, in 1994, for his significant contribution to art, culture and literature. His creative and performing abilities have enriched the Indian theatre. In recognition of his meritorious contribution to art, culture and theatre, the President of India awarded him Padmashri in 1974 and Padmabhusan in 1992. Girish Karnad won the prestigious Gnanpith Award in 1999. He is a gifted genius and a man of excellent intellectual abilities. He is a well-known writer of T.V. serials, film scripts and dialogues. He has played leading roles in many films directed by distinguished personalities such as Shyam Benegal, Basu Chatterjee and Subhash Ghai. His performances as Director of Kannada films, Kudu (1973) and Ondanondu Kaladalli (1978) and in Shashi Kapoor’s Hindi film Utsava (1984) have been widely acclaimed. His roles in Hindi art films such as Mahatma (1976) and Swami (1978) are among his best achievements in acting. As an active member of an amateur group called “Madras Players”, Karnad worded from 1963 to 1970 as an actor-director putting on stage some memorable plays such as Evam Indrajit, Six Characters in Search of an Author, Uncle Vinya, The Caretaker, The Crucible and A View from the Bridge in English. He played the lead roles in Oedipus Rex and Jokumaraswamy directed in Kannada by B.V. Karanth for the Open-Air Festival in Bangalore in 1972.

1.2.3 Karnad: A Playwright with Difference:

Girish Karnad’s achievements as a playwright have received widespread national and international recognition. His creative abilities have brought him a number of awards and rewards. For his first play Yayati (1961) he received Mysore State Award in 1962. Hayavadana (1971) won Kamaladevi Award of the Bharatiya Natya Sangh for the best play of the year in 1972. His play Tale-Danda (1989) brought him B.H. Sridhar Award in 1992, Karnataka Nataka Academy Award for the Best Play of 1990-91. ‘Granthaloka’ Journal of the Book Trade
honoured him as ‘the Best Writer of the Year’ in 1990, for writing Tale-Danda. In 1992 he was awarded Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award for the most creative work of 1989 for his play Naga-Mandala (1988). Though a multi-dimensional personality, Karnad is at his best in playwriting. He says:

I had never fancied myself a dramatist. In fact, I had tried my hand at writing poetry. When I was at Dharwad, which was the cultural capital of Karnataka, having produced writers like Bendre, Gokak and so on, I would very often pass by the famous Kannada publishing house Manohara Granthamala and wonder if my work would ever be published by them! During the weeks preparation for my departure to England, I found myself writing a play. This was Yayati. 

Karnad’s first play Yayati (1961) reveals the existentialist view that each man is what he chooses to be or makes himself. Yayati, the protagonist of the play, who was cursed to old age for his moral transgression, wishes to exchange his old age for money, land and even a part of his kingdom. None including his three elder sons accepts the offer, when Puru his youngest son with a great sense of filial obligation and respect for his offers his youth for his old age and takes the curse on him. Puru has just returned home with his newly-wedded wife Chitralekha and the nuptial bed is being prepared for them. The same bed is now used for Yayati to celebrate his wedding-night with Sharmishtha, his second wife, a low-born girl, whom he had accepted under some niceties of dharma. Devyani, his first wife, jealous and furious seeing her husband with a co-wife had brought the curse of old age on him. However, Puru’s great sacrifice brings disastrous results. Puru’s newly married wife, Chitralekha, who wants to bear a child, is unable to bear her husband’s old age. She wishes to offer herself to Yayati but, then, commits suicide out of shame. Yayati is horrified to see the disastrous results of his action. He finally takes back the curse from his son in a moment of remorse. Yayati was a major success on the stage.
Karnad’s second play *Tughlaq* (1964) is a historical play on the life of Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq of the fourteenth century India. Karnad saw Tughlaq as a complex personality who was at once a dreamer and a man of action, benevolent and cruel. In this context Girish Karnad says:

> When I read about Mohammed bin Tughlaq, I was fascinated. How marvellous this was, I thought. Tughlaq was a brilliant individual yet is regarded as one of the biggest failures. He tried to introduce policies that seem today to be far-sighted to the point of genius, but which earned him the nickname ‘Mohammed the Mad’ then. He ended his career in bloodshed and chaos.

*Hayavadana*, (1971) Karnad’s next play, is richly symbolic and spectacular. The main plot, the story of a love triangle between Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini, is drawn from the *Kathasaritsagar*, an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. The original story, a part of the *Vaital Panchvimsati*, narrated by Vaital, a ghost, to Vikram, an adventurous Indian King, poses a moral problem, whether the man with Devadatta’s head or the man with his body is regarded as Padmini’s real husband. And the solution is given that the head being the best part of man, the man with Devadatta’s head is her real husband.

The sub-plot of *Hayavadana*, the horse-man deepens the significance of the main theme of incompleteness by treating it on a different sketch. Hayavadana, the son of a Gandharve, who was born as a horse for Kuber’s curse, and a beautiful princess of Karnataka, was left alone by his parents. He was born a horse-headed man. In order to get rid of the horse-head and become a complete man, he visits many holy places, tries magic and mantras and gets blessings of holy men, gods and goddesses but finally becomes a complete horse. The animal nature triumphs over the head, the best in man. *Hayavadana* represents the aspirations of human beings for the unattainable.

Girish Karnad’s play, *Naga-Mandala* (1988) is based on two Kannada folk-tales which he heard from A.K. Ramanujan, is full of mythical wonder. As the play opens, Appanna is portrayed as a very dominating and cruel husband who exercises superiority over his bride. Rani
is an extremely innocent woman. However, the main transformation in the play is that of the cobra assuming the form of Rani’s husband, Appanna to make love to her. Karnad traces the movement of Rani (the Indian woman, in general) from enslavement to empowerment.

In his next play, Tale-Danda (1993), Karnad once again deals with history. He writes of Basavanna, a social reformer of repute of the twelfth century Karnataka who had founded the Lingayat faith. As chief minister of the kingdom of King Byhalia, Basavanna tried to do away with the caste system, inequality of the sexes, rejection of idol worship, etc. Consequently King Bijjala is dethroned by his son while Basavanna dies a mysterious death. Once again history has been used to explain contemporary events.

After a gap of five years, in The Fire and the Rain (published in 1998) Karnad gives a contemporary meaning to an ancient legend taken from The Mahabharata in which Yavakri resorts to harsh penance to win the boon of knowledge from Indra. However, knowledge does not bring wisdom to Yavakri who suffers due to this and falls a prey to lust. Thus through the play Karnad points out the danger of knowledge without wisdom. Karnad alters the original myth by incorporating the scene of drought in the entire land due to Yavakri’s sin. In the end of the play rain arrives giving relief to good persons. The play is highly symbolic in interpretation. The ‘fire’ is that of lust, anger, envy, violence and death while rain is the symbol of self-sacrifice, compassion, forgiveness, divine grace, revival and life.

Girish Karnad’s play A Heap of Broken Images (2005) is different from his earlier plays. Karnad takes up the question of language. Whether Indians should write in English or in their mother tongue? What is the effect of English on our language? The play has a universal significance because it deals with nature of technology over people’s lives. A Heap of Broken Images is set in a television studio. Manjula Murthy, the protagonist is a woman writing in Kannada. However, failing as a regional writer, she resorted to writing in English and was an instant success. Girish Karnad received wide acclaim for his plays because they are rooted in Indian mythology, folklore, and history yet they have contemporary sensibility. He is certainly a modern playwright for he examines the crisis of an individual who invariably encounters deep psychological and philosophical conflicts.

1.3 Myth in Karnad’s Select Plays:
Many Indian writers have employed myths and legends to convey their sense and view of life in literature. In a way, this practice itself, such as myth, is a recurrent pattern. In ancient India and Greece, myths served as the source material for drama, and the re-telling or the re-enactment of old myths in modern terms underlines the universality of the experience that is embodied in these stories. About ‘Myth’ M.H. Abrams and G.G. Harpham note down in *A Handbook of Literary Terms*:

In classical Greek, “mythos” signified any story or plot, whether true or invented. In its central modern significance, however, a myth is one story in a mythology- a system of hereditary stories of ancient origin which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group.7

Around the middle of the twentieth century, ‘myth’ became a prominent term in literary analysis. A large group of writers, the myth critics-including Robert Graves, Francis Fergussion, Maud Bodkin, Richard Chase, and Northrop Frye viewed the genres and individual plot patterns of many works of literature, including what on the surface are highly sophisticated and realistic works, as recurrences of basic mythic formulas.

Girish Karnad, fascinated as he is with the rich Indian folk and mythic lore, draws from it the material for his drama. His *Tughlaq* mythicizes history; *Hayavadana* derives its idea from *Vetala Panchavimsati; Yayati* and *The Fire and the Rain* present re-telling of episodes from the *Mahabharata; Tale-danda* is inspired by the life of Basavesvara, the Virasaiva social reformer. While the earlier plays deal with human imperfection and the theme of responsibility, the later ones dramatize contemporary communal strife and caste-based politics in India. *Naga-Mandala*, based upon folk belief and myth, is a deceptively simple play whose complexity consists in a concurrently coordinating the elements of myth, magic, folk belief and romance.

1.3.1 Hayavadana:

Karnad’s third play, *Hayavadana* (1971), marked another major change of direction, not only in his playwriting but in post-independence theatre as a whole, because it was the first work to translate into notable practice the debate over the usefulness of indigenous performance genres
in the development of a new, quintessentially ‘Indian’ theatre. In 1972 *Hayavadana* won both the annual Sangeet Natak Akademi award, and the Kamaladevi Award of the Bharatiya Natak Sangh, for the best Indian play. Girish Karnad has taken the plunge into the depths of Indian literature: epics, myths and legends to look for the subject matter for his plays. In the “Author’s Introduction” to Three Plays, Girish Karnad writes:

I remember that the idea of my play *Hayavadana* started crystallizing in my head right in the middle of an argument with B.V. Karanth (who ultimately produced the play) about the meaning of masks in Indian theatre and theatre’s relationship to music. The play is based on a story from a collection of tales called the *Kathasaritsagara* and the further development of this story by Thomas Mann in ‘The Transposed Heads’.

The plot of *Hayavadana* comes from *Kathasaritsagara*, an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. In *Kathasaritsagara*, the story of ‘The Heads That Got Switched’ contains a simple riddle. A woman was travelling with her husband and her brother discovers the men’s decapitated bodies in the temple of Parvati, receives a boon from the goddess to bring them back to life, but switches their heads by mistake. The resulting problem of ‘true’ identity has an unambiguous solution in this version- the answer given in the *Kathasaritsagara* is: since the head represents the man, the person with the husband’s head is the husband.

However, Thomas Mann brings his relentless logic to bear upon this solution. If the head is the determining limb, then the body should change to fit the head. At the end of Mann’s version, the bodies have changed again and adjusted themselves to the heads so perfectly that the men are physically exactly as they were at the beginning. Thomas Mann’s philosophical elaboration of this story in *The Transposed Heads* (1940) is a fully developed parable about conjugality, proscribed desire, and an ‘accidental’ disruption of identity that can be resolved only by death. Sita is married to Shridaman, who is cerebral, delicate, and sensitive, but she feels an intense physical attraction for his friend Nanda, who is visceral, strong, and emotionally crude. In Mann’s version, the husband beheads himself in Parvati’s temple out of jealousy and despair; the friend follows suit out of guilt and fear; and the pregnant wife prepares to die in order to
avoid ignominy for herself and her child. After the accident of transposition a holy ascetic grants Sita to the new Shridaman by using the same logic that appears in the folktale, but in Mann’s text the supremacy of the head is both sustained and challenged far beyond the moment of crisis. The new bodies of the two men change inexorably until they are compatible with the heads once again; but the original bodies also exert their own subversive power, and change the heads indefinably. Sita, to whom the man with the husband-head and friend-body had given ‘full enjoyment of the pleasures of sense’ for a time, finds herself yearning once again for the man with the friend-head and husband-body, and returns to him in full knowledge of the consequences of her action. Shridaman and Nanda kill each other in the forest, and Sita commits sati on their funeral pyre, leaving her precocious four-year old son behind to keep alive the memory of her strange sacrifice.

However, Karnad deals with the question of Head and Body with a different purpose. Interestingly, the main and the sub-plot of Hayavadana deal with the moral and philosophical aspect of the problem raising more important issues relating to the human existence.

As in William Shakespeare, employment of sub-plot is a common device in Girish Karnad. It is not without significance that the name of the play is not after the name of any character of the main plot. It is named after Hayavadana who is the major character around which the sub-plot moves. It has a human body and a horse’s head: this incompatibility of head and body has close parallelism with the figure of Ganesha who also has an animal’s (elephant’s) head and a human body. But Ganesha is worshipped for perfection, which Hayavadana is looking for.

The story of Hayavadana also fits well into the basic pattern of the play. The mother of Hayavadana was the princess of Karnataka. When she came of age her father invited the princes of all the kingdoms so that she could herself select her bridegroom. The prince of Araby came too late riding a white stallion. On seeing him Hayavadana’s mother fainted and when she woke up she declared that she wanted to marry the white stallion the prince was riding. Married to the horse, she stayed with it for fifteen years. One day in place of the horse, there was a celestial being, a ‘Ghandharva’. This celestial being was cursed to be born as a horse by the god Kubera because of his misbehaviour. After fifteen years of human love, he again turned into his original self. He asked his wife to accompany him but she refused. She said she would come only if he became a horse again. So he cursed her to become a horse herself. After turning into a horse she
ran away happily leaving Hayavadana alone. Hayavadana visits different religious places to beg for his completion, but no god or goddess comes to his help.

By retelling an ancient story, Karnad has invested it with a new significance which probes the philosophical and ontological concerns of life. The play provides a rich experience of theatre not only for the dramatic scenes, but for the humour employed throughout the play, in theatre performance.

1.3.2 Naga-Mandala- Regarding Woman and Snake Myth:

In the “Author’s Introduction” to Three Plays, Girish Karnad writes:

_Naga-Mandala_ is based on two oral tales I heard from A.K. Ramanujan. These tales are narrated by women-normally the older women in the family-while children are being fed in the evenings in the kitchen or being put to bed.9

The play _Naga-Mandala_ based on two oral tales. The first story, about the lamp flames that gather in a village temple to exchange gossip about the households they inhabit, is part of the outer play and gives imaginative expression to the idea of community life. The second story, about the woman who was visited by a king cobra in the form of her husband, is personified in the play as a beautiful young woman in a sari, and it ‘tells itself’ (as the inner play) to an audience composed of the playwright and the flames. This amalgamation of human, abstract, and magical elements creates a synthesis that is thematically and philosophically simple.

Myth and folktale thus merge and come together and weave a rich tapestry of meaning that explores the modern predicament. Myth can never be dismissed as belonging to the past, because a great deal of its charm lies in its principal quality that of repeating itself. Thus the age-old myth is presented to us again in disguised form to confront us. Whether it is the snake man in _Naga-Mandala_ or the house-headed one in _Hatavadana_ or the tyrannical father in _Yayati_ they are but the disguised creation of characters that are encountered every day.

Through this form, Karnad has opened up a dialogue on certain key issues that have plagued mankind since primeval times-they are issues such as fidelity the appropriateness of parental authority and the tussle between the Apollonian and Dionysian approaches to life. No
solutions are suggested since no one solution is possible, but the plays nevertheless induce in the audience contemplation of these issues.

1.3.2.1 Snake as a Totem:

It is not explicit in the play as to whether Rani regards the cobra merely as a totem. She says that the cobra has given the gift of life to her son (literally as well as metaphorically) as by a father. Therefore the cobra has to be ritually cremated and that “the fire should be lit by our son” she adds “And every year on this day, our son should perform the rituals to commemorate its death.” Appanna thinks that Rani is going too far because these rituals are performed by the son for his deceased father. But he has come to believe that Rani is “the goddess herself incarnate.” He therefore, accedes that every wish of Rani will be carried out. Rani’s eyes are filled with tears. She picks up the dead snake and presses it to her cheeks.

The story exists and the subject of the brief discussion which ensues is the ending of the play as tragedy. The flames prefer happy endings, but the man holds the view that death is the inescapable truth, however, for the gratification of others. The man gives the alternative ending in which the play ends happily, Rani and Appanna are sleeping with the child next to them. Rani suddenly moans and sits up. Holding her hair, she says that something hurts her. She tries to comb her hair but cannot. She gives the comb to Appanna as he combs her hair; a live snake falls out of her hair and lies writhing on the floor. Appanna runs out to search for a stick in order to kill the snake. Rani lets her hair down to the floor and hides the snake in her tresses. Patting her hair, she addresses the snake, “This hair is the symbol of my wedded bliss, live in there happily for ever.” The flames disappear one by one. It is morning and the man is sitting alone in the inner sanctum of the temple. He bows to the audience and goes out.

1.3.3 The Fire and the Rain: The Myth of woman and Yavakri:

The Fire and the Rain is a translation of Karnad’s Kannada play Agni Mattu Male, published by Oxford University Press in 1998. ‘Agni’ is the Sanskrit word for ‘fire’, ‘Mattu’ means ‘and’, a spoken Kannada word. ‘Rain’ is a translation of ‘Male’, which means ‘rain, pure and simple’. The Fire and the Rain is based on the myth of Yavakri, Indra and Vritra. The eternal conflict of good and evil continues from the period of the Mahabharata to the modern contemporary society. The myth of Yavakri is a story of ambition to achieve the Universal
Knowledge directly from the Gods but not from the human gurus, which is unjustified and immature. Knowledge without experience is dangerous to humanity and it was the last message of Gods to Yavakri as well as to human beings on earth. The myth of Yavakri is narrated in the ‘Notes’ of The Fire and the Rain:

There were two sages, Bharadwaja and Raibhya who were good friends. Raibhya was a learned man who lived with his two sons while Bharadwaja concentrated on his ascetic practices. Yavakri, Bharadwaja’s son, nursed a grievance against the world for the felt his father did not receive the respect and recognition which was his due.

He therefore went off to the forest and did “tapasya” (penance) so that he could obtain the knowledge of the Vedas from the gods direct. The rigours of his ascetic practice were such that Indra, the lord of gods, appeared to him, but only to persuade him that there were no such short cuts to knowledge. Knowledge has to be obtained by studying at the feet of a guru. But Yavakri was so adamant that Indra ultimately relented and let him have his wish.

Bharadwaja, being a wise man, was anxious lest the triumph turn his son’s head and cautioned Yavakri against delusions of omnipotence. But his fears unfortunately proved well-founded. For one of the first things Yavakri did was to corner Raibhya’s daughter-in-law in a lonely spot and molest her.

Yavakri’s misdemeanour incensed Raibhya. He invoked the ‘kritya’ spirit. He tore a hair from his head and made an oblation of it to the fire. From another hair he similarly brought forth a rakshasa (demon). Then he sent the two to kill Yavakri.

The spirit in the form of the daughter-in-law approached Yavakri seductively and stole the urn which contained the water that made him invulnerable to danger. The rakshasa then chased him with a trident. Yavakri ran toward a lake in search of water, but the lake dried up. Every spot with a bit of water in it dried up at his approach. Finally Yavakri tried to enter his father’s hermitage. But a blind man of the Sudra caste, who was guarding the gate, barred Yavakri’s entry. At that moment the rakshasa killed Yavakri. When Bharadwaja learnt from the Sudra how his son had died, he was naturally distressed. Although he knew his son was to blame for all that had happened, he cursed Raibhya that he would die at the hand of his elder son. And then shocked at his own folly in cursing a friend, he entered fire and immolated himself.

Raibhya’s two sons, Paravasu and Aravasu were conducting a fire sacrifice for the king. One night when Paravasu was visiting his home, he mistook the black deerskin which his father
was wearing for a wild animal and unintentionally killed him. When he realized what he had done, he cremated his father and returned to the sacrificial enclosure. There he said to his brother Aravasu: “Since you are not capable of performing the sacrifice alone, go and perform the penitential rites prescribed for Brahminicide. I’ll carry on with the sacrifice.” Aravasu did his brother’s bidding. But when he returned to the sacrifice, Paravasu turned to the king and said: “This man is Brahmin-killer. He should not be allowed to enter the sacrificial enclosures.” The king promptly ordered his servants to throw Aravasu out, although the latter kept protesting loudly that he was innocent. Aravasu retired to the jungle and prayed to the Sun God. When the gods appeared, he asked them to restore Yavakri, Bharadwaja and Raibhya back to life and make Paravasu forget his evil act. The gods granted him the boon. When Yavakri came back to life, the gods reprimanded him on his folly and asked him to pursue knowledge in the right manner.

The myth of Indra and Vritra as narrated in the ‘Notes’ of The Fire and the Rain, is as under:

The slaying of the demon Vritra by Indra is one of the archetypal myths of India. It is found in the Rigveda: it appears again, needless to say with variations, in the Mahabharata nearly a thousand years later. In the Rigveda, Vritra, ‘the shoulderless one’ (a serpent) swallows rivers and hides the waters inside him. Indra, by killing him, releases the waters and ‘like lowing cows, the rivers flow out’. The importance of this deed to the Vedic culture is borne out by the epithet, ‘Vritrahan’ or the slayer of Vritra, by which Indra is repeatedly hailed. Yet a passing reference in the myth to how Indra, frightened, fled ‘like a falcon across ninety-nine rivers’ suggests that even the Rigvedic version probably had elements not entirely complimentary to Indra.

In the Mahabharata, Indra has lost his central position in the Hindu pantheon. The sectarian gods, Vishnu and Shiva, now hold sway. In the later version of the myth, Indra is anxious that Vishwarupa (also called Trishiras, the three-headed one), son of Tvastri, may dislodge him from his throne. He therefore destroys Vishwarupa treacherously. Tvastri then gives birth to another son, Vritra, by a female demon, and tells him: ‘Kill Indra’. Indra, unable to overcome the new enemy, again has to resort to ignominious trickery to survive. Having killed Vritra, he suffers from the guilt of Brahminicide.

The myth can be seen as expressing a deep anxiety which informs the whole of Indian mythology, the fear of brother destroying brother. This fear branches out fully and nakedly in the
Mahabharata, where the bonding of brothers within the Pandava and the Kuru clans is as close as the enmity between the cousins is ruthless and unrelenting. In the Ramayana, the fraternal bonding in the Raghu family-Rama and his brothers-expresses another facet of the same anxiety, with the betrayals of Sugriva and Vibhishana (interestingly in the cause of the ethically correct side) marking the counterpoint.

Girish Karnad writes in Notes-myth of Indra and Vritra of The Fire and the Rain:

The tale of Aravasu and Paravasu fascinated me as an unusual variant of this Indian obsession with fratricide and it seemed logical too that Yavakri should be their cousin, though the Mahabharata does not explicitly say so. I cannot remember when I decided to incorporate the Indra-Vrita legend in my plot, but years later, while re-reading the original version, I was astonished to find that right at the beginning of the tale of Yavakri, Lomasha mentions that the whole story took place on the banks of a river in which Indra had bathed to cleanse himself of the sin of killing Vritra! One of the fascinating aspects of dealing with myths is their self-reflexivity.12

1.3.4 Bali: The Sacrifice: A woman and Jain Myth of Cock of Dough:

Karnad in Bali: The Sacrifice has dramatized the ancient myth of a Jain king and his queen in a long, single act of intense psychological turmoil interspersed with songs and with intermittent preludes of the couple parts of life. It is a simple tale of adultery of the queen for the king’s mahout, the elephant keeper. The king is devastated to discover that queen Amritmani, is involved with the elephant keeper. In order to avert the evil consequences of her infidelity, he is forced by his mother, who is a devout and ritualistic Hindu, to sacrifice a cockerel to please the gods. But he is a Jain and non-violence is the fundamental principle of Jain faith. So in desperation, he substitutes a bird made of dough, which in turn has unexpected results. To quote Karnad from the blurb of his two plays:
The myth is less concerned with actual violence than with the morality of substitution, which permits violence a wider and more subtle play by masking its true nature.  

Similarly, the playwright himself gives an elaborate account of this Jain myth and the practice of the violent sacrifice of the Hindus in his preface to two plays which contain Bali: The Sacrifice. He writes:

For Bali: The Sacrifice, I have drawn upon the thirteenth century Kannada epic, *Yashodhara Charite*, by Janna, which in turn refers back through an eleventh century Sanskrit epic by Vadiraja to the ninth century Sanskrit epic *Yashastilaka*, by Somadeva Suri.

The action of this play takes place at night in the inner sanctum of a ruined temple. The despondent queen, aroused spiritually and physically by the sensuous voice of the singing mahout in the nearby dilapidated temple, escapes from her bedchamber and reaches to him and gratifies her sex impulse from him. It is an immoral act—no doubt, since she is an Indian wife and also the first lady of the kingdom, morally and ethically bound to present a chaste image of the royalty before the masses. The ugly looking mahout, a representative of the lower castes, doesn’t recognize the queen in the dark sanctum. However, it makes no difference to him, whether she is common whore or a woman of ‘Upper House’ as long as his own physical thirst is quenched. Symbolically, he becomes a tool for the queen to employ her idea of female liberation from the age-old bondage of the customs, traditions and male-dominance. He provides her not only the physical satisfaction which she is unable to get from her husband, but also the mental solace and spiritual calmness which she lacks in the vicinity of Vedic violence for her mother-in-low. However the queen has sinned physically, spiritually and morally against the most rigid law of the matrimony and of the orthodox society. She so does not want her sudden and accidental act of infidelity to come to light. But the king is wide awake. He is shocked to discover his wife’s infidelity as this song of the play suggests:

Woe betide the times
where the king sits alone
outside on the steps
racked by sighs
while the queen trapped
in her lover’s thighs\(^{15}\)

And what goes on later in the play is a characteristic feature of Karnad’s dramatic skills in heightening the conflict. The king’s manhood suffers a huge blow by the queen’s act of adultery. His mother too, eventually comes to know about the crime perpetrated by her daughter-in-law upon her innocent son, since the mothers can easily go through the minds of the tormented psyche of their children as the stage direction and the next dialogue delivered by the mother in the play points out:

(The truth dawns on her. She steps back in horror)

Oh my mother! Don’t tell me! I knew it would happen ultimately--. But don’t tell me she’s done it---. She is with someone. A lover! Oh my God---\(^{16}\).

The mother in the play, however, is already displeased with her daughter-in-law as any mother-in-law in India would be. Here Amritmani is already a cause of the mother’s ire. In fact, mother feels that the daughter-in-law has taken away the only prized possession of her motherhood, i.e., her son. To marry the Jain princess, the king had embraced Jainism and abandoned his mother’s vedantic Hindu religion. Because of the daughter-in-law’s and hence the son’s, non-violent Jain attitude, the mother had to move away from the palace to practise the sacrificing rituals of her own religion away from them. In addition, the queen has been unable to produce an heir to the throne and to her lineage so far. There is, thus, a strong mental and physical barrier of non-attachment between the two women of the family as is the case with majority of the Indian women. In India, even today, most of the mothers are critical of their daughter-in-law for the most trifle of reasons and always consider them rivals for the love and affection of their sons. Hence, they would invariably blame the younger ones for drawing away their sons from them and destroying the maternal bonds. On the other hand the daughters-in-law
rarely appreciate their mother-in-law and their views and always feel neglected, subjugated and mentally tortured. The exchange between the queen and the mother towards the end of the play significantly points out to this conflict:

**Queen:** You’ve hated me from the day I stepped into this palace.

**Mother:** The only relationship in the world which does not wither and Fade away is that of hate. That’ll deep us together—at least so long as my son remains a Jain.

**Queen:** I refuse to discuss my religion with you.

**Mother:** I couldn’t care less about your religion. It’s my son’s that concerns me.... You have a fickle womb. False pregnancy! Miscarriage! Mine is made of steel.17

The relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law towards each other is thus reciprocal. Consequently, the sons suffer invariably between their motherly duties and conjugal bond with their wives. This is a common scene of the majority households of the country today. Karnad highlights this issue of family violence in the play Bali: the Sacrifice, in the garb of the Jain non-violence ideals.
References

6. Ibid, p.35.
11. Ibid, p.64.
17. Ibid, p.231.