PREFACE

Modernization entails continuous changes in all spheres of life. In spite of the remarkable developments, the changes have effected disintegration of social and familial relationships and conflict between tradition and modernity. This development has robbed humanity of its concern for fellow human beings and led to discrimination and marginalization. The marginalized people have become ‘the other’. Young playwright Mahesh Dattani, moved by the complexities of the changes in society, voices for the people who have become ‘the voiceless other’.

In the present dissertation, the researcher has attempted a study of Mahesh Dattani’s plays to understand and examine marginalization in terms of sexuality, religion, culture and stereotypes. Marginalization renders the marginalized people voiceless. Dattani’s plays stand as authentic voices of these people.

The first chapter, by way of introduction, presents a brief survey of the evolution of Indian English drama from the days of Sanskrit drama to the present time. India has a long and glorious dramatic tradition. Yet, Indian English drama did not register anything remarkable in the early periods which witnessed English translations of Indian drama. Hence, the evolution of Indian English drama invariably traces the evolution of Indian drama. Unlike the other genres, Indian English drama had a very slow growth. Even now, it has not established itself as a vibrant genre. However, of late, it has become a distinct literary expression because of the presence of a number of playwrights. Mahesh Dattani is one among them who has taken Indian English drama to new heights. The socio-
cultural conditions of the contemporary society portrayed in the plays of Mahesh Dattani are highlighted by focusing marginalization based on sexuality, religion, culture and stereotypes in accordance with the recent cultural theories.

The second chapter, “Sexuality and Segregation” examines the various ways in which the *hijras*, gays, lesbians and women are discriminated. *Hijras* are the third gender people denied any right and destined to suffer, because of nature’s deprivation. The other two genders are not ready to recognize them as human beings and therefore, they fail to get even the concern that the animal beings enjoy. Gays and lesbians, for fear of ostracism keep their sexuality a secret. Women, irrespective of social status are subjugated. Men are not exceptions when they fail to fulfil the expected gender roles. This discrimination leads to marginalization ultimately rendering them voiceless.

“Religion and Restriction”, the third chapter, analyses how religion, which is supposed to unite people, sets them divided. Hindu-Muslim animosity, rooted in the history has become a threat to secularism and democracy besides being a perennial problem in India. In addition to lack of understanding, intolerance and absence of mutual trust, personal grudges conveniently transferred as a common cause form the basis of the problem. Further, Hinduism with its orthodoxy and rigidity has become the cause of personal tension to individuals. Hence, this chapter probes into the personal as well as the inter-religious Hindu-Muslim tension.
The fourth chapter entitled “Culture and Stereotypes”, discusses the marginalization based on the notions of culture and stereotypes. Culture is man-made and all pervasive in the life of the human beings. It is shaped by humanity and in turn, it shapes the society. Culture controls the human behaviour, the violation of which invites the wrath of the society. Culture produces stereotypes and the societal expectations force the individuals to adhere to those stereotypes. Hence, there is always a tension between tradition and modernity. People who embrace modernity are viewed as a threat to the tradition. Thus, human beings who defy the notions of culture and stereotypes are subjected to marginalization.

The final chapter, “Summation”, sums up all the previous observations. Marginalization drives people voiceless denying them even the basic rights. It has its own consequences on both the marginalized and the people who marginalize. In most cases, both stand defeated failing to achieve anything concrete. Marginalization based on sexuality, religion, culture and stereotypes categorizes the marginalized people as ‘the other’. The plays of Mahesh Dattani studied, thus act as the authentic voices of ‘the other’. 
A NOTE ON DOCUMENTATION

The titles of the plays taken up for study have been used as such without abbreviating them.

Documentation is made following Joseph Gibaldi’s MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Edition.