FIFTH CHAPTER
DRAMAS AND FARCES

BASANTAKUMĀRĪ

Basantakumārī was published on January 2, 1873 from Calcutta. This play of Meer Musarraf Hussain is the first Bengali drama written by a Muslim author. This happens to be the third published work of Musarraf. In 1887, the second edition of the book was published from Mymansing. Almost after a hundred years (exactly after 82 years of 2nd edition), Dr. Abdul Auyal from Chittagong published a new edition with a preface and notes. Dr. Auyal used the text of the first edition for his edition. In 1976, Kazi Abdul Mannan on behalf of Banla Academy, Dhaka, published another edition of the book where the text of the second edition was used. There are some differences between the text of the first edition and that of second edition. There are some additional scenes in the second edition and the character of Mamdo was dropped in the second edition.

As par date of publication, Basantakumārī was his third work but in the preface of the play, Meer Saheb himself wrote: 'আমার অনুরাগ তরুণ বিধীয় কৃষ্ণুম বসন্তকুমারী' প্রস্তুতি হইল। the fact is that his Gorāi Bridge was published on January 20, 1873 and Basantakumārī was on Feb. 20, 1873. Thus there was a gap of only 13 days between the publications. It is quite likely that Basantakumārī was written earlier and was published at a marginally later date. It was even quite possible that while Basantakumārī containing 127 pages was in press, Gorāi Bridge with only 18 pages was written and published before the printing of the earlier work was completed. We learn from the preface of Gorāi Bridge that this narrative poem was composed within
a single day and as the subject matter was not of the liking of Musarraf, he was at first not in favour its publication. This may also be another reason for Musarraf to consider Basantakumarî as his second work.

In the preface of Basantakumarî the author stated the real inspiration behind the composition of this drama:

Musarraf Hussain dedicated his book in the name of Nawab Abdul Latif whom he described as jewel amongst the Bengali Muslims. In the dedication he also mentioned of the pure affection that he used to enjoy from the Nawab. Abdul Latif was a pioneer for spread of western education amongst the Muslims of Bengal. Though Musarraf was not directly involved in that movement for western education, he maintained close relation with social workers sponsoring that cause. That Musarraf was not altogether indifferent to this social movement is manifested by this dedication

The theme of Basantakumarî was adopted form a common feature available in traditional folklore. We do not know whether the drama was at all staged in Calcutta. But we knew that after five or six months of its publication, it was staged at Lahinipara village of Kustia district at authors ancestral house. Another name of the drama was Briddhasya Tarunî Bhârîyyâ.
Basantakumārī is a three-act play, divided in eleven scenes. There are eleven songs including the introductory song. In the fashion of Sanskrit drama, the author introduced his actors and actresses in the introduction. After their arrival, the real story begins:

The story:

Queen Rebati of Indrapur fell in love of his stepson Nārendra. She expressed her feeling to Narendra but he latter refused her. This refusal enraged the queen whose heart was filled with a fiery desire for revenge. She brought false charges against Narendra and sought redressal from the king. As a result, under king's order the prince was executed and his wife Basantakumārī also sacrificed her life along with her husband. Ultimately facts were revealed and King Birendra Singh in frustration and anger killed Rebati and then he committed suicide.

Characters:

The characters of the drama do not belong to the category of ordinary human beings of everyday life. The king, the court jester, the prince, the minister, the queen and the princess are the major characters of the drama and their pursuits and emotions were depicted in proper structural format within their format, the undercurrents of human drama was manifested by depicting the dilemma and conflicts of characters and the sophistication and creativity with which Musarraf performed this task. This depiction speaks highly of his genius. The drama depicts the tragic fateful end, which was the outcome of a vicious conspiracy hatched by Rebati, the newly wedded
of the widower king Birendra Singha. Birendra Singha behaved like an imbecile, he
proved himself to be puppet to pass sentence for the execution of his son who was
virtuous in all respect. He ignored the prudent advice of his Chief Minister
Baisampayan and guided by court jester Priyambada and thereby brought ruins to the
royal family. At the end, on knowing facts, his regret and lament knew no bounds,
but at this stage all these were useless. One of the maids of Rebati rightly observes:

রাজা বীরেন্দ্রের নাম শুনলে ভয়ে মাটি কোপে উঠে,সে বীরকে একেবারে মাটি করে ফেলেছে। সাবান মেয়ে
জামেছিলে ! 1/5

We do not discover any heroic act on the part of Birendra Singh. Rather time
and again his behaviour gives contrary impression. The aged king under the spell of
the young attractive wife behaved like a man under trance. Even he was heard to say:

এমন রূপবানী সতী যার ঘরে, তার চিন্তা কি ? ছাই রাজা থাক বা যাক তাতেই বা র্তাতি কি ? 1/5

আমার গৃহে এইরূপ রূপ-মাধুরী রমণী থাকতে কি প্রকারে তার চকিতে আভাস হতে পারি? ফনকাল
আমার নয়নের অত্র হলে চাতুর্যক্ষে যেন অস্বাভাবিক বোধ হয়। কাগজই থিয়ে ! তোমার সম্মুখে তোমারি
ঐ লোহিতবর্ণ শুধু দৃশ্যমানির প্রতি চেয়ে থাকি। 1/5

Influenced by false pretences of the lustful wife, he did not hesitate to sentence
his son to death. The false charge against Narendra was his alleged attempt to violate
the honour of the stepmother. He asked innocent Narendra.

তোর পক্তে এই দুঃখী যে, ঐ গৌরিণী অনলে পারেন করে আমার বিস্মৃতি কর বলি আমার আজী অবহেলা!
করিস, তবে এই দৃষ্টিতে তোর সঙ্কল্প নদন করে এই জলন্ত আলোনে নিক্ষেপ করবে? 3/3

In the same scene, after the tragic death of his son and daughter-in-law, King
Birendra returned to his senses. Under the advice of his minister Baisampayan, he
broke open the letter over to him by Narendra before his execution. This was the
passionate love letter written to Narendra by the queen Rebati. From this letter the
king could realise that Narendra was not attracted to the queen, rather Rebati tried to
tempt Narendra. The king struck Rebati with his sword, which caused her death. The
repentant king had no other alternative to sacrifice his life by jumping in the burning
pyre.

In the character of Birendra Singha we may trace his love of his son, behind
attachment to his second wife, but not where we can discover the heroism, bravery,
direction, prudence, intelligence and sense of honour expected of a King. Rarely the
vibration of sensibility can be discerned in his character. At time prolonged dialogue
and absurdity of situation deters the reader’s effort to accept the character as a
credible entity.

Narendra Singha was the crown prince of Indrapur, the son of King Birendra
Singha From the utterances of minister Baisampayan, we come to know about his
attainments and attributes:

In another scene, it is revealed that Narendra was very much popular amongst
the subjects. There are number of instances to show that he was endowed with
innumerable virtues. When from the old minister to the lowest subject of the kingdom
resented the second marriage of the aged king Birendra, Narendra confided to his
friend Sarat Kumar:

He did not open the letter of love sent to him by his stepmother, rather
preferred to enter the pyre with his newly married wife. We are a bit reluctant to
accept this extreme inaction as a virtue. When his father pronounced the sentence against him, he unhesitatingly submitted to his father’s directive:

Here we like to quote Rabindranath:

In Basantakumari, Narendra Singha is virtuous and thereby somewhat abstract and that is why as a character of flesh and blood, he is more or less unconvincing. While designing the character, the author stressed simply on his virtues, and Narendra failed to appear before us as a concrete character. Like Narendra Singha, his wife Basantakumari also was not developed properly by the author to be a real character as was done in the cases of court jester Priyambada or young wife of the aged king Birendra Singha.

Speaking generally of the character of Vidusuka or court jester, A B K observes:
The king’s confident and devoted friend is the Vidusuka, a Brahman. Ludicrous alike in dress, speech and behaviour. He is a bald-headed ey with projecting teeth and red eyes who makes himself ridiculous by silly chatter in Prakrit and his greed for goods and presents of every kind. It is a regular part of the play for the other characters to make fun of him, but he is always by the king’s side and the latter makes him his constant companion in all his affairs of the heart. (p 137)

In *Basantakumārī*, there is no mention of the physical features of Priyambada, so a comparison with the Sanskrit model cannot be made. But in regard to nature and traits, Priyambada differs from that model. The court jester in this play also differs from normal pattern of such characters of general Bengali drama. Unlike those characters, here the court jester had a mischievous trait. His gastronomic preferences provided a crude form of amusement:

But also there are some novelties in this character. In moulding the stage play, he played multiple roles brought with significance. We are speaking about his mischievous portents. He successfully persuaded the old king to agree to perform a second marriage, which amounts to fixing an evil ghost on the shoulder of the king. Thereby he sawed the seed of poisonous tree that ultimately ruined all concern. In the second scene of the first act, he inspired the king to remarry and succeed...
immediately. The king was carried away by jester’s argument without much hesitation. Generally such characterisation of a jester is not available in Bengali drama. The latter was too keen to arrange the second marriage of the old king:

| প্রাণ সাত সমত। যদি না হয় তবে এ গলায় এ সাদাসুত আর গলায় রাখবে না ছিড়ে অরিদের প্রাণ। |
| নিয়া যা ইহো তাই করবো। |

That this Jester of *Basantakumārī* was not a simple-minded man, but cunning to the extreme, is evident from his utterance:

| যার কারে লোকে সাধারণের ভাতেও মদ্যসুক্তা তোলে, আর একটা মেয়ে পাওয়া যাবে না? এতো শুভ করে আর মহরাজ? চিরকালে রাজা-রাজার সহ্ববসেই কাটানো, আপাতে ঘোড়া বেঁধে বড়লোকের কথা বলতে হয়, তা আমি বেশ জানি। শায়ী কি তার যোগাড় না করে প্রকাশ করেছেন? |

In the first part of the play, the meaningful presence of the court poet evident form his hectic activities. From these activities, the character attains a natural liveliness.

The most real-life character of the drama *Basantakumārī* is Rebati, She was a vamp-like character. She kindled a hellish fire in the hitherto happy family of Birendra. He was totally responsible for throwing prince Narendra and his sister Basantakumari into the flame of this fire.

| নাটকের নাম সস্ত্রুকুমারী নাটক ইহোলে ও ইহোর কাহিনীতে সস্ত্রুকুমারী কোন প্রদান অংশ পান না। |
| পারে না, কৃষ্ণরামের মধ্যে রেবতীকুই ইহোর মধ্যে প্রধান অংশ অধিকার করিয়াছে। |

It is quite visible that in developing and enhancing the complex settings of the drama the lustful Rebati played a more important role than Bastakumari. Perhaps keeping in view this situation the author attributed to the play a second name *Bhārata* The author created Basantakumārī, as an emotional, simple-minded modest character, but he laboured hard to depict Rebati as a character.
with complex moorings full of passion, hatred and heartburn. She was a buxom and clever to the extreme. We learn from her maid Malati:

She was the stepmother of Narendra but this relationship did not debar her to express passionate physical desire to Narendra, at the same time she did not have to lie to the king expressing her maternal affection for Narendra:

It was beyond comprehension of her old husband to get the root of the pretension of this licentious woman. She told Malati:

This lustful woman sent passionate letter of love to the prince:
When king Birendra entered the room and snatched the letter away, Rebati could feel that the letter was bound to doom her fate. Hence she pretended hurt and her foolish husband did not dare to open the letter. He gave the letter back to her and asked her to read the content. The cunning queen read out an imagined text as if it was written to her sister. The king could not detect the subterfuge. After the king’s departure, her maid said:

When newly wedded Narendra did not respond, the queen with a broken heart accused the prince of trying to violate her fidelity.
In the last scene of the play (2/3), the real character of Rebati was finally exposed to the king. The king, now free from all illusion, killed Rebati with his sword. Taking everything into consideration, it can be said that the character of Rebati was depicted in full details to endow her with significant individuality. In entire drama, this character has been blossomed to the full capacity.

**JAMĪḌĀR DARPAṆ**

*Jamīḍār Darpan*, the second drama of Musarraf Hussain was published in 1873. It is a drama of a quite different category—it did not deal with the pain and happiness, love and dejection of individual man in domestic life. Artist Musarraf is here absorbed totally in an affair of great social significance. The author here left behind his earlier engagement with problems of individual psychology, his consciousness now opted for a new domain vibrant with social commitment. The basic objective of *Jamīḍār Darpan* is to depict the atrocities committed by the ruling class on the oppressed. Musarraf with spectacular ability exposed the ugly face of the ruling class to the readers.

*জামীবার দর্পণে* প্রতিকরিত বন্দু সমাজ, মানবসহস্র যন্ত্র। রাগ ও প্যারের মোহে আস্বাদনের যে বিষয়টিতে মানবীয় সমাজকে প্রভাব ও প্রশস্ত করে তোলে, *জামীবার দর্পণে* প্রতিকরিত তিনি তার অন্তঃনিহিত সত্য প্রকাশের উদ্দেশ্যে উৎক্ষেপিত নন। তার বক্তব্য সামাজিক সমস্যা-বিষয়ক, শাসন ও শোষিতের সমস্যার হামছীনতাকেই তিনি এদেশে মাননীয় করে তুলতে চেয়েছেন।

The purpose of the *Jamīḍār Darpan* was fully accomplished fetching a golden harvest. Musarraf did not make any attempt earlier to use his creativity for striking a severe blow on the feudal system of land holding. In the preface of the drama:
With this perception, he set to write this drama. We feel that not because of his birth in a zamindar family, but because of his long tenure in the services of zamindari administration induced him to take up this venture. The experience he gathered and characters he encountered, helped him to a considerably extent in writing this book. It speaks of boldness of his character that being an employee of zamindari establishment he dared to direct his pen against the feudal class. That as an artist his sympathies and commitment were with the oppressed masses ignoring his private gains and interest is amply manifested in this book. A critic rightly observes:

A critic rightly observes:

After publication of *Jamiṭḍaṛ Darpan*, the mute oppressed subjects not only became vocal—in some cases they acquired enough self-confidence to revolt against inhuman oppression of zamindars.

Dinabandhu Mitra wrote *Nil Darpaṇ* in the wake of peasant uprising against indigo plantation; likewise Musarraf wrote *Jamiṭḍaṛ Darpaṇ* keeping uprising of tenants against feudal lords in the background. During this period there was a large-scale peasant’s uprising against the zamindari system in the districts of Pabna and Bagura. This historic Peasant Revolt (1871-76) started from Muslim dominated
Sirajganj of Pabna district and gradually spread over to entire Pabna and Bagura districts. Enhancement of land revenue and eviction of tenants were the major reasons for that uprising.

In the context of the seriousness of consequences, it can be compared with the Indigo revolt of 1860-61. Because the Peasant Revolt of Sirajganj not only foiled the conspiracy of zamindars in their bid to squeeze the tenants but also played a vital role in depriving the zamindars of their absolute right of evicting peasants. It compelled the British government to enact Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, which superceded earlier acts detrimental to the interest of tenants.

Janidar Darpan was written immediately after the Peasant Revolt of Sirajganj. There is a general impression that much discussed Peasant Revolt of Sirajganj was the material basis for writing of this drama. But we feel it was neither the revolt, nor to projecting the class character of zamindar through a symbolic representative, but for deploiring an individual character the play was written.

In the play, there is an introduction and a conclusion and besides these, the three act’s drama three scenes for each act. But the dramatist did not use the word ‘Drisya’ (scene) and used ‘Garbhagka’ in its stead.
The story:

Indulgent and debauch zamindar Haowan Ali used to lead a wreck less life. Nurunnesa, the young and beautiful wife of Abu Mullah, a tenant, became the target of his lustful desire. But how was he to fulfill his beastly lust. He chalked out a plan. On a pretext, he decided to bring Abu under his control. The zamindar sent his men to Abu and they harassed Abu with some flimsy accusation and ultimately Abu was asked to pay a fine of Rs.50/. How could Abu manage such a large amount of money? So Abu was imprisoned at the private lock-up of the zamindar. Then he deployed Krishnamani, a Vaisnavi, as a pimp to act as a go-between (Kuttini) to influence Nurunnesa. She went to Nurunnesa and ultimately intimated her of the desire of Haowan Ali:

গুনেহি তোমার জন্য একেবারে পাখল। বেশ না, একমাস হলো তোমার পাখেই নেগে আছে, তুমি মনে করলেই সব মিঠে যায়। 2/1

Not only that Krishnamani allured Nurunnesa that once she decided to go to Haowan's house, she would be maintained as a queen. Nurunnesa refused the proposal hatefully. Now the naked viciousness of the zamindar came in the open. Innocent housewife Nurunnesa who was also pregnant was forcibly taken away by Haowan's men. Nurunnesa resisted Haowan using her entire strength and succeeded in defending her honour but could not save her life. Abu Mullah filed lawsuit in the court. But police, thana and court were all in one way or other sagged in the same thread. So the case was ultimately dismissed. Inspired by the favourable court verdict, Haowan Ali demolished the house of Abu Mullah who did not get justice from any quarter. At last, the unfortunate husband of Nurunnesa became mentally deranged and had to leave the village.
Characters:

In Jamīdār Darpan, a number of people representing different social strata are present. We find the zamindar, tenants, zamindar’s sycophants, police constables, Judge, Magistrate, physician, pleader, bench clerk and what not. Including the dancing girl, there are four female characters. In comparison to Basantakumārī, characters of Jamīdār Darpan are more down to earth and life-like. In the centre of the stage, we find the character of Haowan Ali, the atrocious zamindar. The author also showed ability in depiction of minor characters. Each character was significant for its individuality. The sharp focus of the playwright did not allow any character to remain obscure. As we can identify the attitudes of sycophants from their conversation, similarly the behaviour of the judge exposed before us vividly the inner facet of the entire system of judiciary. The power of observation of the playwright deserves to be appreciated.

If we examine the characters of the drama, we find that they are divided broadly in two categories: good and bad. Some are powerful and barbaric, some others are weak and docile. In short they are bounded by a pattern. Those who are ruthless and vicious, they are powerful and rich. Those who are poor, they are weak and tortured. No tangible change in their character at any stage of development is traceable. Of course amongst all characters, the character of Haowan Ali is the only dramatic character of the play. This ruffian character did not spend much words in pronouncing a heinous declaration and with perfect calm and quietness executed the hateful task. The meaning of the word Haowan is beast or animal and here the zamindar was just a beastly character. He was not least hesitant in performing the heinous crime. He did not suffer from any hangover as a sequel to such crime. Haowan Ali was truly a criminal character. Ordinary tenants were simply miserable.
by his atrocious deeds. From the title of the drama, it is evident that this character represents the zamindar class. Haowan Ali belonged to a hereditary zamindar family equally known for the atrocities. When Nurunnesa, wife of Abu Mullah, was killed by the atrocities of Haowan Ali and his sycophants, we can learn from the utterances of his elder brother the way they used to treat their subjects:

Haowan Ali was not a man to be cowed down. Each and every day, his brainwaves centered on newer schemes for grabbing other peoples land. His another engagement was to plan for abducting other’s wives or daughters for fulfilling his lust. In the first scene of the first act, the author skillfully presented this villain character.

Haowan Ali was free from all prejudices and at the same time he was a good conversationist as well clever. While answering a sycophant, he said:

After a short while he confided his cunning design to his sycophants:
The author to show his hypocrisy presents a small dialogue. He sent his muscleman Zamal and his four associates to bring Abu Mullah forcibly. Haowan informed his friends that once Abu was caught, Nurunnessa would be compelled to surrender to him. At that moment, sound of ‘Ajīn’ reached his ears:

Haowan told his friends:

The man who could synchronise his vicious action with performance of ‘namāz’ definitely is a hypocrite of highest order.

After bringing Mullah, Haowan tortured him severely and then said:

He was shameless enough to openly demand wife of a tenant for his pleasure.

After bringing pregnant Nurunnessa forcibly, Haowan told her:

And he asked his accomplices:

Ultimately assaults and tortures of Haowan caused pregnant Nurunnessa’s death.

In this three act play, Haowan is present in first two acts. In the third act, though Haowan was not physically present, one can feel the invisible presence of a powerful zamindar in the courtroom of the British administration. Though in the lower court of the magistrate, Haowan was convicted, in the higher court, through
the combined conspiracy of the Judge, the barrister and the British doctor, Haowan was acquitted and Abu Mullah was convicted instead. In the third scene of the third act, we get a glimpse of the spectacular initiatives taken by the British court for acquittal of a heinous rogue like Haowan Ali. In the end of the drama, justice and truth did not become victorious; rather the atrocious villain was allowed to continue his evil game.

Haowan was a villain of highest order and a vicious man of this kind is seldom available:

Haowan Ali is not one of these normal villains normally available. His viciousness was not linked with any vindictiveness. The atrocious son of an atrocious zamindar was given a free hand to fulfill his lustful desire and he availed of the fullest advantage of this unhindered freedom and indulged in devastating the lives of innocent subjects. None did any harm to Haowan and he had no grievance in this regard. He had an open field without any accountability to roam about and look for fulfillment of his lust and sensuousness. If we regard here the social beings as heroes, then Haowan Ali was the antihero or villain. Here society was innocent and Haowan was the culprit. His inherent vices were nourished by a favourable circumstance. In the play, no remedy of this calamity was depicted, what was hinted at was merely utopian. There was appeal to God as well as an appeal to the Empress of England:

ব্রেইলন্যা ইম্প্রেস যিনি, পরম ইম্প্রেস—

অনুগত ধর্ম যার সদা আজ্ঞাবহ,
Hence there was no hint of any immediate redressal of problem: Villains were to continue with their misdeeds without any check. *Jamīdār Darpaṇ* was composed in 1873, even after the lapse of more than 77 years we find in another drama a similar type of villain romping merrily in same fashion. This is evident from the character of Hakimuddi, the villain of the drama *Cherhaṛār*. There is a spectacular similarity between the characters of Haowan Ali created by Meer Musarraf Hussain and that of Hakimuddi created by Tulsi Lahiri. Does this similarity originate from commonness of inner mind of two characters? We may examine where these two characters manifest same traits in spite of the time gap of 77 years.

Haowan Ali was a rural zamindar, Hakimuddi was a village headman (matabbar) as powerful as a zamindar. While dealing with tenants, their atrocities made no difference between a Hindu and a Muslim—no mildness was available for their Muslim co-religionists. Abu Mullah’s life was ruined by Haowan Ali, Rahimuddi, a tenant of Hakimuddi was subjected to same fate by the latter’s atrocities. The deceit, dishonesty and machination resorted to by these characters were also of the same kind. Both Haowan and Hakimuddi were also of the same kind. Both Haowan and Hakimuddi were debauch but both of them pretended to be religious. Rahimuddi observed about Hakimuddi.
And seventy-seven years back, after hatching a conspiracy to violate the young attractive wife of tenant, Haowan ali said:

In Jamīdār Darpan there was no allusion to the defeat of the wicked. But Cherhūr was written seventy-two years later and by this time, the social situation has been changed to certain extent and hence there was a suggestion of the possibility of the defeat of the villain. When Rahim was completely ruined, other tenants came out collectively to oppose the zamindar and resist him. Saremamud caught Hakimuddi who was flying and said.

Two characters are strikingly identical. Both of them because of their traits earned universal condemnation from readers. Also the authors earned appreciation from readers for creating these two real life characters.

The minor characters of Jamīdār Darpan are quite important in moulding the sequences of the play. The sycophants were also of beastly type and accomplices of the misdeeds of Haowan Ali. The depiction of Haowan Ali surrounded by his sycophants and portrayal of the Judges court with the judge surrounded by the barrister, muktear, the jury, witnesses etc are quite lively characters of flesh and blood. With regard to sycophants, let us quote a portion:

> আবাই- হয়তো! আমি তো গরিব, কুপুরগীয়া গলের, বিবর্ত-আশর হয়তোর অজানা কি?
> এত টাকা কেনে কেটে জোটাইডি? দোহাই কেনাবান্ধ! মাপ করুন!
> প্রায়ো— কেন? তেমন কুপুরগীয়া এমন কে?
The sycophants were uncultured in their utterances but Haowan Ali added vulgarity to the discussion.

Siraj was the brother of Haowan Ali. Though he verbally objected to the atrocities committed on Nurunnessa, he did nothing effective so that Haowan Ali was brought to justice. Dr. Cuningham is a farcical character. Both Abu Mullah and Nurunnessa were timid characters. Abu Mullah was weak and poor and his destiny was to be tortured. Nurunnessa was also poor but she had sparkling beauty. She was a typical rural damsel, faithful, pure and religious but she did not know how to protect herself from atrocities. None of them was capable of self-protection hence they were abused and tortured.

In the Judge’s Court, we find characters like Jitu Mullah, Haridas Babaji and others. These characters were painted with skill and precision. In our society, in the guise of religion, lot of hypocrisy takes place and these two characters represented such hypocrites from two different communities. In a limited space, the author drew a very realistic portrayal of the judge. The exalted position of a judge had been occupied by a fickle minded ridiculous joker- his task was to mock the entire process of justice. The way he forcibly appointed Abjan Byapari a member of the jury was ludicrous.
The barrister, the physician and the judge these three Englishmen by their blatant bias and shameless trick brought ruin to Abu Mullah's life. Dr. Cunningham sacrificing all moral values satisfied his friends, the barrister and the judge, by submitting the following report:

In my opinion she must have died of sanguineous apoplexy of the brain. 3/3

The playwright developed then character and their environment with praiseworthy skill and ability.

ER UPĀY KI

Er Upāy Ki is the maiden farcical play of Meer Musarraf Hussain. It was published in 1875 but the first edition of this play could not be traced. The second edition was published after 17 years in 1892. This second edition was also untraceable for a prolonged period. In 1965, Anisuzzaman retrieved a copy of this edition from the library of Chicago University.
Musarraf was eager to dedicate the book to one of his friends. But this gentleman did not allow him to mention his name. What could be more insulting and regrettable for an author. In the preface, he thus wrote, "साधरण उपबन्ध के जन्य सत्यत्व प्रकाश करिते कथनि सह्रोतित इहव नाते।"

From this perspective his venture was laudable.

The central theme of *Er Upāy ki* is Radhakanta’s addiction to drinking and inflation for prostitutes. The story depicts the craze of a husband for visiting prostitutes ignoring his wife and subsequent restoration of good sense in him through the fact of a friend of the wife. The theme is a hackneyed but Musarraf opted for using this old theme. Perhaps the author was induced by the reckless conjugal life he himself led. The playwright wrote this drama after his second marriage and there is a scope for presuming that his own follies provided him the experience and repentance for those follies acted as an impetus for undertaking this project. At the end of the drama he showed that Radhakantababu was on his way to rectification but before that throughout the play the way he depicted prostitute Nayantara and some other debauch male characters and portrayed their sinful way of life deserves praise because of realistic treatment.

*Er Upāy ki* is the third composition of Musarraf and the first and only full-fledged farcical play. In his earlier plays, *Basantakumārī* and *Jamīdār Darpaṇ* he brought ‘Sutradhār’ and ‘Nāṭa’ and ‘Naṭī’’s for retaining tie with the Sanskrit dramatic tradition. Scenes of *Basantakumārī* were termed ‘Rangabhūmi’ and the same of *Jamīdār Darpaṇ* were termed ‘Garbhāṅka’. In *Er Upāy ki* there is no preface-the first act was divided in four scene or ‘Rangabhūmi’. The structure resembles that of an one-act play. The nineteenth century Bengal and its middle class formed the
background of *Er Upāy ki*? Meer Musarraf was fearless in his commitment to serve the cause of the society and this play was the literary expression of this commitment.

**The story:**

Radhakanta was addicted to wine and woman and ignoring his wife Muktakesi, he was passionately attached to a prostitute. Musarraf narrated in a lighter vein how through tactful maneuvering he was restored to senses and brought back to his wife. Radhakanta was used to spend his nights with his friends drinking and merrymaking in the house of Nayantara. Muktakesi knew well that her husband was madly attached to a prostitute. All her appeals and pleas failed to bring Radhakanta back to a righteous life. At last her friend Raimani chalked out a plan to teach Radhakanta a lesson. One night, Muktakesi in her bedroom kept Raimani in the guise a male paramour. On entering their bedroom, Radhakanta discovered that his wife was spending night intimately with a paramour. Radhakanta was furious with this development. He had the notion that though he used to spend his nights with a prostitute, his wife should be faithful and pious under all circumstances like Sita and Sabitri. Muktakesi rightly gave vent to her feelings to Radhakanta:

केन? एक केन? तुमी टाका दिये बेश्या एने आमार घर आमि पारिने? एकरे देखेको स्त्री ना।

कुन करतै चाचा। दुःखनेत माथिम करितै चाचा। आमि यो चिरकाल देखेछ जसै आमार मने किरुङह नयाँ?

किरुङह बेलना लागे ना? बेश करेछ, एतै तोमाकि कि? राप्तै वा केन? काटकाटि मारामारिका र?

केन? 2/4

By this time Radhakanta came to know that Muktakesi was not unfaithful and the drama ends with the happy union of a repentant Radhakanta and jubilant Muktakeshi.
In this play, the depiction of the behaviour of a class of people of that period who used to ignore their wives and devote fully to wine and women along with secret life of so-called magistrates was done in a satirical fashion with some superb artistic touches. Also in this play we find the picture of the social evil, which was not confined only to male’s attachment to whores, but also the custom of buying male paramours by lustful women.

Characters:

The characters of the play were portrayed in the model of some acquaintances of the playwright. The characters are quite alive, reminds one of the characters of *Sadhabār Ekadasi* by Dinabandhu Mitra. The real strength of the portrayal is the time element that furnishes the contemporary setting and quite realistic dialogue:

The remark is quite relevant with regard to *Er Upāy Ki*? The playwright did not meddle in the inner conflicts, cross currents or other complex aspects of the characters — he rather avoided dealing with any kind of sophisticated analysis. The theme is also not that much complicated. In this easygoing situation, all characters behaved in a natural way not being interfered by complications of any kind. We can
trace a natural development of the characters like Radhakantababu, Madanbabu, Sannyasidas, Nagendrababu, Nayan, Jaga and others.

The magnitude of the influence of prostitution on the society and the way this influence disrupted domestic life of some people was the basic theme of the play. Though the treatment meted to Muktakesi by her husband was sad and deplorable but this dark side was overwhelmed by the light and humorous projection of developments. Farce and comics are more or less synonymous. A farce though composed with satirical allusions normally has a cover of lighter humours. This trait of light recreation has been maintained in Er Upādy Ki throughout the play. The characters like Radhakantababu, Madanbabu, Sannyasidas, Nagendranbabu, Jaga and others have been depicted with their individuality and at the same time the playwright used these characters to retain the flow of humorous sequences. The characters with their hypocrisy, idiosyncrasies and follies contribute immensely to our enjoyment. Bandhab a contemporary periodical expressed strong resentment alleging vulgarity of taste and obscenity of presentation, particularly in songs, of the drama. We beg to differ in this respect. Of course there are some indecent activities and some obscene dialogues but these were incorporated to give credibility to the theme, otherwise the play would have been deprived of normalcy. There is no reason to brand these inclusions as unaesthetic because these helped creating proper atmosphere for developing farcical situation. The author’s satire is not aggressive but mild and reasonable. It did not undermine the author’s normal inclination for humour and fun. His sense of humour was never subjected to the stringent demand of satire.

In this play Radhakantababu and his mistress Nayantara are the most important characters. Radhakanta had almost forsaken his wife to maintain his association with Nayantara. There were some other characters like Madan,
Sannyasidas and Nagenbabu (magistrate) who gathered around Radhakanta at the residence of Nayantara. In a sense they were seekers of favour from Radhakanta. Drinks and rempings had a free run in this beehive. However, while drawing these characters, the playwright did not forget to endow them with individuality. One was completely unreasonable, another was reasonable to the extreme even while drunk, yet another did not mind visiting a whore but hide his face whenever encountered by another male client—the playwright did justice to all those characters. This is one of the major reasons for the success of the play. Radhakanta was completely carried away in his utterances.

Only in these two sentences, we can trace the fullest account of these two characters. The surrender of Radhakanta was totally credible, so also the banter of Nayantara. Nayantara saw enough of such devoted client, so she could easily lash back. In conformity with this characteristic trait, we hear in the beginning of the play:

"( wholesome words)"

But while squeezing out some favour, she was capable of saying sweet words and pretending passionate love:
Again, when her self-interest was in danger, she could be furious:

Though Radhakanta was completely enslaved by her, she did not hesitate to cultivate another client if the latter happened to be rich and powerful. She tried her best to win over this new one by all means. Thus, when Nagenbabu visited her, she started endearing him with series of sweet lies:

There is another aspect of Nayan’s character. She was intelligent and objective in her thought. Still at times, hidden conscience cropped up to induce her temporarily for doing something good or fair when Radhakanta wanted to take her to his home to perform dance there, momentarily her conscience dictated her today:
When Radhakanta went to assault his wife in front of Nayantara, she showed the way he behaved. She resisted and refused to let him in, but Radhakanta was determined to carry out his plan. Nayantara, however, stood her ground and refused to bow to his demands. The author perhaps used Nayantara’s utterances to expose the addiction to wine and woman of the ‘Babu’ class of Calcutta.

Madanbabu in the company of Radhakanta everyday used to visit Nayantara’s house. But he was in a dilemma—he neither could forsake his attraction to domestic life, nor avoid visiting Nayan. There is a sense of reason in Madanbabu from which Radhakanta was completely free (besides the last scene). Radhakanta’s reckless passion and Madan’s passion, side by side, created an interesting contrast.

In the character of Nagenbabu, the magistrate, the author incorporated the ingredients of a hypocrite elite. In nineteenth century Calcutta, a number of people were there who maintained a dual life — they did everything possible to wear the façade of an honourable gentleman in public life, at the same time retained clandestine relations with courtesans for fulfillment of their sensuous lust. The playwright with a single stroke of his pen made this character convincing. He created a lively scene to prove his point. When the magistrate was busy in lurid conversation with Nayan,
in her room, another ‘babu’ entered the room— he was Madanbabu of whom we mentioned earlier. Just seeing the shadow of an intruder, Nagenbabu covered his face. How did he allow making public that the powerful and respectable gentleman like him regularly used to visit a courtesan’s house? Hence he had to be careful. Of course his precaution reached a stage of ridicule. Madan was also a regular visitor to such house, but he was not a hypocrite. Amazed by Nagen’s behaviour, Madan spoke out the basic truth:

মদন— আর তাকান না, চিনচিনি। চোখের আলো কি কাপড়ে ঢাকা পড়ে? আজ খরা পড়েছেন। এতে

সিভিল সার্ভিস ক্লাস নয় যে নোবলিটির সার্টিফিকাট না ছিলে দোকানের জো নাই। এ কলিকাতার জামাদর। তাতেও রবীন্দ্র আর সরকার বিকাল আছে। হাবড়া, এ হাবড়ার স্টেশন বললেও হয়, ময়লা পত্রী বললেও হয়। পয়সা ছিলে আর কথা নেই। 1/3

The author used Madanbabu’s utterance to expose the whole truth of the situation. Madan was an onlooker who assessed everything objectively and spoke out frankly. The playwright brought out with skill, the difference between the two men attracted to same prostitute. It can be said without any hesitation that Musarrat showed unsurpassed capability in depicting human characters in this play.

Muktakeshi was the wife of Radhakantababu. At first she tried herself to bring back her husband to lead an honest life but she failed and then with the help of her friend Raimoni she succeeded in infusing good sense in the mind of her husband. The character of Muktakeshi represents real protest against the licentiousness of the male species. She used the mechanism of ‘tit for tat’ successfully. She may be treated as a precursor of women’s lib movement of the later days.

We have already said that all characters of this play are portrayed with their distinctive individuality. Except Muktakeshi and Radhakanta, all other characters
contributed by their utterances and action to create funny and comic situations.

Moreover, the author also created the character of Jaga who was a pure humorous character. Jaga was the servant of Nayan. He spent his days merrily by serving the new and old clients of Nayan. Stealing was also one of his attributes. In his dialogues one can discover some traces of intelligence:

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(রোগিতে চরিত্রকরণ।)

জগা--ও হা!—বাবু আসছে। তীক, কোথা গেলে গা। (হেলতা) যাক মরুপায়ে, গেরানে ইচ্ছা সেবায়ে

যাক যুক্ততায় পোষকতা পান চুরি করি (কয়েকটা পান লইয়া কিছু উচ্চেত্রে) তীক গো,

ও মাঠকুনি! বাবু এসেছেন। ওগো বাবাঠাকুর এসেছেন। 1/1
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This development from 'Babu' to 'Babathakur' is remarkable! His act and cunning is hidden in this utterance. He was living in an atmosphere of hypocrisy, suspicion and deceit and in this background his character was quite in conformity with the situation. We find him completely tuned to the situation.

**Dialogue of the play:**

Dialogue is the most important component of a drama whether it is a farce, tragedy or comedy. In fact dialogues are the footsteps of a drama that create the trail on which the theme depended. Characters materialised, aesthetic essence formulated, ideas flourished and what not! Dialogues create emotions, agonies, conflicts and other attributes of a drama. The autonomy of drama as a separate literary form is totally attributable to dialogue. Thus proper structural application of dialogue is the basic requisite of a drama. A drama becomes immortal by proper and judicious use of dialogues.

Ramnarayan Tarkaratna, Madhusudan Datta or Dinabandhu Mitra, those who pioneered the cause of Bengali drama could not set any standard for the spoken language of the Bengali gentry to be used as a model. Dinabandhu in his *Nil Darpan*
(1860) proved his ability in the use of rustic mode of conversation in rural based characters; in other instances he was not that successful. Dinabandhu’s *Lilābatī* was published in 1867 and *Kamale Kāmiṇī* in 1873, but there he followed the Sanskrit dramatic tradition of using both verse and prose in dialogues. In the conversation of urban gentry, he used long sentences full of Sanskrit words, which was totally unnatural and unsuitable for the purpose. On the other hand, almost contemporary, the first Muslim dramatist of Bengali literature, Meer Musarraf Hussain, was strikingly free from those limitations.

The period of which we are referring to, the literature written in Bengali by Muslims, was following a quite different path for away from mainstream literature with regard to language. For more than one reasons, to most of Hindu Bengalees, this literature was not acceptable. One reason was the Islamic inclination of Muslim writers, and another the highbrow attitude of the Hindu educated class, Meer Musarraf was aware of this attitude of the Bengali Hindus and hence in his first drama, *Basantakumārī*, he wrote in the preface under the subtitle ‘Abhimān’:

नत्री : कसत्रामारी! कार रचित!

नत्र : कुलियान निबाांनी सीर मनारारहे होसेन रचित।

नत्री : क्रिए! एमन सराय मुसलमानेर लिखित नाटकेको नाम कोहो?

नत्र : केन ? मुसलमान बले कि एकौनरे अपनन होलो?

नत्री : ता नय, एइ सराय की ते नाटकेको अवधार तन हो ? हारी होक मुसलमान।

नत्र : अमन कर्न मुख्ये आलिहो ना। वी सर्वनैने कवाकाते है, जराहेर नेडला होत्य नाल बोक्स होत्य।

The name of *Bisādsindhu* is known to most of educated Bengali Hindus, but how many know about his other works? But he was that distinctive litterateur who made a clarion call to participate in the literary great feast cutting across all religious
and communal barriers. Bankimchandra was highly appreciative of the prose style of Musarraf. Bankim wrote:

> 'f
> 
> Again,
> 
> As an artist, Musarraf was quite conscious of the demand of the time. Hence we can trace on the one hand his non-communal and rational outlook with all sympathies for the downtrodden people, on the other, his eagerness to use a language with real life flavour. The beauty of his language is not in anyway of lesser quality than the best-known dramatist of his age. Though in *Basantakumārī* there is some traces of stiffness, in *Jānīdūr Darpan* his language is free and spontaneous. He wrote *Er Upāy Ki?* two years later and its language is based on Calcutta colloquial. In these two realistic plays, the author blended regional dialect and idioms along with slang term according to necessity and thereby infused liveliness to the dialogue. He made variations to indicate individuality of the language of the characters and often aptly used rhymes and riddles to add deeper significance to some of the dialogues. No doubt this enriched the text by giving a better insight of the life and worldview of the characters.

In Musarraf’s dramas, dialogue is composed both in verses and prose. If we take into consideration the demand of his age, then we must praise the restraint he
showed in dialogues composed in verse. Altogether in three dramas, there are only 128 sentences written in verse, the rest are in prose. Total calculation comes to:

- **Busantakumarī**: 1st act/3rd scene, Meghamala ——— 05 lines
  2nd act/2nd scene, Rebati’s letter ——— 33 lines
  2nd act/4th scene, Kanchuki ——— 31 lines

- **Jamālār Darpan**: Introduction, Sutradhar ——— 21 lines
  Conclusion, Nati, ——— 22 lines

- **Er Upāyi Ki**: 1st act/1st scene, Sannyasidas ——— 06 lines
  1st act/3rd scene, Madanbabu ——— 08 lines
  1st act/3rd scene, Nayan ——— 02 lines

Let us cite an example of the verse form the dialogue composed by Musarraf: (in the beginning, prose is used):

> (রাধাকান্তবাবু—) সে বাজকলেই দোকানী বেটারা কি আর পুরুষের হাতে মদ দে? জগা দু'বার
> ফিরে এসেছে বলে তিনি নিজেই গেছেন। আমি সেদে মেঝে 
> চাইলাম, আবার তেমন তোমার বিয়ের কাজ নেই।
> (মধন বাবু—) এই সে ঠাকুর চাকুবী ভেবে পার নাই।
> শতজন মন তারা কথায় বোঝায়।
> একজন পরিহর করিয়ে তো কাজ যায়?
> একজন আলো তারা কথনি থাকিযান।
> একজের অভাব হলে কিছুই ভেঙে না।
> কেবল তোমার নয় ও নয়নাতরা।
> কত জন বলে শেষ নয়নের তারাঃ।
> কার তারা কে বলিয়ে, তারা কার নয়।
> কেবল অপেক্ষার সে তারার প্রশ্নাঃ। (এর উপায় কি) 1/3

This truthful depiction of the character of the courtesan reminds us instantly of the similar smart use of vocabulary by Iswar Gupta.

From the very beginning of Bengali drama, verse has been used in dialogue, but in the nineteenth century none actually pondered seriously to synchronise the dramatic movements and emotion of the characters with the text of their verse.
dialogues. They were more concerned with external beauty of the world and rhetoric presentation of the text:

The effect of poetry in the theatre will be of the same order as the effect of words in a poem. It will extend the range and power of the author’s meaning... The poetry is there to express and define patterns of thought and feeling otherwise inexpressible and indefinable. This is the legitimate reason for its use. 15

But in the nineteenth century, most of the playwrights were not that much aware of the significance of use of poetry in dramas. The pre-Tagore dramatists used verse form without caring for deeper implications involved in the process. Musarraf was also not fully alive to the problem but he maintained restraint and sense of proportion, which goes to his credit.

The theme of Basantakumārti is based on a fairy tale. It involves the king, the queen, the prince, the princess and the like. The author followed Sanskrit model in this drama. King Birendra Singha was the monarch of Indrapur and his dialogue is full of Sanskrit influence:

The conversation between Vijay Singha, the king of Bhoj and the prince of Indrapur follow the same style and pattern of language. It may be mentioned that when Raja Birendra, queen Rebati and the court jester were gossiping, the language used had an easygoing realistic touch.
The speeches of the jester and ladies of the royal household were composed in an easy manner with direct sentences. The new queen of Indrapur and the court jester used short sentences to express their feelings. But at times the playwright used prolonged passages as dialogue for expression of emotion, agony, repentance etc. and thereby caused disruption. For example.

There are a number of clauses in this sentence and to combine them in one sentence he allowed consumption of a prolonged period, which is tedious. There are at least ten or twelve passages of this variety.

Though Musarraf was not that much successful in framing dialogues of Raja Birendra or Basantakumari as cited above, in other cases he deserves to be praised. It should also to be said though Sanskrit influence dominates the speeches of the king, in comparison to use of chaste language by Madhusudan or Dinabandhu, the language of Musarraf is more easy and fluent.

Accepting this view of an expert, we can speak aloud that presentation of the speeches of average gentry, is considerably free from those defects. And whatever
artificiality is there in the dialogue of Basantakumārī, Janīdār Darpan is almost free from this defect. Most important thing is that Musarraf did not at all try to use Islamic prose in his dramas. We have already said that the author used Sanskritic prose in the dialogue of some characters of his first drama. The dialogue of court jester is lively and natural—nowhere disrupted by any kind of artificiality. Musarraf was aware that any narration or speech if used devoid of actual context becomes liability to the drama. The court jester of Musarraf not only provided comic relief to the play but also gave some inkling of his mischievous traits. The dialogue of the court jester in this respect was composed with skill by the author to give the character a novelty.

The dialogue of ordinary characters of Basantakumārī is realistic. Their speeches manifest their material life, which was humble. We are aware that the use of patois does not always signify better linguistic tie. The beauty of use of patois is reflected if the character’s particular distinctiveness, relevant regional speciality and local imagery are used judiciously. Though Basantakumārī is not the best example of such judicious use, in other two dramas Musarraf showed praiseworthy aptitude in this respect.

In Basantakumārī, the city police chief (Nagarpal) spoke in Hindi. This trait was available in other dramas written by other playwrights of contemporary Calcutta hence it can be termed as a general trend. However, definitely the character assumed some amount of authenticity through this process. The Hindi of the police chief was not always correctly spoken: মহারাজকা হোক্কম, তোমাকে বাঁধিকে লে যাবে। 3/2

When the accused prince requested for a temporary unfastening, he was refused: সে হোগা নেই 3/2
Or, rejecting the ardent appeals of the wife of the captive prince the duty obsessed police chief said: আর দেরি করেঙে দেহি সাকতা।

But the same chief allured by a golden chain unfastened the knot:

মহারাজারা হোক্স, ক্যা করেঙা 3/2

The author has revealed that the police administration of that period was also full of corruption.

There are three letters in Basantakumari. All three are in 2/2. First one is an invitation form Raja Bijay Singh, for ‘Swayambar’ ceremony of princess Basantakumari. Second one is the letter of the queen to her stepson expressing her shameless desire. The third one is not a written letter but an imaginative one. The first and third one is written in chaste prose and the first one, being written by a male monarch is full of ‘Tatsama’ or Sanskrit words. The third one being written by a woman is lucid. The second one is a letter of passion written in verse. The beginning is like

ঘুয়ঙ্গার! ভুইতে কি পারিবে আমায়।
যেদিন প্রমাদবনে দেশেছি তোমায়।।
পরঙ্গকাম সনে গলাগলি করি॥
বেঁড়াইছিলে করে হাত-খরাশি॥
যেদিন নামনে হেরিয়ে তোমায়।
একবারে মহিয়াছি প্রণ-মায়ায়।। 2/2

The letter was written by the stepmother of the prince infatuated by the latter’s physical appearance. The fact and text of the presentation deserves appreciation.
Of the three dramas of Musarraf only *Basantakumārī* has some characters whose language is mostly Sanskritic. This Sanskrit influence does not contribute to the enrichment of the drama; rather it proves to be a liability. We cannot trace any remnant of this drawback in *Jaṁīdār Darpaṇ* written only after a few months. Was there any hidden reason for it? We come to know from the researches of Bajendranath Bandyopadhyay that Jatindranath Dutta wrote a biographical sketch of Bhuban Chandra Mukhopadhyay in *Janamabhūmi* (Bhādra, 1310) collecting materials from the latter. In this life sketch it is mentioned that a Muslim author named Meer Musarraf Hussain gave him two manuscripts for correction and he throughout revised the text in what he thought to be chaste Bengali. The name of the work is *Basantakumārī* and another, *Bīṣādsindhu*. Thus there is scope for conjecture that the Sanskritic portion of *Bīṣādsindhu* was not written by Meer Musarraf himself, some of them are corrected version composed by Bhuban Chandra. This decorated portion has become a liability for the drama.

The prose style of *Jaṁīdār Darpaṇ* may be classified in three divisions. (i) Language of Bengali male (ii) Language of Bengali female (iii) Language of Englishmen. In the language of Bengali males, there is no trace of their social or economic differences. In *Nīl Darpaṇ* of Dinabandhu Mitra, there are two patterns of male speeches, one is stiff and lifeless. Musarraf’s style is free from this defect. He retained the spoken form with colloquial verb forms; Nowhere the author was tempted to use Sanskrit words where it was not imperative. At the same time he did not have any out of the way fascination of use of regional dialectic forms. Let us quote the dialogue between zamindar Haowan Ali and his poor tenant Abu Mullah:
In contemporary dramas, long dialogues were the rule, but in *Jāmiṭā Darpan* this trend was absent. The sentences are short, free from complications and realistic. In one scene (3/1) of the drama (conversation between muktear and court inspector), the dialogue used is artificial. In their speeches, long sentences were used with ‘Tatsama’ (Sanskrit words) that appeared to be superficial. How the author could allow this defect to be remained is a matter of surprising enough. Perhaps the argument used in their debate demanded such deviation. Let us quote an instance:

In the court, the court inspector submitted his report in Bengali that contained only two sentences. But in the first sentence there are 274 sentences, in the second 42.

There are four female characters in *Jāmiṭā Darpan* (including the dancing girl). We will quote a speech of two Muslim women:
It is clear from these quotations that Musarraf did not differentiate between
the language of Muslim women and Hindu women. The author was very much
restraint in using Arabic or Persian words in speeches attributed to Muslim women.
But in the dialogue of Muslim males, the author used these words at random. For
example.

In the speeches of Haowan Ali and Jitu Mullah large-scale use of Arabic and
Persian words was made. That was perhaps natural.

In *Jamīdār Darpan* the language of local male and female is Bengali in its
colloquial form. In some cases, regional dialect was also used. For example:

Non-aspirate<Aspirate—

বেঝে<বেঝে ২/২ অকন<অকন ২/২, মোচ<মোচ ২/২, কটা<কটা ২/৩, মনি<মনি, সেক<
Dialect-words--

'ভো কথা' (মিয়ে কথা) 2/2, বাংলা (বসবাস) 3/1

Slang words--

হারামজাদা 1/3, হারামজালী 2/3, পাজী 2/3, শালা 2/5, বাংলা 3/1

Moreover, English words in the speech of rural characters:

ইংরেজিটি 1/1, বক্স 1/1, ড্যাল 2/1, লিয়ার্স 2/2, ওয়ার্ল্ড 3/2

Arabic & Persian words :

খোসারু, জানওয়ার, দরকা, কসুর, হাজুর, নামজাজ, কাচেরি, হুরাম, নফিস, আক্রান্ত, আওয়াজ, হাক, বিবি,
গোল্ম, জরানা, কয়েদ, পায়না ইত্যাদি (শ্রেণী অঙ্ক)। নালিম, জান, খুন, কনহি, মোকদদাম, হুমহ,
ফুরুশ, তার, মোল্লা, জানালা, মামলা, বন্দর, মোহাই, দর্ষ, শাশ, সাওয়াল, ফেরেবাজাজ, হাজির, আইন,
মালিক ইত্যাদি (ফিতীয় অঙ্ক)। পাকার, আরামদালী, উফিল, মোক্তার, খোনান্দ, কসুর, চাপকান, হলমে,
আশের, জেহীর, ফেরেব, কলাম, জবাই, খলিফা, সাওয়াল, নজর, সান্নি ইত্যাদি (কৃতীয় অঙ্ক)।

Use of mixed language (Hindi and Bengali):

হায়ওয়ান আলী—মাপ ক্যা, আম মাপ হায় নাই। জামাল ! ওকে চৌড় পাওয়া করে মাথায় ইংট চাপিয়ে

নেঃ। 1/3

শ্রেণী কন— এ দুই বাঞ্চি হল তাঁকি।

'পোঁপোল্ল'— আচ্ছা লে আও ! ভাঙ্গার সাহেবকে লাশ পাঠাতে হবে। 3/1

হায়ওয়ান আলী দুয়ার পুরো হিংসা সঙ্গে বলেছে—

হায়— পাচ আদীরা হাও, আরুকা পাকড় লাও, আবি যাও। 1/1

হায়— মেজ রাও হায়ওয়ান ! আবার হাস্ত সামনে মুখোলকে সাড়া করত হায় ! আভি লে যাও !

লে যাও ! (কেঁচে উঁচুচুরে) ঘাঢ়ে কা দারিমিয়ান রোপেরা আদা কর। 1/3

Use of rhyme and riddle:

শীত নাড়ে অসূরী, বানর নাড়ে মাথা।
Only in *Jamūdār Darpaṇ*, Musarraf incorporated 'Sāhib' characters. *Sāhib* means Englishmen. One amongst them used to speak pure English (Cunnigham) and the other three characters spoke different varieties of mixed language. In the conversation of three English characters, the proceeding of the session courts of Bilaspur district have been revealed to show the mischievous machination of those 'Sahibs' and the resultant misfortune of ordinary tenants.

Some peculiarities of the speeches of the Englishmen as evident in *Jamūdār Darpaṇ* may be mentioned:

**Dental>cerebral/ত>ট:**

মাত্রিটির— ও হাতে পায় না, তুমি আসামীর পাকে আছে, তোমার বজ্রাতা শেষে হাতে পারে।
Perhaps Hindi ‘ham’ (we) has influenced the formation of the ward ‘hämi’(I).

In the farcical play *Er Upāy Ki?* ultimately the rectification of Radhakanta from the vices of drinking and visiting prostitute has been shown but major portion of the text has been devoted to the depiction of the courtesan Nayantara and sinful descend of some male characters to the lowest depth of immorality. The author has skillfully dealt with this depiction. The major ingredient behind this success is dialogue- it is Calcutta-colloquial but the speech is not used mechanically, rather individuality of each character is presented through proper use of this dialogue along with the society around them. In spite of occasional use of one or two undesirable words, the ability of the playwright in creating amusing situations cannot be undermined. And these usages, according to us, at times, were necessitated by the demand of the situation, i.e., to bring reality to the picture. Since obscenity is there in the society and to focus the society in the mirror of literature such depiction at times becomes imperative. Musarraf simply responded to this demand and there is noting wrong in it. In *Er Upāy Ki?* the use of words and phrases are full of the vitality extracted from real life.

To get a glimpse of the skill of the author, we may go through some of the instances:
Radhakanta was eager to take Nayantara to his house and introduce her with his wife. He actually compelled Nayantara to accompany him to his house. Radhakanta said: তবলাটা নিই। গিরিকে এমনকি দেখাবে... বড়বোধী নাচবে তো ?

The termagant Nayantara replied:

অত বরিকাতা কর না। যাগকে আমার নাচ দেখিয়ে কাজ নেই, শেষে বেঁধে রাখা দায় হবে। আমার জ্বালা-

তাই দিনরাত মাথা নিয়ে আপনি উঠবে। আমার তার চোখকান দুজি কাজ নেই। সে ভাঙলোকের মেয়ে,

তাই তো টের পাও না, আমার মতো হলে তোমার প্রণ থাকতো না।

The dialogue of Radhakanta and Nayantara deserves to read and re-read with utmost attention. While Radhakanta’s dialogue exposes his keen desire to corner his wife, in speeches of Nayantara we find a peculiar blending of fickle mindedness and suppressed dignity. There is some difference between the dialogue of Muktakeshi and Raimoni and that of Nayantara (a prostitute). The difference of circumstances caused that difference of language. Both Muktakeshi and Raimoni spent their time in criticising and repenting; hence the flow of speech was slow.

The city of Calcutta was the scene of occurrences of the play. The drama was published in 1875 when the author’s age was 28. The language of the drama is the colloquial language of Calcutta. Regional peculiarity is visible in the speeches of some characters. For example:

Non-Aspirate <Aspirate। সুদুড়ু চোক-চোখ, সক-শেষ, গুদ-গুড় ।/।, চিনচিনেই।
Non-Aspirate <Aspirate শ্রী চরিত্রের মুখে বেশি শোনা যায়।

Some selected words suggestive or regionalism.

নেমা, তেরে, মলা কাপড়, কথা কওয়াব 1/1,

এয়েছ, কমে, থেকেপাড়া না, শীতে সেখেব 1/2, পড়তে <পড়তে, ডব্লিউয়ে গুরুয়ে 1/3 ইংরাজি।

Alien language spoken by Bengali character;

রাধাকান্ত—ক্যা বাত হায় 1/1 শালা বাজাম লাও 1/2

সম্মানীকার—কুইক, বি কুইক, জলার চালাও 1/1

রাধাকান্ত—গুড হেলের বড়বো। মদন- আল রাইট, ফ্লামার.... 1/3

List of abusive and obscene words used:

শালা (বহুবার); শালা টোর; ভাঙ্কেরা (কয়েকবার); ডেকেরা গোড়ামুখ (কয়েকবার); বেহায়া পাঁচ কয়েকবার; ফেনেলি করে আর জুরিমা না; পাজি; দুরদূর করে শেখালুকুরের মতো তোকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে তাহকে 1/1

েকনকার মদবারী আর বেশায়োর স্বামী যে বাঁর হচ্ছে বাড়া; পায়া কপালী হঁশ ভাতারী; ওবেগ পাজি মাগ নিয়ে মাজা করকে 1/2। নিম্নচ্যুত; কীটাধিক; হরামজাদি, তোমার নামে দুঃখ সেটা না;

রামুখো, বেশায়াকার—বাবা কেলে বিবাহের হন; বাঙ্গালী, পরবের; নেড়ে 1/4

Swearing ( দিবিদান, শপথ):

আমার মানা বাও ( —মুষকেশী, —রাইমনি 1/2, —মদন 1/3, নয়ন 1/3)। আমি দিবা করে বলে। পাজি রাধাকান্ত 1/3, তোর মুখ দেখেন না; এ প্রাণ রাখব না; গলায় ছুরি দিয়ের মরব—নয়ন। 1/1
Soliloquy and aside are two important components of any drama. When a character of a drama expresses his or her own feeling or attitude all to himself or herself on the stage is called soliloquy:

Soliloquy is the act of talking to oneself. In drama it denotes the convention by which a character, alone on the stage utters his thoughts aloud; the playwright uses this device as a convenient way to convey directly to the audience information about a character’s motives, intentions and the state of mind, as well as for purposes of general exposition. 18
And when a character, in presence of other, speaks out his mind in a low voice is called ‘aside’;

A related stage device is the aside in which a character expresses his thought or intention in a short speech, which, by convention, is inaudible to the other characters on the stage. 19

Though these speeches are different from direct speeches of the drama, since they also help depiction of characters and can be discussed here as a part of dialogue of a play. Those who succeeded in using these two devices were all reputed and powerful dramatists. In the works of mediocre dramatists, proper uses of these devices are to be found rarely. The greatest use of soliloquy is to be found in the dramas of Shakespeare: through such speeches Shakespeare depicts extreme agonies of characters, exciting emotions of heart and soul, intimate feeling of life of some characters and what not! Though from Ibsen onwards this tradition is in the wane, in some modern plays both in Bengali and Western language sporadic use of the device of soliloquy can be traced. Of course the device of speaking aside has been totally abandoned.

In Bengali dramas of the nineteenth century the use of the devices of soliloquy and aside is plentiful. In most cases they did not help improving the quality of the play, rather burdened the text because of inept use. Meer Musarraf seldom used these devices. On in his first play _Basantakumārī_ there are some short soliloquy.

1. _নীল_–_ডাকাতিনা_ , 2. _রাজা–1/1_ , 3. _ক্ষিপ্তসত্ত্ব–1/2_ , 4. _রাজা–1/1_ , 5. _নরেশ–2/1_ ,
6. _রেবতী–2/2_ ,
7. _বসন্ত–2/3_.
Let us quote one of those:

বসন্ত— (সম্পর্কে আজকেই আমার জীবনের শেষ। আজই আমায়— ভগবান! তুমিই রক্ষকর্তা! তুমিই অবলম্বন আহ্বান! সতীত্বে রক্ষণ তুমিই একমাত্র উপায়। নাথ! তুমি কৃপাল্লেনে অবলম্বন না করলে সাক্ষীর আর উপায় নাই। বাহার বন্ধে দেখতেই তীরে সভায় যদি দেখতে না পাই, তবে এ প্রাণ আর রাখবে না।

(মেহমোদার প্রবেশ) 2/3

The device of speaking aside also is used only in Basantakumārī in the first act, first scene of the play:

বাহার— (একটি সত্যির বিষয়ে) চলবে কি? বলবে কি?.... এই তো বিচলিত যুগে শুয়ে কেবল মনে মনে
সাত সাগরের ছেড়ে গুলেন। আমার যদি ক্ষমতা ধারনে, তবে দেখতেন, শাম্ভারাম কথনো দৃষ্টিতে হতো
না— কথনোই না। (পশ্চিমে দৃষ্টিপাত করিয়া) মহারাজ! চলবেন, আর বসা হলে না।

In Jamādār Darpaṇ, the author did not use soliloquy in the main text, only in the introduction the speech of 'sutradhār' writer in 'pāyār' rhyme has been marked as soliloquy by the author. Same thing happened at the appendix in the speech of the 'Nati'. The first one is of twenty-one sentences, the second of twenty-two.

In Er Upāy Kī?, the courtesan Nayantara while decorating betel-leaf or arranging furniture used to talk to herself casually which may be treated. Soliloquy of Madanbabu and Radhakantababu are available in 1/3 and 1/4 respectively. The soliloquy of Radhakanta is the longest of all. Its presentation is enjoyable. Radhakanta, devoted totally to Nayantara, returned one night with a desire to end the life of his wife just to please the courtesan.

রাষ্ট্রাভিষেক বসন্ত— (দোহে দাইটাইন্য, চুপে চুপে স্থায়ত) দুমিয়েছে, না জেগে আছে। (মস্তক উজ্জল করিয়া
দৃষ্টি) তৈ, কোন সাজা শক্ত হো পাই না। জাগায় | নয়নতারার মন মোগাতে ঘরের দ্বার বাঁ— না— পারব
না। (একটি লেগার) নয়নতারার কাছে মাতে ঈষ্টে হয়েছিল, এখন স্মরণ হলো কেন? কি করি (শশা)
দূর, দূর, ফিরে যাই আহ্মন এবং ক্ষুটকাল পরে পুনঃপ্রবেশ) নয়নতারাকে তো আর পাব না। কিছু না
Though lengthy, it did not interfere with the flow of the dramatic proceedings. Rather it expressed the indecisiveness of Radhakanta perfectly. This soliloquy reminds us of similar utterances of others. In *Othello* of Shakespeare, when ‘Othello’ went to murder Desdimona on suspicion, his mental condition was also under the influence of indecisiveness. There is a striking similarity between the two soliloquies.

Musarraf prudently used this device, in no other way the hesitant mental frame of Radhakanta could have been expressed in such a simply and easy fashion. Here the playwright showed unsurpassed genius in entering deep into a human character and expressing the resultant knowledge in suitable language.

The prose style of Musarraf reveals his liberal and progressive mindset. The practice of following a mixed language with maximum Arabic and Persian words was the prevalent amongst the Muslim writers of the nineteenth century. Musarraf avoided that track altogether. His perception with regard to life and the world around them was also quite different from the most of the Muslim intellectuals of his time. His mindset was developed through life full of contradictions— both the venom and nectar of life he had to swallow. He experienced ups and downs, blaze and darkness, urban and rural life, tradition and modernity— blending of all those ingredients. He himself meddled in mud but for us he retrieved lotus, like incense his burning produced sweet fragrance for others. His life is an open book without any hypocrisy. His prose is simply a manifestation of this openness. Dialogue of his drama thus is lively and spontaneous— uninterrupted moonshine of a full moon night.
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