CHAPTER THIRD
Introduction:

In our previous chapters, discussions have been made about the classification of Hindi Dramas in the Pre-independence era. In this chapter we propose to discuss national consciousness in the Puranic dramas. At the beginning a list of dramas has been prepared with due considerations. In the first place, the plot construction on the following subjects are taken-up. They are the Ram Avatar, the Krishna Avatar and the Parashuram Avatar plays which are related to the incarnations of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna and Lord Parashuram respectively and other subjects related to Rishi-Muni (Sages and Saints), Dev-Devi (Gods and Goddesses), and Nar-Nari (Human beings -- male and female).

In the second instant, characterisation of the dramas; and in the third, the aims and purposes of the dramatists from the point of view of national consciousness, have been taken-up.
The following are the Ram Avatar plays i.e., plays related to the incarnation of Lord Ram written during the period under study:

1) Sita Haran - Daivakinandan Tripathy (1876)
2) Ram Lila Vijoy - Baldev Jee (1877)
3) Ram Lila - Daivakinandan Tripathy (1879)
4) Sulochana Satee - Bhawadev Upadhyay (1883)
5) Jonaki Mangal - Shitala Pd. Tripathy (1886)
6) Sita Swayambar - Munshi Tolaram (1903)
7) Ram Lila - Braj Ch. Ballav (1908)
8) Ram Avishek - Ganga Prasad (1910)
9) Ram Lila - Narayan Sahay (1911)
10) Dhanus Yajna Lila - Ram Gulam (1912)
11) Ram Lila Natak - Kundanlal Shah (1927)
12) Lav Kush - Ramanand Sahay (1930)
13) Kartavya (Part- I) - Seth Gobind Das (1935)
14) Meghnad - Dr. Chatur Chein Sastri (1936)
15) Ravan - Dinesh Dewraj 'Kalpit' (1948)
16) Ram Lila Natak - Beniram Tripathy 'Srimali' (1949)
The theme of Ram Avatar plays:

The dramas enlisted above are regarded as the Ram Avatar plays i.e., plays related to the incarnation of Lord Ram, and have been taken for discussion. Here mention may be made that the classification of dramas made by Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari in his research paper "Hindi Aur Asomike Pauranik Natak" has been accepted here and discussion on the subject-matter of dramas has been taken in that line.

National Consciousness in the Puranic Hindi Dramas (Ram Avatar plays) may be discussed under the following heads:

(a) **Glories of the Indian Heritage**

In the Ram Avatar plays the glories of ancient Indian culture and life-story of ancient heroes are depicted. The dramatists wanted to take up new inspiration from the ancient past. The glories and pride of the ancient past are intimately mixed-up in the play 'Kartavya' of Seth Gobind Das. The Kartavya is based on the life-story of the epoch-making heroes, Ram and Krishna. In the utterings of Ram to Sita a high ideal of performance of duty has been indicated,
"Par Maithely Adarsh Uccha, Bahut Uccha Hain. Praja mein Koibhee Manushya Adhyatmik, Adhidaivik aur Adhibhoutik Dristi Se Dukhi Wa Rahe, Apne Kartavya Purti Ke Liye Raja Ko Apne Sarbaswa Kee Ahuti Denee Pare to bhi yeh piche Na Note." 1

(b) Untouchability:

Narayan Prasad Betav in his play "Ramayan" depicted this problem of untouchability. After elopement of Sita, Ram entered into the hermitage of Shavari. For entertaining the guests, Shavari laying her veil of the head for Ram and addressed Ram in the following words:

"Mere Chujanese to Sadhuyonke Bastra Ashuddha Ho Jate hain, Mere Kopra Chujata Hain to Log Nahate Hain." 2

(c) Striving for Immunity from British domination:

In the Sulochana Sati, a woman addressed the audience and condemned the British rule. She referred to immunity from the British domination and said:

1. Kartavya, Seth Gobin Das, p. 7
"We shall do away with your rub here and keep the heads of the Hindus erect again like that in the ancient days."³⁴

(d) National unity :

In the play Ram Lila Vijoy, the interlocutor (the Sutradhar) expresses the idea of national unity in the following words :

"Our Hindus, Muslims and the English lived united as one nation and after few years they would be one again ...........
It is meet and proper for the Hindus and the Muslims that they would not give-up their service of Parameswar or Khoda according to their own religion."⁴

In the Kartavya, favour has been shown to the neglected Sudras. While Ram wanted to kill Sudra-born Shambuka as he engaged himself to meditation (Tapasya). But Shambuka warned Ram in the following words :

-- Brahmon Yeh Mante hain Ki Hum Sudra Ko Top Ka Adhikar Nehin Hain ..... Bhagwan unko Jata Dena Chante Hain Ki Unke dwara Utpanna Kiye Huye KisiBhi Byaktipar Atyachar Nehin Ho

3. Sulochana Sati, p. 66
4. Ram Lila Vijoy, Baldev Jee, p. 4
Sakta. Yadi Brahman Ek Jansamuday Ko Sada nich Banaye Rakhne Ka Uddyog Karenge To Hum Esi Prakar Seer Uthayenge. Es Se Unhika Sanhar Hoga.**

In the Ravana, Lord Ram has been shown as accepting fruits and flowers from Bhilni Shawari. Ram told Shawari that he viewed all humanbeing with equal eye. He didnot consider one's caste and creed. The caste of one was decided by one's own actions.** Besides this, clear hints to national unity have been found in the Ramlila of Daivaki Nandan Tripathy, the Ramlila of Damodar Sapre, the Ramlila of Braj Chandra Ballav and in the Ramlila of Narayan Sahay.

(e) Desire for Self-sacrifice:

Dinesh Devraj depicted the character of Ravana in a new light in his play 'Ravana'. All the heroes of Lanka didnot even think of their ownselves while fighting against the attack of Rama. Prahasta, a minister of Ravana, incited the Lankan people for self-sacrifice.** The queen Mandodari was astoni­shed at the loyalty of Ravana's uncle Malyadan to his mother­

land and exclaimed; —

5. Kartavya, Govind Das, p. 73
6. Ravana, Dinesh Devraj, p. 16
7. Ibid, p. 73
Summary:

A comprehensive study of Hindi dramas related to life-story of Ram reveals that writing of such plays began with Pranchandra Chauhan's Ramayan Mahanatak. And while analysing the subject-matter and plot construction of these dramas, it is found that there are enough materials relating to national consciousness in them. Another significance of these dramas is that they are full of ideas like glories of ancient past, national unity and integrity, desire for sacrifice for the motherland etc. The plays like Kartavya Ravana, Ramayana, Sulochana Sati, Ramlila etc. are also related to the rising of national feeling and national unity and integrity.

8. ibid, p. 89
The Krishna Awatar Plays:

In the preceding pages we discussed about the Ram Awatar plays and the development of national consciousness in them; and how proceeding to discuss the Krishna Awatar plays i.e., plays written on the life-story of Lord Krishna. The following is the list of plays available on Lord Krishna:

1) Parijat Haran - Umapati Upadhyay (1335)
2) Rukmini Haran - Daivakinandan Tripathy (1879)
3) Chandrawali Natâka - Bharatendu Harishchandra (1879)
4) Kamsa Badh - Daivakinandan Tripathy (1879)
5) Nandi Utsav - Daivakinandan Tripathy (1880)
6) Lalita - Ambika Datta Vyas (1884)
7) Maha Ras - Hari Har Duoey (1884)
8) Kalpa Vriksha - Khand Bahadur Mall (1885)
9) Usha Haran - Chandra Sharma (1885)
10) Dropadi Vastra Haran - Gaj Raj Sinha (1885)
11) Usha Haran - Kartik Prasad (1887)
12) Prabhas Milan - Durja Prasad Misra (1889)
13) Rukmini Parinoy - Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay 'Hari Yodh' (1894)
14) Dropadi Vastra Haran - Prabhu Lal (1896)
15) Yugal Vihar - Krishna Datta Dwij (1896)
16) Rukmini Parinoy - Mathura Das (1917)
17) Rukmini Mangal - Radheshyam Kathavasak (1918)
18) Krishnarjun Yuddha - Makhanlal Chaturvedi (1918)
19) Krishna Lila - Anand Prasad Kapur (1919)
20) Krishna Sudama - Yamuna Das Mehra (1924)
21) ShriKrishna Awatar - Radheshyam Katha Vasak (1927)
22) Kartavya (Uttarardh) - Seth Gobind Das (1925)
23) Usha Aniruddha - Sri Krishna Hasrat (1949)
24) Subhadra Parinay - Birendr Kr Gupta (1950)

Now, considering the theme and subject-matter of the Krishna Awatar plays in connection with the ideas of national consciousness, they may be discussed under the following heads:

a) Rebellion against the British Rule:

The British wanted to suppress the feeling and endeavour of the Indian people for freedom with brutal hand. The play-writes of this era depicted various ways and means to get rid of the authoritarian rule of the British. They began to give publicity among the masses about the brutality of this rule. Pandit Makhanlal Chaturvedi in his 'Krishnarjun
Yuddha* hinted at national feeling, corrupted English politics and at the sad plight of the Indian society. Galav Rishi also was infuriated at the corrupted administration and said to Balaram,—

"You have authority at your disposal. But you must know every detail of power and authority. You know it well that the king does not think of the disaster of the people. He has pushed the country towards the doom. Now you may meet the same fate."  

(b) **Depiction of Moral degradation:**

There are enormous illustrations of moral degradation of Indian people in the dramas of the Bharatendu period. When there is a chaos and fall in the social and political life of the people, moral degradation naturally follows. The play-writes of this period were very much critical of the prevalent moral degradation of the society. Most of these play-writes throw light on this side of the society. The game of dice between the Pandavas and the Kauravas in Ray Prabhu Lal Kayastha's 'Draupadi Vastra Haran' can be regarded as the example of degradation of morality.  

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(c) **Nature of marital relationship:**

During this period women claimed full freedom relating to marital relationship in the society. In the Rukmini Krishna of Radheshyam Kathavasak, Rukmini wanted to marry Krishna and not Shishupal. She opposed her brother and said to him; --

--- "O brother, now I give up all shamefulness and all fear and like to tell you in clear language that I shall commit suicide by hanging or by jumping into the well or by setting fire on me rather than marrying Shishupal."\(^{11}\)

It has been clearly proved that during this period women wanted freedom in selection of their life-partners.

(d) **National awakening:**

Dramatists of this period are found to give calls for national awakening and rising. They advised the Indian people to shake off idleness, selfishness, meanness and such other bad qualities in them.

The 'Sutradhar' in the Kalpa Vriksha said that\(^{12}\) if

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11. Rukmini Krishna, Radheshyam Kathavasak, pp. 105
12. Kalpa Vriksha, Khand Bahadur Mall, p. 3
during the spring, the people unite together to cultivate the soil of the land, definitely it would become a means to uplift the nation.

In the Rukmini Mangal, Krishna tried to unite and strengthen the Yadavs, He spoke of living a powerful and healthy life in this world.


(e) National unity:

Dramatists of the period under discussion, expressed the idea of unification of the whole country. They realised it fully well that without national unity, hope for freedom of the nation is meaningless.

In the Kalpa Vriksh, Indra's father Kashyap explained the value of love and unity to Krishna and Indra, who were fighting against each other. But it would not be wrong if we

13. Rukmini Mangal, R. Kathivasak, p. 61
suppose that his utterances were directed towards the Hindus and the Muslims in India.


(f) Desire for freedom:

In the speech of Basudev addressed to Daivaki in the Shri Krishna Awatar, desire for getting rid of Kamsa's tortures i.e., freedom from troubles is quite evident Basudev said, --


Summary:

Considering the Krishna Awatar plays it may be safely concluded that this stream of plays in Hindi began with Umapati

14. Kalpa Vriksh, Khang Bahadur Mall, p. 61
15. Shri Krishna Awatar, R. Kathavasak, p. 109
Padhyay's "Parijat Haran." And analysing these plays of stream from the point of view of national consciousness that rebellion against the British rule, illustration of moral degradation of the people, call for awakening, national unity etc. are the specialities of these plays. Besides them the desire for freedom was the most potent feature of these plays. The plays like the Chandrawali (Bharatendu), the Kartavya (Seth Gobind Das), Shri Krishnarjun Yuddha (Lakhan Lal), the Sudama (Kishori Das), the Krishna Sudama (Krishna Patha) etc. are very important from the point of historical and communal view.

The Parashuram Avatar plays:

Only one play is available on this theme. It is the Parashuram by Biswa, which was published in 1950 only. The subject-matter of the play in the light of national consciousness may be discussed under the following headings:

1) Hatred towards subordination:

In the Parashuram, the king of Kaunidanya did not submit to Kartaviryya and said to him — "How could be surrender to such a heartless, low and mean-minded one? It was better..."
II) Upholding of chastity:

It is found in the Parashuram that Renuka prayed God for upholding of chastity. She said that her husband wished to have Narayan as his son only to behead her. Further she said, --


Summary:

Considering the subject-matter and handling of the plot of the Parashuram Avatar plays we can easily come to the conclusion that this play is important from the point of giving birth to national consciousness. Hatred and wrath for subordination and upholding of chastity are the specialities of this play.

16. Parashuram, Viswa, p. 29
17. ibid, p. 11
The Narasingha Avatār plays:

The following are the plays available on this theme:

I) Prahlad Charit, Mohanlal Vishnulal Pandeya (1874)

II) Prahlad Charit, Shriniwas Das (1888)

III) Narad Ki Veena, Laxmi Narayan Mishra (1946)

IV) Prahlad, Bal Gobind Lal (1951)

V) Param Bhakt Prahlad, Radheshyam Kathavasak

We propose here to discuss the subject-matter of the Narasingha Avatār plays under the following heads:

a) Desire for Freedom from the British rule:

Radheshyam Kathavasak in his Param Bhakt Prahlad described the British rule as the dacronian one. Pramod told his friends that we should make ourselves free from dacronian rule.¹⁸

b) Cruelty of the Britishers:

The dramatist of the Param Bhakt Prahlad hinted at the cruelty of the British through the cruelty and hard-heartedness of Hiranya Kashipu, Hiranya Kashipu asked the people to worship

¹⁸. Param Bhakt Prahlad, Radheshyam Kathavasak, p. 107
him. But the people began to worship the Paramatma (the Great Soul or the God) rather than worshipping him. At this Hiranya Kashipu was much angry and ordered Brajadatta to snatch away the Scriptures from all the rebellious Brahmins. If they make any trouble to this their 'Laguns' (the 'sacred thread' worn by a Brahmin) should be removed from them. Thus cruelty of the British was represented here in the play.

Again Prahlad in the Prahlad of Bal Gobind Lall said, ---


c) National unity:

One Brahmin in the Bhakt Prahlad said to Pandeyaji thus,---

Varn Bhed, Kul riti, Grah Dharma Abom Jati Kartavyaki Parwah Na Karke Kya Stree Kya Parush, Kya Valak Kya Vriddh. Sabka Jhund Dharm Ke Jhande Ko Niche Satya Aur Sadachar Ka aroh Karne Keliye Taiyar Hain?21 In this manner the idea of national unity has been spread.

19. Param Bhakt Prahlad, Radheshyam Kathavasak, pp. 28-29
20. Prahlad, Bal Gobind Lal, p. 41
Prahlad in the play Prahlad hinted at the welfare of the world through national unity. He begged from Lord Narayan, —

"Jan Jan Ka Utthan Ho
Jan Jan Ka Utkarsh Ho,
Jan Jan Ke Utthan Se
Jan Jan Ko Ho Harsh.
Vyakti Vyakti Ke Krodh Se
Ho Na Kabhi Bhoi Bhit,
Jan Jan Ke Mon mein Vase
Sneh, Shanti, Sangeet."

**d) All-absorbing capacity of the Indian culture:**

It may be said that of the modern problem play writes Shri Laxminarayan Mishra is at the topmost position. He is known to be the first and the foremost play-write in Hindi literature in this line. Mishraji began the use of English dramatic style in the analysis of individual problems through the new environment of life. In his Puranic drama 'Narad Ki Veena' he proved that Indian culture has the capacity to absorb other cultures in it.

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22. Prahlad, op. cit., p. 100
23. Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Alochanatmak Adhyayan, Dr. Ved Pal Khanna, p. 249
24. Adhunik Hindi Natak, Dr. Nagendra, pp. 53-57
25. Narad Ki Veena, Shri Laxmi Narayan Misra, p. 2
Summary:

Although the glories of the Lord have been taken as the main theme of these Narasingha Awatar plays yet a glimpse of Aryan-Non-Aryan unity has been reflected through them. Considering these plays from the point of view of national consciousness, here we find some salient features like desire for freedom, the cruelty of the British, the idea of national unity etc. in abundance.

The Devi-Devta Vishayak plays:

The following is the list of available dramas of which themes are related to Gods and Goddesses (Devi-Devta):

1) Satee Charitr, Nanumant Singh (1910)
2) Satee Dahan Natak, Ram Goolam Rasik Viharilal (1912)
3) Ganesh Janm, Ramsharan Atmanand (1930)
4) Satee Parbati, Radheshyam Kathavasak (1944)
5) Shiv-Parbati, Babu Paripurnanand Verma (1948)
6) Maha Laxmi, Dindayal Gupt (1949)
7) Maa Durge, Hari Shankar Sinha 'Shriniwas'.

Below the themes of the Devi-Devta plays are analysed under different heads. Since the original plays are not available
in some cases, only mention of the names has been made here.

I) **Exploitation:**

Radheshyam Kathavasak in his Satee Parbati hinted at exploitation of the masses. Shankar told Narad of some past stories:

"Yeh Dhanpati Sahukar Apne Jiwan Mein Bada Nar Pishach Tha. Kiññi hi Vidhavayo Aur Kitñi hi Anathonka Khun Chuch Chuch Kar Kothinwala Vana tha."\(^{26}\)

It is strange that on one hand they exploited the poor and on the other constructed temples and Dharm Salas so that respect of the people towards them was increased and at the same time they were able to get high posts. Such an idea also exists in the present society.

II) **Awakening of women:**

In the Satee Parbati, a modern woman is depicted as safeguarding her own rights. After elopement, Sita rebuked Ravana,

"Jis Samaj mein Abalonka Adar Nehin, Sationke Satitwaka Sanman Nehin, Us Samaj, Us Jati, Us desh Ka Nash Sadaiv Huwa hain. Aur Hoga."\(^{27}\)

\(^{26}\) Satee Parbati, R. Kathavasak, p. 64

\(^{27}\) ibid, p. 94
In this play the words of Sita are the words of a modern woman. She does not like to bear the tortures silently; she can rebuke the torturer strongly. Sita here represents the whole womenkind.

In the Ma Durge, Ketu addressed Dhumralochan thus:

"Narike Kewal Anurag Aur tyag Ke Chitrako Dekh Kar

III) Loyalty:

Babu Paripurnanand Verma in his 'Shiv-Parbati' illustrated the example of loyalty to the crown. The prerogatives enjoyed by Indra, the God of gods are the result of the praiseworthy loyalty of gods to him. 29

In the Maa Durge, the king of Kanchanpur addressed a 'nati' (a dancing girl) thus, --

"Jao, es Nagarki Gali Gali mein Swatatra Ki Veena Vaja don, Eske Vatavaran Ko Kewal Ak Shabd se Bhar don, Yeh Bhumi Hamari Hain, Hamari Hi Rohegi." 30

29. Shiv-Parbati, B. Paripurnanand Verma, p. 33
30. Maa Durge, Hari Shankar Sinha, p. 54
Summary:

After careful analysis, it is clear that exploitation awakening of women and loyalty are the special features of these 'Devi-Devta' plays. Of these plays the Shiv-Vibah (Ram Golam Rachik), the Shiv-Parbati (Pari Purnanand Verma), the Maa Durga (Hari Shankar Sinha) and the Parbati (Vidya Shankar Bhatta) are important one.

The Rishi-Muni Vishayak Plays:

A comprehensive list of available Hindi dramas with Rishi-Muni (Sages and Saints) theme is given below:

1) Viswamitra, Yamuna Das Mehra (1921)
2) Satee Sukanya, Shyam Sharan Johari, (1923)
3) Adars Kumari, Ram Chandra Bharadwaj (1932)
4) Shri Shuk, Prabhudatt Brahmachari (1944)
5) Viswa Mitr, Durga Prasad Gupt (1950)

The above dramas of the Rishi-Muni theme are discussed under the following heads:

I) Persuasion of chastity:

In the Satee Sukanya, of Shyamasharan Johari, Sharyati gave his daughter Sukanya in marriage to a rishi
(Sage), Sukanya was a chaste woman and therefore, she could turn Indra and his courtiers into ashes by invoking her family god.31

II) Upholding of Justice:

Sharyati was a king and a disciple of Shravan. Indra, the God of gods tortured him like anything. Even his kingdom was taken away from him, yet Sharyati did not deviate from the path of justice.

Summary:

After a careful analysis, it is clear that the idea of national consciousness is found latent in the Rishi-Muni Vishayak plays in Hindi. These plays subscribe to this ideal through persuasion of chastity and upholding of justice as discussed above.

The Nar-Nari Vishayak Plays:

Most of the plays written during this period are related to 'Nar-Nari' i.e., human being -- both male and female.

Below we furnish a list of such Hindi dramas available along with their date of publication in the brackets:

31. Hindi Aur Asomike Pauranik Natak, Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari, p. 206
I) Damayanti Swayambar, Baikrishna Bhatt (1885)
II) Damayanti Swayambar, Gauri Shankar Bhatt (1885)
III) Dhruv Tapasya, Mansa Rao (1885)
IV) Bal Khel or Dhruv Charit, Damodar Sastry
V) Brihannala, Bal Krishna Bhatt (1890)
VI) Mor Dhwaj, Baligram Baishya (1890)
VII) Pradumn Visayak, Ayodhya Sinha Upadhyay (1893)
VIII) Abhimanyu Badh, Shaligram Baishya (1896)
IX) Sabitri Natak, Lala Devraj (1900)
X) Anjana Sundari, Kanhaiyalal (1901)
XI) Kapati Muni, Anant Ram Pandey (1903)
XII) Abhimanyu Badh, Gor Sharan Goswami (1908)
XIII) Mor Dhwaj, Yamuna Das Mehra (1911)
XIV) Urvashi, Laxmi Prasad (1910)
XV) Mahabharat, Narayan Pd. Vetab (1913)
XVI) Veer Abhimanyu, Radheshyam Kathavasak (1914)
XVII) Urvashi Natak, Kuwar Ramlal Verma (1917)
XVIII) Pandav Pratap, Haridas Manik (1917)
XIX) Bhism, Viswambhar Nath Sarma (1918)
XX) Dropadi Swayambar, Jalam Nanak (1921)
XXI) Ajnat Vas, Dwaraka Pd. Gupta (1921)
XXII) Apsara, Vriddhvi Ch. Agrawal (1921)

XXIII) Shravan Kumar, Radheshyam Kathavasak (1922)

XXIV) Ven Charit, Badrinath Bhatt (1922)

XXV) Purb Bharat, Mishra Vandhu (1923)

XXVI) Devyani, Yamuna Das Mehra (1922)

XXVII) Kichak, Bhagavannarayan Bhargav (1923)

XXVIII) Krur Ven, Hardwar Pd. Jalan (1924)

XXIX) Bhakta Chandra Has, Yamuna Pd. Mehra (1924)

XXX) Varmala, Gobind Vallabh Pant (1925)

XXXI) Dhruv Lila, Anand Pd. Kapur (1926)

XXXII) Janmejoy Ka Nag Yagna, Joyshankar Prasad (1926)

XXXIII) Shravan Kumar, Hari Das Manik (1927)

XXXIV) Kurukshetra, Jagannath Sharan (1928)

XXXV) Savitri Satyaban, Ganga Pd. Arora (1928)

XXXVI) Anjana Sundari, Uma Shankar Mehta (1929)

XXXVII) Dropadi Swayambar, R. Kathavasak (1930)

XXXVIII) Vidrohi Atma, Uday Shankar Bhatt (1935)

XXXIX) Sagar Vijoy, Uday Shankar Bhatt (1937)

XL) Satyagrahi, Vraj Nandan Sharma (1938)

XLI) Damayanti Swayambar, Bal Krishna Bhatt (1942)

XLII) Devyani, Mrs Tara Mishra (1946)
Under the following heads we propose to discuss the theme of the Nar-Nari Vishayak plays:

a) Illustration of Economic Disaster:

The playwrights wanted to make the people conscious about the sad plight of Indian economy by heartrending illustrations of the economic disaster of the country. At the same time they also inspired the people to use 'Swadeshi' in place of foreign goods.

Badri Nath Bhatt in his play 'Ven Charitra' depicted the immoral activities of the rich people thus:

"Din Bhar Majduri Karke Bhi Bhukhe Rah Janewale Aur Ishwar Ko na Bhulnewale Garibko Abhi Kambakht Bagairah Vata Kar Dut Kara Yay."\(^{32}\)
b) Dissatisfaction for corrupt political system:

King Bhanu Pratap in the Kapati Muni speaks of corrupt administration, --

-- "Jis Rajake Rajyamein
Dust Na Pawe Dand;
Praja Sahit Raja Tonha
Bhogte Dukh Prasand.
Bhogta Dukh Prasand
Pranka Dar Nisi Basar,
Chhatra Bhang Nehin Der
Dust Ghate Niji Asusar."33

One character in the Mor Dhwaj is found to be much distressed at the disaster of the country and prayed God for its redress;

-- "Durdin Ghota Despar Bhari,
Go Brahman Ka Kal;
Danav, Daitya, Asur Bahu Bade,
Hinsak Nar Chandal."34

33. Kapati Muni Natak, Anant Ram Pandeya, p. 33
34. Mor Dhwaj, Yamuna Das Mehra, p. I
Radheshyam Kathavasak in his play Dropadi Swayambar raised a slogan against political exploitation. Satrajit was mad with fury when the precious Gem - the Syamantak was taken away from him. He said to his daughter Satyabhama, — "Are these kings gods in the shape of a man, who wanted to snatch away hard-earned things from their subjects? They are animals although they have hands and feet like human beings." In this manner the play-writ raised his voice against the exploiters of the poor.

Again in the Savitri-Satyavan, one Prasakt expressed his feelings like this:

— "Phansi pe jhul jaye, Tukre Ho Dehke Annyay Se Lorne Ko Toiyar Khare Hain."  

C) Recalling of the Glories of the Past:

In the Dropadi Swayambar of Radheshyam Kathavasak, Arjun expressed unfettered love and deep affection for the motherland which is dearer to his life.

— "Yeh Hamara desh, desh Hain, Yeh Hain Hamara Matribhumi; Dhanse Pyara Irn Hain Pranose pyari Matribhumi." 

35. Dropadi Swayambar, R. Kathavasak, p. 57  
36. Savitri Satyavan, Gobind Das, p. 5  
37. Dropadi Swayambar, R. Kathavasak, p. 113
The Veer Abhimanyu of Kathavasakji is a well-known drama. Here all the qualities of Abhimanyu like heroism, bravery, devotion to his father etc. are depicted in such a balanced manner that audience cannot but enjoy it. At the very outset of the play the dancers (Nat-natis) attracted the attention to the glories of ancient India:

--- Huye Dharenvan Dhanvan Esi Bharat Mein;
Aur Bade Bade Vidwan Esi Bharat mein;
Tha Sarse Ucha Jnan Esi Bharat mein."\(^{38}\)

In the Shrawan Kumar, light has been thrown on the comparative relationship of the ideals of the kings with those of subjects. The character of the king Dasarath has been depicted as great and clean. He loved his subjects like his own sons.\(^{39}\)

d) **Anxiety for Subordination & Inspiration for Independence:**

The Vidusak (courtier) of the king Kashiraj in the widrohi Ambaa depicted a very heart-rendering picture of slavery:

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38. Veer Abhimanyu, R. Kathavasak, p. 6
39. Shrawan Kumar, R. Kathavasak, p. 7

In his Sagar Vijoy, Uday Shankar Bhatt addressed the people in the following language:

— "Tom Manushya Ho. Manushya Swatantra lOkar Jivit Rahne Ke liye Hi Paida Huwa Hain. Yadi Yah Duchre Ke Adhikar Ko Chhinta Hain To Yah Manushya Nehin Pashu tulya Hain."41

The king in the Urvashi said to Urvashi, — "Hello lovely one! Subordination does not allow you to do anything you like. So obey the orders of your husband."42 Thus the dramatist wanted to point out to the evils of subordination. In the Nal Damayanti, the writer hinted at breaking of the shackles of subordination through his character Dwapar. Dwapar said to Puskar:

— "Tuf Hain Lahot Hain

Tumhe Dhikkar Hain Dhikkar Hain,
Yoh Amar Karta Kisiko bhi nehin,
Sansar Hain;

40. Vidrohi Amba, Uday Shankar Bhatt, p. 72
41. Sagar Vijoy, Uday Shankar Bhatt, p. 103
42. Urvashi, Kunwar Ramlal Verma, p. 86
(e) Sense of Self-sacrifice & of Revolution:

Kathavasakjee expressed his revolutionary ideals from the economic point of view in his play 'Dropadi Swayambar'. Satyabhama, daughter of a poor Yadav, Satrajit expressed her grudge against capitalists:

-- "Main Pushtha ho In Kaldarose to garib ke mukh Se
Chhine huye Grasoko Dakar Dakar Kar Mote bane hain -- Kya
Tumhara Khun Khun Hain Aur In Goriboka Khun Pani ?" 44

In the same play, Arjun described 'death' as a game and believed that life become fruitful only when it is sacrificed for the good of the motherland. 45

Shukracharyya, the preceptor of the Danavs explained the cause of their coming to life again and again was --

"Desh Raksha Hetu Ran bhumi Mein Pran denewale Swarg Ke
Adhikari Hain" -- as such the Danavs came to life again and again after they were killed. 46

43. Nal Damayanti, Ramji Sharma, p. 39
44. Dropadi Swayambar, R. Kathavasak, p. 57
45. ibid, p. 113
46. Devyani, Yamuna Das Mehra, p. 38
Bhattjee roared against imperialism and spoke of revolution thus, --

"Tum Utho, Saraju Tumul Nad Karti Huye Tumhe Jaga
Hahi Hain. Uski Helo rese Suryya Vans Ki Swatantrata Ki dhwani
Nikol Kohi hain. Tum Manushya Ho, Manushya Swatantra Ho Kar
jivit Rahne Ke Liye Hi Paida Huwa Hain." 47

(f) Freedom for women:

In the Vidrohi Amba, Udayshankar Bhatt’s mind was rebellions when men dishonoured women. Amba answered to the question of Vidushak in rebellious tone that dishonour to a woman was quite insignificant. In the society of men such shamelessness was always there. A man, who is always after the woman for her beauty, has been dishonouring her. Amba took revenge at last on Bhism for his dishonour to her and proved the capacity of a woman. 48

Thus the dramatist spoke highly of freedom for woman.

In the Devi Shakuntala, Gautamee said, --

"Shakuntala, ab yeh Lajkarne Ka Samay Nehin. Jo
tu Laj Karti Hain, to Jindegi Se Hath Dho Baithegi, Aur Kalank

47. Sagar Vijoy, Uday Shankar Bhatt, p. 64
48. Vidrohi Amba, Uday Shankar Bhatt, pp. 76-77
Ki Bhagini Hogi. Atoeb Apna Ghunghat Khol de Aur Apna Pata Vata Kar Patike Bhram Ko dur Karo;\(^{49}\) Saying so Gautamee then put off the veil of Shakuntala.

\(\text{(g) Inspiration for Freedom :}
\)

King Mordhwaj in the play 'Mordhwaj' asked his subjects to be firm enough for attainment of independence and to get rid of evil influences of foreigners. He also advised them to perform 'Swadham' (One's own duty).\(^{50}\)

In the Veer Abhimanyu, Abhimanyu was also found fighting for freedom. The utterances rebuking the 'Maharathis' proved that he was fighting for 'Dharm' i.e., 'Swadham'.

\(\text{(h) Feeling for National Unity :}
\)

In the Sagar Vijoy, king Sagar told Basistha that the king was for the security of his subjects and the state. It is the living voice of the people only. The king is not only for luxury but he is one among the people. His real duty is to keep the wealth fortified for the subjects and not for him. The

\(^{49}\) Devi Shakuntala, Prof. Hari Prasad Dwivedi, p. 76

\(^{50}\) Mordhwaj, Yamuna Das Lehra, p. 22
happiness of the subjects is the happiness of the king and the peace of the subjects is the peace for the soul of the king.

In the Sharawan Kumar, the sage Basisth reminded Sumant of the instructions given by him; --


Summary:

From the plays discussed above, it may be concluded that the themes of the Nar-Nari Vishayak plays are based on the problems of economic disaster, dissatisfaction for corrupt political system, repentance for subordination, inspiration for independence, freedom for women, sense of self-sacrifice and of revolution etc. Besides these, national unity and integrity is another feature of these plays. It is found that the Nar-Nari Vishayak plays subscribed a lot for national consciousness. From this point of view the names of plays like

51. Shravan Kumar, Hari Das Manik, p. 8
Janmejoy Ka Nag Yajna, Vidrohi Amba, Anjana Sundari, Kurukshetra, Devyani and Korn are worthmentioning.

Characterisation:

1) Characterisation in the Ram Awatar Plays:

Most of the characters of the Ram Awatar plays are depicted according to the original mythological stories. But for the systematic treatment of the theme and development of the end, certain imaginary characters are also introduced. In most of the plays Lord Ram is the hero and Sita the heroine. There are certain plays where Laxman, Nishad, Bharat, Vibhishan, Ravan or Meghnad is depicted as the hero. There are illustrations of caste system, sense of self-sacrifice, endeavour for independence etc.

The queen Mandodari once said, "Atma Validan dena, kathor hona Aur Marna Nehin Janti, Yoh Desh Akrant Ho jata Hain." In this manner patriotic feelings were given publicity through minor characters also.

52. Ravan, Dev Raj Dinesh, p. 89
2) Characterisation in the Krishna Awatar plays:

In most of the plays under discussion, Lord Krishna is the hero. The play-writes introduced some imaginary characters to fulfil certain aims. In these plays Generally Rukmini, Satyabhama, Radha, Subhadra, Dropadi or Usha is the heroine. Through dramatic characters like the sage Galav, Shishupal, ShriKrisna, Indra, Devaki and others, there have been expression of national consciousness in almost all these Krishna Awatar plays.

3) Characterisation in the Parashuram Awatar plays:

Here in the Parashuram Awatar play, Lord Parashuram is the hero and Kartaviryya is the villain. The characters like Parashuram, Jamadagni, Renuka, Kartaviryya and Mahasweta are successfully drawn. The persuasion of chastity has been represented through the character of Renuka and hatred towards subordination and love for freedom has been shown through king Kaunidanya.

54. Rukmini Krishna, R. Kathavasak, p. 105
55. Prahlad, Bal Gobind Lal, p. 100
4) **Characterisation in the Narasingha Awatar Plays:**

Of all the characters here in the Narasingha Awatar plays like Prahlad, Vibhishan, Hiranyakashipu, Narad, Vijoy Kirty, Menka, the character of Prahlad has been depicted in the customary way. But Bal Gobind Lal treated Prahlad in a modern way. Narayan, Nar, Vijoy Kirty and Menka are originally Dravidian characters. Narad has been described as the messenger of peace. Though one imaginary character Pramod, freedom from dacronian rule, through Hiranyakashipu the cruelty of the British and through Prahlad a sense of national unity were successfully depicted.

5) **Characterisation in the Devi-Devta Vishayak Plays:**

A close study of these plays reveals that all these puranic characters are depicted in accordance with their original Puranic style, although some imaginary characters are introduced here and there. Exploitation of the subjects, rise of women, freedom of women, loyalty etc. have been depicted through the characters like Shankar and Narad, Sita, Ketu and the king of Kanchanpur respectively.

56. Prahlad, Bal Gobind Lal, p. 100
57. Hindi Aur Asomike Pauranik Natak, Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari, p. 184
6) **Characterisation in the Rishi-Muni Vishayak Plays:**

Among the characters in the plays under consideration, Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari referred to the character of Sukanya as both customary and modern. Sukanya is the upholder of the principle of 'Sati Dharma' (Chastity) and Sharyati has been depicted as the defender of 'Dharma' and justice. Besides these, the Sage Vasistha was found to be a kind and ideal 'Tapasyee' -- a meditator.

7) **Characterisation in the Nar-Nari Vishayak Plays:**

In almost all the plays under this head, the characters are based on the social problems of the day. The hatred towards corruption in political system was indicated through Bhanupratap of the Vencharit and Prasakt of the Savitri Satyaban. Again the Vidushak in the Vidrohi Amba and the king in the Urvashi expressed their anxiety towards subordination and inspiration for independence. Savajit in the Dropadi Swayambar and Sukracharyya in the Devyani expressed their ideas of sacrifice and revolution. Besides these freedom for woman, national unity and security constitute a part of the theme in these plays.

58. ibid, p. 206
59. Devyani, Yamuna Das Mehra, p. 31.
Aim:

According to Indian dramatic critics aim of the plays is included in the theory of 'Rasa'. But by the Western critics aim has been accepted as an independent theory. Dr. Nagendra describes the Puranic dramas as the Puranic Moral Plays and said that the basis of these plays is the Puran and aim is moral one. Several critics expressed similar ideas with Dr. Nagendra as below:

a) "Dharmopadesh Ke Sath Sath Desonnati Ka natak Dikhana Chaliye." 61

b) "En natakonka uddeshya Janta Ko Kuch Siksha Dena Hota tha." 62

c) "Satyake Rahasya Darshan Ke liye Dristi Unmilit Karna Hain." 63

d) "Ajke Pauranik Natak bhi Yug Samasya Ke Samadhan Ka Prayas Karte Hain." 64

60. Adhunik Hindi Natak, Dr. Nagendra, p. 46
62. Adhunik Hindi Sahityka Vikas, Dr. Krishna Lal, p. 244
63. Kurukshetra Ka Sabera, Dr. Joyshankar Tripathy, p. 11
64. Hindi Natak, Udbhav Aur Vikas; Dr. Dasarath Ozah, p. 532
Below we propose to discuss the aims of the Puranic plays like the Ram Awatar, the Krishna Awatar, the Parashuram Awatar, the Rishi-Muni Vishayak, the Devi-Devta Vishayak and the Nar-Nari Vishayak plays briefly.

On the first place, the Ram Awatar plays or the Ramakhyan plays are quite purposive. In the majority of such plays, the aim is to deify Ram and thereby increasing the revenue of the masses. In some of the plays evils of casteism, national unity and self-sacrifice were taken as the aim. In this connection reference can be made to plays like the Sulochana Satee\textsuperscript{65}, the Ramlila Vijoy Nat, the Kartavya and the Ravan where the dramatists hinted at national consciousness through the aims of the plays.

Secondly, in the Krishna Awatar plays the aim is to deify Krishna. Besides this, there are certain other aims also. The main aim of the play 'Krishnarjyun Yuddha',\textsuperscript{66} is to prove dutifulness of the Dropadi Vastra Haran to prove superiority of moral principles while of the Kalpa Vriksha and the Rukmini Mangal it is national unity.

\textsuperscript{65} Sulochana Satee, Valdevjee Agrahari, p. 66
\textsuperscript{66} Krishnarjyun Yuddha, Pt. Nakhan Lal Chaturvedi, p. 23
Thirdly, the main aim of the Parashuram Awatar play is to prove the greatness of father's orders. Side by side, the dramatist showed the anger against subordination,\textsuperscript{67} and spoke in favour of chastity in women.

The main aim of the Narasimha Awatar plays is to sing the praise of the Almighty. At the same time, through praises, the dramatist put before us the ideas about national unity, oppression of the British rule and the means to get rid of it etc. In the Narad Ki Veena\textsuperscript{68}, the chief aim is to create unity between the Aryans and the Non-Aryans.

Through the Devi-Devta Vishayak plays, oppression, exploitation, rise of women and loyalty are chiefly depicted. Here mention of Prahlad (Bal Gobind Lal), Param bhakt Prahlad (R. Kathavasak), and Narad Ki Veena (Laxminarayan Misra) may be made in this regard.

In the close analysis of the Rishi-Muni Vishayak plays, it can be safely concluded that their chief aim was maintenance of justice\textsuperscript{69} and observance of chastity. In the language of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Parashuram, Viswa, p. 29
\item \textsuperscript{68} Hindi Aur Asomike Pauranik Natak, Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari, p. 186
\item \textsuperscript{69} ibid, p. 208
\end{itemize}
Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari --

"En Natakanka Pradhan Uddeshya Sukanya Ke Prativrata Dharm Ka Pratipadam Karna Pratit Hota Hain."70

The chief aim of the Nar-Nari Vishayak dramas is to depict the basic problems of human society. In the Ven Charit it is the economic problem, in the Kapoti Muni and Mordhwaj the political problem and in the Vidrohi Amba, the Sagar Vijoy and the Urvashi71, it is the call for freedom. In the Devyani and the Dropadi Swayambar, the play-writ wanted to depict the ideals of self-sacrifice and of revolution. The Sage Vasistha in the Shrawan Kumar hinted at national unity.72

Conclusion :

In the conclusion we find that there are numerous plays relating to incarnations. Of these incarnation plays the Krishna Awatar plays are found in a large number. While discussing the theme of these Awatar plays, one must admit that although the basic theme of them is to deify somebody or to express the glories of gods yet they are full of ideas of national unity and national consciousness.

70. ibid, p. 206
71. Urvashi, K. Ramlal Verma, p. 86
72. Shrawan Kumar, Haridas Manik, p. 8
In the Rishi-Muni Vishayak plays, although their number is less than the Awatar plays, yet they depict the greatness of chastity and justice. Again the number of the Nar-Nari Vishayak plays is more than that of Awatar plays. Their themes are based on the religious, social, cultural and political problems of the present society. The names of the plays like the Vidrohi Amba, the Urmila, the Kurukshetra Ka Savera, the Devyani etc. may be mentioned where problems of casteism, freedom of women, conjugal life etc. found expression.

A study of the characterisation in these plays makes it clear that the dramatists not only fortified the characters of Puranic personalities in them but also expressed about human virtues and the virtues of the state through them. The problems of rise of women, casteism, exploitation and political problems etc. are clearly depicted in them. It can also be mentioned that the characters of the Puranic plays expressed the deep thought and humanitarian outlook of the dramatists. The dramatists also depicted politics and virtues of the age along with their national feelings. Of all the Hindi Puranic plays of this period the Krishnarjun Yuddha, the Kartavya, the Sagar Vijoy etc. expressed this feeling in them. Love for
Indian culture is depicted very successfully side by side with national unity.

It can be safely concluded after an elaborate study that the attempt made in the Puranic plays to show the way in the midst of troubles and exploitation is equally applicable in the present times in India. Here the ideal of national consciousness is also clear and distinct.