Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The present study is a modest attempt to deal with the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar especially the themes and techniques in them. Drama is an audio-visual medium and it has been a powerful and effective genre in literature. This form was developed particularly in Greece, Rome, England and India. It is the integral part of the culture and society. It is concerned with religion, philosophy, moral commitment and social and political changes of the society. It is the representation of life that combines in it the real and fictional, art and reality. Bharata in his Natyashastra refers to it as the ‘Fifth Veda’.

In the world of literature drama is the most peculiar, the most delightful and most appealing of all the literary genres. It is concerned with the inner consciousness of human race and it explores the human nature.

In the recent past Indian drama has witnessed a spectacular growth in regional languages and also the drama in English translation. Extensive translations of regional plays into English have established a bond between East and West, North and South.

Post-Independence Indian drama has opened new vistas both technically and thematically. It has contributed substantially to the growing richness of contemporary creative consciousness. Drama in English translation has registered a remarkable growth in the recent decades. During the last few years several plays originally written in the regional languages have been translated into English. There is a need to assess and evaluate Indian drama in its totality. The regional drama in India is slowly paving way for the evolution of the ‘National Theatre’ into which all streams of theatrical art seem to
The contemporary Indian playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad have played a significant role in the development of Indian drama. These are the torchbearers of this genre. They have made bold innovations and experiments and have dealt with the themes related to the present social scenario, in an effort to bring about social change and a social cultural revolution to make the people aware of the need to renew the social structure and march towards a better social system.

**Statement of Hypothesis**

The primary reading of the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar reveals that sex, struggle and zest for political power, violence and the instinct of selfishness are the major themes or the core areas of the selected plays. Both the playwrights seem to have penetrated deep into these major themes in order to understand human life or human predicament. A careful study of these plays of the two playwrights with special reference to these basic instincts of human beings is likely to reveal the identical vision of human life or human predicament of both the playwrights. At the initial stage the reading of their plays create these first impressions, however a detailed study is required to find out the realities in these contexts. For this purpose a careful comparison of the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar is necessary to testify the hypothesis.

In the context of the hypothesis mentioned above there can be only three possibilities.

1. The two dramatists have entirely different views of human life or human predicament.
2. The two dramatists have something common and they share to a limited extent a partial view of human predicament.
3. The vision of life or the concept of human predicament of both the
playwrights is mostly identical and they have almost the same view of the human life.

The present study is an attempt to testify the hypothesis mentioned above and to come to a conclusion by making a comprehensive statement about the themes and techniques of the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar.

Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar have used various themes and techniques to explore the inherent social and cultural problems in Indian society ranging from ancient, renaissance and modern times. The researcher intends to compare and contrast these themes and techniques in the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. Girish Karnad has used Indian myths in general and Kannada myths in particular to comment and criticize Indian traditions. Vijay Tendulkar has used the psycho-analytical method introduced by Sigmund Freud to delve deep into the evil in Indian traditions. The progressive Marathi ethos on the backdrop of the major role played by social thinkers and leaders like Tilak and Ambedkar has deprived Marathi cultural scene form the basic mythical milieu prevalent in South India. However Vijay Tendulkar has deliberately used modern Western, European psychological and social theories to probe into the role of sex and violence in the Indian psyche. The research will find out how these two playwrights have used Indian myths on the one hand and modern psychology and sociology on the other hand to create new themes and techniques in their plays and have thus enriched Indian Drama. The aim of research is to develop the powers of understanding and appreciating.

The Significance and Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the selected plays of the two playwrights in the context of selected critical categories.

2. To analyze and understand the dramatic techniques used by the two writers.
3. To define the perceptions of human life of both the playwrights revealed in their selected plays.

4. To compare and contrast the themes, techniques and perceptions of human life of the two playwrights.

5. To make a comprehensive statement on the selected plays of two dramatists in the context of the hypothesis and the objectives of the study.

The primary objective of the study is to analyze and interpret the themes and techniques in the plays of Karnad and Tendulkar. An attempt will be made to conduct the study according to certain major canons of comparative literature. One of the objectives of the study is to compare and contrast the themes and techniques used by Karnad and Tendulkar to evaluate, comment and criticize Indian traditions and to examine the evils in the society. The study will attempt to examine the role of power and power politics in the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. The family relationship that includes man and woman relationship is the crux of the themes of these playwrights. The social, economic and cultural relationship of the individual is an extension of this basic man-woman relationship. The study will explore how Girish Karnad uses Indian myths and Vijay Tendulkar uses modern psychological approach to understand the complexity of this relationship. These playwrights use the dramatic aspects of action, plot and dialogues to delineate the complex characters. This complexity is lucidly presented by the use of rich Indian folk traditions in dance and music like Yakhagana and Dashavatar.

Karnad and Tendulkar are bilingual playwrights. They have written their plays in their regional languages and English as well. The research study is limited to the English plays of Karnad and the Marathi plays of Tendulkar.

The comparison between these two eminent playwrights will help the drama going public in India and abroad to understand the contribution of the
Karnad and Tendulkar in the dynamics of changing modern human relationship. The academic research in literature will be greatly benefited from the detailed study of these playwrights and their comparison because the established academic research in English has so far compared the Indian writer with the western writer but the comparison between two Indian writers will orient the researchers abroad to the tension and strain in modern Indian society. It can be further argued that the present study will not only benefit the academic research in language and literature but it will be helpful to the researchers in social sciences and fine arts as well. The researchers in subject like psychology will find ample resources in this study to understand the stress and resulting ailments in human relationship, especially man-woman relationship in modern India. We know that sex is the basis of man-woman relationship and all the men and women characters in the plays undertaken in this study exemplify well the root cause of problematic man-woman relationship in the concerned type of sexual relationship they enjoy or rather they don’t enjoy. A researcher in the field of psychology will find the study of these characters useful to understand those types. The research in other social science disciplines like Political Science and Economics will also gain a few important directions in their particular areas from the study of these plays. The changing social patterns, urbanization, globalization, privatization have actually been the reasons for the emotional tension and strain in the human relationship portrayed in these plays. The researchers in social sciences will be able to understand these root causes and their impact on the individuals while they get acquainted with the study of characters in this study. The all-pervading violence in our society and which is the part of the plays studied here has its roots in our failure to bring about the real social change. The researchers in the field of Economics will see it better in the present research.

The present research is pertaining to the dramatic criticism and not to
the theatre criticism even to the production. In this regard it must be kept in
mind that drama, dramatist and dramatic criticism are different from theatre,
playwrights and theatre criticism or production. Drama has certain extra
literary aspects in comparison with other literary forms like poetry and fiction.
To elaborate this statement further, it can be said that drama is not only
literature but also a performing art which requires a co-operative and
collaborative activity. Moreover it is the combination of lyricism and mime.
More precisely it is the blending of lyricism with mind. While lyricism refers to
the printed text, mime refers to the action on the stage. These extra literary
qualities of drama enhance drama to the highest literary status.

The age old conviction that literature is the mirror of life is truer with
drama than other literary forms.

Drama is able to hold ‘the mirror up to nature’. One of the most
eminent dramatists, Tennessee Williams has said, “Once in a while someone
will say that he would rather wait for a play to come out as a book than to see
a live performance of it, where he would be distracted from its true values if it
has any, by so much that is mere spectacle and sensation and consequently
must be meretricious and vulgar. There are plays meant for reading. I have
read them. I have read the works of thinking playwrights ..... a play in a book is
only the shadow of a play and not even a clear shadow of it ..... The printed
script of a play is hardly more than an architect’s blueprint of a house not yet
built. The color the grace and elevation, the structural pattern in motion, the
quick interplay of living beings, suspended like pitiful lighting is a cloud, these
things of the play, not words on there.” (Afterwards to Comino Real)
(S. Ramswamy)

Is there any value for play without performance?

There is a very significant question asked that can we think of the
dramatic value of a drama without its performance? Is it helpful to think of
the play as a literary text only? The concerned work is regarding the literary
value of the dramatic texts. Some are of the opinion that there cannot be drama without a performance. The real drama is in its stage performance. At the same time they think that at every performance the drama may have different effects. Now a days the dramatists are paying a lot of attention to performance. In the previous period the dramatists paid a lot of attention to the literary value of the drama and they paid least attention to the performance. But the modern dramatists are paying a lot of attention to the performance.

The drama and its performance can be studied with three different dimensions.

1. The performance of the drama (The capacity of the actors).
2. The performance ability of the drama. (Is the drama written for the stage performance? Does the writer know the ability and limitations of the stage? Does he know how to perform the play? Etc.)
3. The need of the performance of the drama [Not the effect of the words (dialogues) but the effect of the presentation].

Drama has got performance value as well as literary value. Tendulkar mainly wrote his plays for the dramatic performance but some of his plays like Baby and Bhau Murarrao are published without performances. Other plays of Tendulkar are performed in the beginning and are published later on.

As Marjorie Boulton says, “A true play is three dimensional it is literature that walks and talks before our eyes ... the text of the play is meant to be translated in to sights, sounds and action which occur literally or physically on a stage. The action and conversations take place before our very eyes, or, if there are actions in the play so violent and distressing that they
cannot be performed on the stage, they can be described by characters that are present on the stage and show all the signs of the horror and revulsion.” (Boulton Marjorie 3-4)

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The literary vision of a writer cannot be defined only with the study of his single work. The literary vision of the writer can be understood by studying major works of the writer. The undertaken research work will help the researchers in social sciences to understand the dynamics of the modern Indian Society. This type of comparative study has several benefits. It has in itself its own significance as a study in literature and literary criticism on one hand and on the other hand it will provide us certain comparative literary perceptions of the selected authors in the context of themes and techniques used by them. The major thrust of the present research work being the human relationship it will be useful to understand the scope of this research in terms of following major aspects -

1. Family Relationship {Human Relationship}
2. Political Power and Power Politics
3. Sexual Relationship
4. Violence

It will be further useful to understand the scope as well as limitation of the present research in terms of following aspects -

1. Plot
2. Action
3. Characters
4. Use of myth
5. Songs
6. Dances
7. Language
8. Music
The scope of the study is to compare the themes and techniques used by Karnad and Tendulkar. The themes and techniques in the plays of Girish Karnad - *Yayati, Tughlaq, Hayavadan, Nag-Mandal, Tale-Dand and The Fire and the Rain* and in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar - *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe, Ghidhade, Sakharam Binder, Ghashiram Kotwal, Kamala and Kanyadan* are the focus of the study. The study is limited to the English plays of Girish Karnad and Marathi plays of Vijay Tendulkar. Vijay Tendulkar’s plays are translated from Marathi into English by various translators. However the plays selected for the study are the original Marathi plays of Vijay Tendulkar. Though Karnad has written eleven plays the study is limited only to the selected six plays of Karnad and same is the case with Vijay Tendulkar. Though in case of drama the performance is very important the study is limited to the ‘thematic value’ of the texts and the techniques which are mentioned by the playwrights in their texts only. The study does not deal with the actual performances of the plays on the stage yet where so ever it is necessary to mention about the performances just the commentary has been passed on it. A brief survey of the context in which the selected authors have written their works has been included in the chapter.

**The Origin of the Indian Drama**

The creation of the new form of literature was reserved to the silver age, when the gods approached Lord Brahma and bade him to produce something to give pleasure to the ears and eyes alike. Something new should be created and it should be enjoyed even by shudras. Brahma gave ear to the pleading and designed to fashion a Veda in which tradition (itihas) should be combined with instruction in all the ends of men. He took

- element of Recitation from *Rigveda*
- Song from *Samveda*
- Mimetic art from *Yajurveda*
- and Sentiment from *Atharavaveda.*
Then he asked Vishvakarman the divine architect to build a playhouse in which sage Bharata was instructed to carry into practice the art thus created.

All the gods accepted the new creation with joy. Lord Shiva contributed to it with his Tandava, Parvati with tender and voluptuous Lasya, and Lord Vishnu took the responsibility of the four dramatic styles, essential to the effects of any play. Bharata took the responsibility of writing the Natyasstra. This Natyasstra is also called as Natyaveda or Fifth Veda.

The Vedic ritual contained in itself the germs of drama. The ritual did not consist merely of the singing of songs or recitations in honour of the gods; it involved a complex round of ceremonies in which there was the element of dramatic representation. A drama proper can only be said to come into being when the actors perform parts deliberately for the sake of the performance, to give pleasure to themselves and others, if not profit also, if a ritual includes elements of representation, the aim is not the representation, but the actors are seeking a direct religious or magic result. (Keith A. Berriedale)

Girish Karnad mentions in his The Fire and the Rain, “Indra realized that the gods were unable or unfit to deal with this new form and passed it on to a human preceptor, Bharata, and Bharata with the help of his hundred sons and some nymphs specially created by Bramha, for the purpose, staged the first play.” (Karnad 70)

The play was performed on the occasion of the Banner festival, held to celebrate Indra’s victory in a battle over the demons. The theme of the play was victory of the gods over the demons, the event which the festival was meant to celebrate. This didn’t please the demons that were present. They took umbrage and using supernatural powers, paralyzed the speech movement as well as memory of the actors. (Notice that the demons do not attack the actors physically but rather, render the training they had received for performance ineffective.)
Indra, enraged by the mischief of the demons, laid into the demons with his thunderbolt, killing many.

(Notice again that thus Indra, the god, re-enacts what Indra, in Bharata’s plays was enacting in imitation of what Indra, the god, and initially had done in Battle.) But the demons persisted in their obstructive tactics.

At this point Bharata again approached Brahma whose immediate reaction was to suggest that the theatre building should be built within which the performance would proceed uninterrupted. He placed the various Gods at the vulnerable point of the building to ensure security. And then he addressed the demons on the nature of Drama. In it (natya) there is no exclusive representation of you or the God’s he said, ‘for the drama is re-enactment of the state of the Three Worlds.’ Drama serves varied functions providing for instruction, entertainment, enlightenment, happiness, peace and moral upliftment. It teaches one one’s duty and relives one’s sorrow. There is no maxim, no learning, no art or craft that is not found in drama, for it is the joys and sorrows of human nature expressed through gestures and other techniques.

Then Brahma instructed Bharata to concentrate the stage for the next performance. The character of nati is interesting. In the early days, she was a songstress and a danseuse and she was found in many plays. In some plays like *Mrichha Katikam* and *Ratnavali* the nati is represented as the wife of the sutradhara. Nati became a permanent member of the Sutradhara’s band.

The role of the Sutradhara was to entertain the audience and at the same time inform them of the play, the plot, and the characters and so on. His work was not mere sthapana or introduction with amusement and this sort of sthapana was called a prastavana. “The prastavana was originally nothing else but the music the singing in produce of the seasonal charm.” (Adya Ragacharya 70)

Ratan Thiyam in his play *Chakravyuha* writes,
Periparshvika : 1.  O. Guru , O my  preceptor , Lord Brahma , the creator of this universe, who was himself born in the lotus (He makes the lotus gesture) stemming from the navel (points to the navel) of Lord Vishnu had taken the recitative from the Rig Veda, music from the Sam Veda, action from Yajur Veda and the Rasas or emotions from the Atharva Veda to create fifth Veda called the Natya Veda (He describes each Veda with broadly drawn gestures indicating the attributes and drama gestures indicating the attributes and draws a pot to suggest the hoards) Is it not true , Garudeva my teacher? (He addresses the Sutradhara who has been following his gestures appreciatively.)(Ratan Thiyam 70)

Any play is designed to be acted before an audience whose characters and interest keep changing with the times. The playwright must write for the present and create the place for his characters in situations that are interesting and relevant to general human experience and their world.

The oldest text regarding the theory of Drama is Bharata’s Natyasastra. In it Bharata who claimed that drama has divine origin and it is to be connected with the silver age. The gods approached Lord Brahma and requested him to produce something to give pleasure to the eyes by Shudras. Brahma listened to the pleading and created fifth Veda by mixing all four Vedas. He took elements of recitation from Rigveda, song from Samveda, mimetic art from Yajurveda and Sentiment from Atharvaveda. The new created art was practiced by rage Bharata in the playhouse which was architecture by Vishvakarman.

All the gods were very happy with the new creation. Tandava was the contribution done by Lord Shiva. Parvati contributed dance with tender and voluptuous ‘Lasya’ and Lord Vishnu took the responsibility of dramatic styles. Bharata took the responsibility of writing Natyasastra. This Natyasastra is also called as Natyaveda or Fifth Veda.
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There are four ethical goals of human existence which are called as ‘purusharthas’ and those are ‘dharma’, ‘artha’, ‘Kam’ and ‘Moksha’. According to Abhinav Gupta drama should direct one’s mind towards the realization of the purusharthas.

**Post – Vedic Literature and the Origin of the Drama**

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The great epic of India, *the Mahabharata* does not recognize in any explicit manner the existence of the drama. The term nata indeed occurs and it meant actor, the existence of the drama would be proved. *The Ramayana* lends no aid to the attempt to establish an early existence of drama. We hear of festivals and concourses (samaj) where Natas and Natakas delight themselves and even of speaking of Natakas, if we believe the commentator plays in mingled languages.

**The Religion and the Drama**

Those scholars, who see in Bharata -the supposed author of *the Natyashartra* – only a mythical being, easily dismiss the claim of that treatise
to any authoritativeness. Hence according to them the origin of Dramatic presentation as narrated in the *Natyashartra* is a further myth woven round the same of mythical Bharata. On the other hand scholars have their own theory about the origin of Sanskrit drama—a theory which is free from any mention of Bharata. The origin of Sanskrit Drama is sought to be in the religious rites. (Adya Ragacharya 70)

**The Shudras and the Drama**

In response to the prayers of Gods, Brahma created Drama. It is interesting to note that everything connected with Drama is associated with lower castes. It so happened, the *Natyashastra* tells us that the sons of Bharata became too arrogant on account of their dramatic art. “You shall lose the Brahmin culture and shall take to the ways of Shudras. We here by degrade you to the Shudras status. Your descendant shall be perpetually born into the shudra caste.” King Nahusa is spoken of as the first patron of drama in the mortal world.

**The Concept of the Happy Ending**

The primitive Indian play differs in one essential from origin of tragedy: the victory lays with Krishna means hero and not with Kansa the villain. We have therefore, not sorrow, though there is death, and the fact is that the Sanskrit drama insists on happy ending. Though there is death, the end is happy and not grief.

**The Existence of conflict**

Both in the Greek and the Sanskrit drama the essential in the content is the existence of a conflict. In the Greek drama, in its development this conflict came to dominate the play, and in the Indian drama this characteristic is far less prominent. But it is distinctly present in all the higher forms of the art and we can hardly doubt that it was from this conflict that these higher forms were evolved.

**Greek Influence on Sanskrit Drama**
Keith A. Berriedale in his *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice* (1923) states “It is undoubtedly a matter far from easy for any people to create from materials such as existed in India a true drama and it was a perfectly legitimate suggestion of Webster that the necessary impetus to creation may have been given by the contacts of Greece with India, through the representation of Greek plays at the courts of the kings in Baktria, the Punjab and Gujarat, who brought with them Greek culture as well as Greek forces.” So Keith is of the opinion that there is influence of Greek drama on Sanskrit drama. But according to Adya Rangacharya if we try to guess the time of the Sanskrit drama the origin of the Sanskrit drama goes to Seventh or Sixth century B.C. If the origin of the Sanskrit play is earlier than Greek play then how can it influence Sanskrit drama?

Adya Rangacharya agrees with some opinions of Keith. The origin of the Sanskrit drama is in its religion. The music and drama was used in religious activities. Shudra and Vidushak were used for the performance. The performances were organized during the time of religious ceremonies and functions. The themes were taken from *the Harivansh, the Mahabharat and the Bhagawata*. The worship of the gods and their idols during the time of performance indicate the love for religion of the players and the dramatists.

**The Early Stage of the Development**
(Sutradhara, Nati, Prastavana and Stapanasa)

Sutradhara is usually accompanied by the musicians. It is not however necessary that it must be always so. The various episodes and legends of the epics were too well known. The various episodes and legends of the epics were already too popular to need description, contemporary episodes and events would not as well need any separate mention and thus the earliest plays, the sutradhara entered the stage just formally initiate the play. Whatever the story and the characters are too well known the Sutradhara
merely mentions them. However, where the story is not universally known to
the audience he describes it for the audience. Sanskrit Sutradhara evolved like
the prologues of Euripides. The Greek tragedian found prologues necessary
since the story or treatment was usually out of the ways sort. In Sanskrit
drama Sutradhar appeared even where the story was well – known. Sutradhar
was there even before the Sanskrit drama while the prologues of Euripides
came in as a device long after the Greek drama. Research is something more
than earning a qualification or fame. It is an activity which is a reward in itself.

The Limitation of the Growth of Indian English Theatre

Drama after Independence

After Independence, National School of Drama was established to
encourage the performances of the plays. This was conducive for the
performance of the Indian Regional Drama. However it could not provide
ample support to Indian English Drama. The meager support to the Indian
English Drama has been limited to big metros like Chennai, Kolkatta and
Mumbai. In this scenario a play or two were performed every year. Only a
play or two are staged throughout the year. As a result the Indian English
Drama has suffered irreparable loss.

Drama observed in a theatre and the text reading gives us different
type of experience. But we cannot deny that we can get aesthetic pleasure of
drama by reading it. A drama can exist without the performance.

If the poems are recited by the poet, the listener may get some more
things from the poem. But it is not necessary that some should recite poetry
for some one’s understanding. Sometimes the reader who reads silently can
understand the poem more effectively because he can read and reread it.

In India, right from Bharata’s Natyasastra to the modern times, we
have thought of Drama in terms of Music and dance included, as primarily a
stage performance. It is not in the Western context also. Theoreticians like
Antonin Artaud, Gorden Craig, Bertold Brecht, Luigi Pirandello and a
playwrights like Tennessee Williams have upheld the primacy of drama as stage performance and a Drama text becomes merely a pre-text if not a pretext for the performance itself. Thus the Drama text is a means to an end, the end being the performance.

The question is why hasn’t Indian drama kept pace with other forms of literature written in English in India? Many plays in English written by Indians are not performed on the stage and this is one of the prominent reasons behind the paucity of drama in India.

In the poetic plays of Sri Aurobindo the characters are from myths, legend and history. At the same time there are many dramatists in Indian Writing in English whose characters are from myths, legend and history. The language certainly gets to be so elevated that it does not pass the test of stage dialogue. T.S. Eliot says in his “Poetry and Drama” that poetry when used on the stage must be such that the audience can say ‘I can speak like that too.’ It is obvious that the poetry of plays of Aurobindo and other dramatists of Indian writing in English can say that they can speak like that. Drama is primarily stage performance. Right from Bharatmuni’s Natyashastra to the modern times drama is considered as the combination of music and dance in India. In the Western context drama is considered as stage performance. It is evident from the plays of major European and American playwrights like Antonin Artaud, Gorden Craig, Bertold Brecht, Luigi Pirandello. These playwrights always considered the written play as nearly a pretext or at the most a text for performance itself. The intention of the dramatic text is only performance in the Western context.

The pertinent question is that why the Indian English Drama could not flourish as much as the other forms of literature in India. The most prominent reason is that it is difficult to get the stage for performance. It is not so easy to get the audience for the English plays out of the big metros. The English speaking public and the elitist class that fosters the English stage is available
only in big cities. The theatre groups that work in the regional language are
not much interested to take the Indian English plays to the small towns.

The actors and actresses who are well-versed with English language
enjoy their respective job in metropolitan cities therefore it is difficult to get
the cast to perform the play in small places. The logical interpretation of the
problem of the poverty in drama is that where there is scattered audience in
Indian English town the actors are not willing to go there to perform. At the
same time when both the actors and the audience in the small town are
interested to watch English drama major playwrights write on the themes
related to only the urban society. The only exceptions are the plays of Badal
Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh.

The Modern European and American playwrights considered that
drama is merely for performance. However quite a few western playwrights
practiced the poetic drama which was obviously not intended for the
performance. T. S. Eliot and Garcia Lorca wrote verse plays similarly there are
two Indian playwrights who wrote English plays which fall under the category
of verse play are Tagore and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. Sri Aurobindo’s plays were
not meant for performances. He wrote his plays merely as a literary activity.

Life and works of Girish Karnad

Girish Karnad (born on May 19, 1938) is a contemporary writer,
playwright, actor and movie director in Kannada, Hindi and Marathi. He is the
recipient of Jnanpith Award for Kannada, the highest literary honour
conferred in India. Girish Karnad was born in Matheran, Maharashtra in a
Konkani speaking family. His initial schooling was in Marathi. As a youngsters,
Karnad was an ardent admirer of Yakshagana and the theatre in his village.
He earned his B.A. degree from Karnataka University, Dharwad in 1958. After
his graduation Karnad went to England and studied at Lincoln and Magdalen
College in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, earning his M.A. in Philosophy, Political
Science and Economics.
Karnad is one of the most famous playwrights of India. His plays are written in Kannada and widely translated into English and all major Indian languages. Karnad has translated his own Kannada plays into English. Karnad has found a new approach in Indian drama by drawing historical and mythological sources to tackle contemporary themes. The multi-faceted Jnanpith winner has a historic vision but a contemporary voice. He is a ‘Renaissance Man.’

Girish Karnad is one of the torch bearers to Indian dramatists. In the realm of contemporary drama the place of Girish Karnad is noteworthy. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and he is World Theatre Ambassador of the ‘International Theatre Institute Paris’. He has directed and acted in many films in Kannada, Marathi and Hindi. He has found a new approach in Indian drama by drawing historical and mythological sources to tackle contemporary themes. As a multifaceted dynamic writer he has a historic vision but a contemporary voice. He is one of the most prolific writers of Indian drama writing at the beginning in Kannada and translating himself his plays into English.

The contemporary Indian Theatre is dependent upon the development of modernism in Indian Literature and arts. In the contemporary Indian theatre the political upheaval, social changes, insecurity, frustration and depression of the man has taken the central place. We see that the upper class ignoring moral values and tradition, middle class is trying to hold it tight and the lower class is totally unaware of these values. In the modern Indian theatre local and regional tradition is at the centre. In case of Indian Culture, a lot of experimentation is done to Indian theatre by Tendulkar, Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and others.

Diverse influences have formed Karnad’s mind as he came across literacy scenes where there was a direct clash between Western and Indian tradition. “It was India of fifties and sixties that surfaced two streams of
thought in walks of life adoption of new modernistic techniques, a legacy of colonial rule and adherence to the rich cultural past of the country. Karnad’s position was akin to that of John Dryden. (R.K.Dhawan 13)

**Plays**


Originally Kannada plays are published by Manohar Grantha Mala, Dharwad.

**Cast**

Manthan, Naga-Mandala, Agnivarsha, Umbaratha. Manpasand, Iqbal, Swami, China Gate, Ardha Satya etc.

**Movies Directed by Girish Karnad**

Utsav, (Hindi), Ondanaondo Kaaladalli (In Kannada), Anand Bhairavi (In Kannada and Telugu), Kanooru Heggadathi (In Kannada), Woh Ghar (Hindi), Kaadu (In Kannada), Cheluvi (In Kannada)

For four decades Karnad is contributing to Indian drama by writing excellent plays. He has also forayed into the jungle of cinema, working alternatively as an actor, director and screen writer.

**Kannada Theatre and Girish Karnad**

The contemporary Indian Theatre is dependent upon the development of modernism in Indian Literature and arts. In the contemporary Indian theatre the political upheaval, social changes, insecurity, frustration and depression are the themes of the plays in the contemporary drama. We see that the upper class ignoring moral values and tradition, middle class is trying to hold those tight and the lower class is totally unaware of these values. In the modern Indian theatre local and regional tradition is at the centre. A lot of
experimentation is done to the Indian theatre by Tendulkar, Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and others.

The common man in India was far away from the classical tradition of theatre. The problems of the common man were different and the things shown in the Sanskrit plays were totally different from these. The beauty of these plays was dependant on the aesthetic values only.

It was Bhartendu Harish Chandra who contributed a lot to the development of modern drama. He was the first person to write about the exploitation of common people by the ruling class. He used the theatre as a tool for the political propaganda and while doing this he paid the attention to the aesthetic beauty of the text also. He produced plays like *Andher Nagari*, *Chaupat Raja* and *Bharat Durdasha* with his Nagari Natak Mandali. Instead of using the semi classical farcical he combines in his works folk form with Western theatre. He has made his plays stage worthy by doing this.

It was Jai Shankar Prasad who did noteworthy contribution to Indian theatre. His plays were having literariness or we may say his plays were difficult to stage due to the literary quality of the text because he used Sanskritised Hindi in his plays and that’s why his plays staged less.

**Honours and Awards**

- The Mysore State Award for *Yayati* (1962)
- The Government of Mysore Rajyotsava Award (1970)
- Presidents Gold Medal for the Best Indian film for ‘Samskara’ (1970)
- The Homi Bhabha Fellowship for creative work in folk theatre (1970-72)
- The Sangeet Natak Academy (National Academy of the Performing Arts) Award for playwriting (1972)
- The Kamala Debi Award of the Bharatiya Natya Sangh for the Best Indian play of the year for *Hayavadana* (1972)
- The National Award for Excellence in Direction for Vamsha Vriksha (shared with B.V. Karanth - 1972)
The Mysore State Award for the Best Kannada film and the Best Direction for Vamsha Vriksha (1972)
The Presidents Silver Medal for the Second Best Indian film for Kaadu (1974)
The Padma Shri Award (1974)
The National Award for the Best Kannada film for Ondanondu Kaaladalli (1978)
The National Award for the Best Script for Bhumika (shared with Shyam Benegal and Satyadev Dubey - 1978)
The Film Fare Award for the Best Script for Godhuli (shared with B.V. Karanth - 1978)
The Best Bengal Film Journalists Association Award for the Best Actor in Swami (1978)
The Karnataka Nataka Academy Award (1984)
The Nandikar Calcutta Award for Playwriting (1989)
The Golden Lotus for the Best Non-Feature Film for Kanaka Purandara (1989)
The National Award for the Best Non-Feature Film on Social issues for The Lamp in the Niche (1990),
“Writer of the Year” Award from Granthaloka Journal of the Book Trade for Tale-Danda (1990)
The Karnataka State Award for the Best Supporting Actor in Santa Shishunala Shareef (1991)
The Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award for the Most Creative Work for Naga-Mandala (1992)
The B.H. Sridhar Award for Tale-Danda (1992)
The Padma Bhushan Award (1992)
The Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award for Best Play for Tale-Danda (1992)
The Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India Award (1992)
The National Award for the Best Film on Environmental Conservation for Cheluvi (1993)
A Special Honour Award from the Karnataka Sahitya Academy (1994)
The Sahitya Academy Award for Tale-Danda (1994) and the Gubbi Veeranna
Award (1996-97)
The Jnanpith Award (1999)

**Life and Works of Vijay Tendulkar**

Vijay Tendulkar (January 06, 1928- May 19, 2008) was a leading contemporary Indian playwright. He was also known as screen play and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist and social commentator. He was the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in Marathi. He was known for his radical and progressive views. His contribution to Marathi theatre is noteworthy and outstanding. He has written thirty full length plays and twenty three one-act plays, several of which have become classics of modern Indian theatre. He emerged as one of the leading Indian playwrights after the staging of his Silence! The Court is in Session. His *Ghashiram Kotwal* brought him international fame in the mid seventies.

Vijay Tendulkar was the co-founder and president of the experimental theatre group ‘Avishakar’ Mumbai and had served on the Board of the Directors of the National School of Drama (New Delhi) and the Bharat Bhavan Rangamandal (Bhopal). He had been a member of Advisory Council of the Shriram Centre of the Arts (New Delhi), a Trustee of the ‘National Book Trust,’ New Delhi. He was President of National Centre for Advocacy Studies, Pune.

Vijay Tendulkar played a vital role in the modernization of Indian Theatre. Indian Theatre was primarily traditional until his plays appeared on the stage. He brought many changes to Marathi drama without deviating from the stage completely. He combines facts and fiction in his drama very nicely and paints the reality of the world in sharp colours. We can see a vivid picture of the present day society in his plays. Being concerned with journalism he automatically came across various types of persons. His requirements were fulfilled due to the newspaper reports or incidents
Vijay Tendulkar gradually rebelled against the tradition and became the dramatist of the new age. Before his arrival the Marathi drama was bound in history, mythology and sentiments. He discarded these values and converted the mundane speech into a powerful dramatic foot.

“Vijay Tendulkar was sort of rebelling in the field of stage and in society in general a rebellious and he violated all the frames of traditional drama”. (Loksatta, 20th May 2008).

He was probably a single Marathi playwright who took Marathi drama over-seas. For Tendulkar writing was like breathing, he has mentioned writing and he were sayami twins and they cannot be separated from each other. Vijay Tendulkar is supposed to be the undeclared king of Marathi experimental theatre. He was busy in creative activity up to the end of his life. At the last stage of his life he was writing ‘The study of Indian History with socio-cultural perspective’.

Vijay Tendulkar’s personality was as complex as his plays. He was an enigmatic person. For 30-35 years every play of his, every speech, every interview, put stamps on his enigma. Before his death he wrote in a straightforward way that the news about his death should not be informed to the media. He deliberately kept himself away from money, name, fame and honours. In his plays he dealt with the modern themes and presented those in post-modern way.

Vijay Tendulkar distanced himself from the terms like ‘intellectual’ and ‘ideological’. Tendulkar was anxious to know about the man, his character, his behaviour, the conflict which goes in the mind of the man. He opposed the traditions very strongly. His themes and his way of writing in different style took him to popularity. Tendulkar was an activist who fought for the democratic rights of the people. He participated in Narmada Bachao Andolan (save Narmada movement). He was connected with a cultural movement like
‘Granthali’.
Works

Novels

Kadambari: Ek (1996), Kadambari: Don (2005)

Short Story Anthologies

Dwandwa (1961), Phulapakhare (1970)

Plays


One Act Plays


Collection of Stories


Panch Pahunha (1973)

Essays


Children’s Plays

Ithe Bale Miltat (1960), Patlachya Poriche Lageen (1965), Chimna Bandhto Bangla (1966), Chambhar Chauksiche Natak (1970), Mulasanthi Teen
Natika (1972)

Translated Works


Screenplays


Humorous Writing

Karbhareen: Dorothy Von Doren (translation)

Biography (Translation)

Dayechi Devta: H D Wilston, To Aamchyasethi Ladhla (Roosevelt: K O Pear

Honours and Awards

Sahitya Akademi Award 1965
The Kamaladevi Chattopaddhyay Award for Silence! The Court is in Session 1970
Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution to Indian Theatre 1971
Maharashtra Rajya Paritoshik 1956, 1969, 1972
Nehru fellowship 1973-74
Film Fare Award 1980 (Aakrosh), 1983 (Ardhasatya)
Padma Bhushan 1984
Maharashtra Gaurav Purskar 1990
Tendulkar's Contribution

Vijay Tendulkar did various experiments with the theatre and the theatrical form. Throughout his career he kept himself associated to theatre and film personalities like Girish Karnad, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihlani, Kumar Sahani, Mani Kaul, Ketan Mehta, Jabbar Patel, Kamalakar Sarang, Shiriram Lagoo and Neelu Phule. He took Marathi drama overseas. In America Tendulkar festival was celebrated. During the festival Tendulkar was requested to write a play in English and Tendulkar wrote *His Fifth Woman* a prequel to *Sakharam Binder*. His plays to some extent may be compared with the works of Tennessee Williams and Tom Stoppard. However, this comparison should be minimal. He had many more creative capabilities than these playwrights. Violence was the main theme of his plays and he thought violence as an inseparable part of the human life.

The major events in the personal life of the creative person may lead to a sudden change in his/her personality. Similarly untimely death of his son Raju and daughter Priya made him to turn to spiritualism. He did not believe in traditional Indian belief in things like rebirth. However he said once that he would like the idea of his rebirth.

‘Manthan’ – received National Film Award for Best Screenplay. He was also involved in giving shape to the story of *Bhoomika*. He was more of a ‘script-doctor’ than a writer for a film. For the past four decades he had been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in Marathi. His
newspaper columns ‘Kovali Unhe’ and ‘Rampahar’ were very popular. Apart from being a playwright of a great stature and a fine journalist, he was a social commentator and critic. Tendulkar transcended the cultural boundaries of Maharashtra.

His *Ghashiram Kotwal* a musical combining Marathi folk performance is one of the most performed plays in the world, with over seven thousand shows in India and abroad. New York’s Indo-American Cultural Council dedicated October 2004 as a tribute to him. Tendulkar has described his own plays to be about the reality surrounding him, “I write to express my concerns vis-à-vis my reality. The human conditions as I perceive it.” It is the content of his work that determines the form. (Introduction to *Two Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*)

Tendulkar started writing at the early age. He studied only up to matriculation. After leaving the school he had no friends and did not speak and mix much with the members of his family. The feeling of loneliness kept him haunting. In the disturbed mood writing was a relief for him and later on it became his necessity. Writing gave a sort of mental and psychological relief to Tendulkar. All the feelings which he experienced, tension, relief, happiness, sorrow, excitement, thrill, anger, pleasure he put those down and it gave him a relief. He worked as a proof reader in different printing presses then as a journalist, and later he worked on the faculty of the ‘Tata Institute of Social Sciences’.

“The earlier works of Tendulkar like *Shrimant, Manus Navache Bet, Madhalya Bhinti, Chimanicha Ghar Hota Menacha, Mi Jinklo: Mi Haralo, Kawalyanchi Shala, Sari ga Sari* belong to the first phase of his career. In these plays Tendulkar dwelt on the woes of the middle class with the degree of sympathy bordering on sentiments”. (Priya Adarkar iii) As he came from the middle class he saw all those things in an objective manner. As an artist with a sensitive mind he did not allow anything to escape his keen sense of
The plays after 1960 depict a suitable change in the attitude and aptitude of the dramatists. With his *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* he broke the ground in the history of the Marathi stage.

The new techniques, new outlook and the very modern way of piercing in to the hearts and minds of characters made Tendulkar the dramatist of the first grade. The unconventional ways of the dramatists made the theatre going public very serious. He became provocative in the second phase of his career. There is a typical “Tendulkar Twist” (Kumar Ketkar 22) i.e. presentation of social reality to suit his notion in them. The tremendous social pressure of the ruthless social forces or traditions which isolate the individual and suppress him is as usual the theme of the plays. He was unconventional or more modern, courageous and bold in his presentation of themes and characters. He dealt with contemporary Marathi society and believed that violence exists in each of us and it must be presented in all its manifestations.

In an interview with ‘Fulcrum’ he said “I do not consider the occurrence of human violence as something loathsome or ugly, in fact even since *Shantata*, I have discovered that violence makes men fascinating. I find it is a patent even present quality. ------ I believe that violence is a basic quality”. (Kumar Ketkar, 22)

According to Vijay Tendulkar the most important point was to keep the violence raw, not to dress it up with fancy trappings not to attempt to make it palatable. Tendulkar shattered the norms of the play writing.

The plays of second phase of Vijay Tendulkar made the audience restless and they created much storm. Extremely bold plays were written by Tendulkar in this phase. *Gidhade* and *Sakharam Binder* are the best examples. Old values are challenged by Tendulkar. From 1968 to 1983 he wrote plays which are crucial in his career. The most outstanding plays of Tendulkar are *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe, Gidhade, Sakharam Binder, Bhalya Kaka,*
Ghashiram Kotwal, Baby, Bhau Murarrao, Pahije Jatiche, Mitrachi Goshta, Kamala and Kanyadan.

In the second phase of his dramatic career Tendulkar presented the increasingly violent society. Cruelty and violence are the inseparable parts of the human life and Tendulkar wanted to present the life as it is. He was fascinated by certain themes. It was immaterial for him whether the public appreciated the plays or they were shocked by the plays. He was rather interested neither shocking the people nor aroused them. He was disturbed with the harsh realities around the modern man.

The play Gidhade deals with the disintegration of a family due to selfishness and greed. The members of the family are very greedy and lusty and the greed and the lust unlike them selfish cruel and violent and they behave like vultures.

The play Sakharam Binder is about a man working in a press as a binder. He keeps those women who are discarded by their husband. He is sexually involved with these women. In the other words he brings the women who are discarded by their husband to quench his lust. He is very abusive, physically violent, drinks heavily and admits to all his vices. He does not feel guilty of his actions.

The play Ghashiram Kotwal created a lot of controversy and dispute. Though the play is based on in episode in history it is not a historical play. Tendulkar himself said that it is his unhistorical play. The play shows how sex, greed, lust for power and money have a corrupting influence on man.

In Baby, Raghav the brother of Baby tries to murder Shivappa because he has tried to molest her. Raghav is sent to a lunatic asylum but when he comes out of it he finds that his sister is living with Shivappa. A very cruel and violent treatment is given by Shivappa to Baby and Raghav.

Tendulkar presented the modern changed time which is very complex. He did not care about the old values. The modern man’s problems are
different and he knew that the old values could not solve the problems of the modern man. Modern man is confused, disillusioned and dehumanized. In the changed time no one can be optimistic. The modern man is fighting a losing battle. The difficulties, conflicts, dilemma and suffering of the modern man became the themes of plays of Tendulkar. Tendulkar came across the worldwide things as he was concerned with journalistic career. After receiving the fellowship of the Nehru Memorial Fund Committee in 1974, the travelled widely across the country and observed the life of the common man and worked on ‘Emerging Patterns of Violence’. As the life of the modern man is full of complexity it became the soul of his plays. He was true to the realities of life.

The human relationship between people the struggle going on in the minds of the common men, their tensions and their futile struggle against the evil are the issues handled by Tendulkar. His plays are character oriented and he is interested in the individuals because he was fascinated by the behaviour of the individuals. Man is being isolated day by day and even when he is in the crowd the finds himself alone. The theme of alienation had attracted Tendulkar to write the problem plays.

Irony in human life as a result of the lack of communication among individuals, individual and the society and social situation in general are used effectively by Tendulkar. Powerful use of the old technique of soliloquy is done in his plays. He used songs and dances to make his plays effective. The combination of myth and history is found in his plays like Ghashiram Kotwal. He has used ‘Khele’ and ‘Tamasha’ (from this form particularly ‘Lavani’) in an effective manner in Ghashiram Kotwal. Being one of the most leading dramatists of Marathi stage he has brought new techniques in case of dialogues.

**The Relevance of the Comparison of the Plays of Karnad and Tendulkar**

In the present study the English plays of Girish Karnad are compared
with the Marathi plays of Vijay Tendulkar. Karnad belongs to Karnataka, though born in Maharashtra, writes his plays both in Kannada and English. Initially Karnad himself translated his plays from Kannada into English. Vijay Tendulkar except his *His Fifth Woman* wrote plays in Marathi. Tendulkar was a versatile writer. Along with plays he wrote film scripts, novels, one act plays, essays and literature for children. Many identical things can be found in Karnad and Tendulkar with the Indian stage – theatre and screen world. Both are the first rate writers and both have achieved many awards in the field of literature. Both have translated each others’ plays into their own regional languages. Both are the award winners of Sahitya Akademy Award, Saraswati Samman, Padma Bhushan and P.L. Deshpande Award. Karnad has played the roles in the films which are based on the scripts of Tendulkar like ‘Manthan’, ‘Ardhasatya’ and ‘Umbaratha’.

Though there are many similarities between these two writers we can find that Tendulkar could never adopt Karnad’s professional approach throughout his life. Karnad became an actor for his livelihood where as Tendulkar kept himself busy with drama and screen play writing. Both these dramatists have made noteworthy contributions to drama form and made some changes in the art of writing and gave significant contribution to ‘Indian National Theatre Movement’. The title ‘The New Dramatists’ is given to Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Mahesh Dattani etc. R.K. Dhawan has mentioned about the contribution of these writers in his “*New Directions in Indian Drama: A Report on the Seminar*”

“They are the symbols of the new resurgence in their own areas and have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments and given a new direction, which goes in the history of Indian drama as a significant mark of achievement.” (Sudhakar Pandey and Freya Barua 185)

The theatre has been brought very close to the lives of the masses by Tendulkar and Karnad. The plays of both these writers are not based on the
entertaining value of them but they are thought provoking. Both the writers are contemporary and both of them share contemporary social and national life. As there are similarities in them there are some differences also. For example, Tendulkar shows the naked lust, greed and violence in the lives of people using the contemporary setting and language. Karnad calls anecdotes, parables and ideas from the forgotten conventions, scrapes and fragments of Indian history and mythology and welds them with the contemporary stories of India. It is interesting to see the approaches of two playwrights because both of them are born and brought up in India. Though both are Indian major playwrights no comparative study regarding their themes and techniques has been done.
References