Indian English Drama has introduced a large number of playwrights who have taken it to the high pedestal with their fruitful contribution to Indian English Literature. The playwrights with their distinct purposes have enriched the world of Indian English theatre and thus they have occupied a respectable position because of their rich contribution. There are several writers who have focused on the follies of the society with an aim at reforming it through their writings. They believe in creating social awareness among common masses with the help of their works.

Drama has been considered as one of the best mediums to fulfil this purpose of literature. Many writers take up this genre to make the people aware of the evils present in the society. Among these writers, Asif Currimbhoy and Manjula Padmanabhans are also the two famous ones who have successfully dealt with the social issues in their remarkable plays. Both the dramatists share a number of similarities while they are also different on several grounds.

Asif Currimbhoy is a prolific playwright and has written more than two dozen plays during the period of over 17 years (1959-1975). Their range and variety of subject matter are astonishing. His themes are drawn from a wide variety of fields including social and economic problems, history and politics, East-West relationships, psychological conflicts, religion, metaphysics and art. He believes that an artist must deal with the realities of life. He rightly remarks, “Pain comes from life’s realization, without it there can be no awareness: without it there can be no birth... no greatness to painting.”

Manjula Padmanabhans, on the other side, is a recent dramatist who with less number of plays, has occupied a remarkable place in Indian English Drama.

Basically, she is a cartoonist but has also tried her hand at different genres. She illustrated twenty four books for children including her own novels for children entitled *Mouse Attack* and *Mouse Invaders*. She has not written a large number of plays like Currimbhoy but a few plays of hers have brought her international fame.

Currimbhoy and Padmanabhan are socially conscious dramatists. They aim at exposing the follies of the people and make them aware through their works of art. Their purpose is to convince the viewers to change their mind set and get rid of the outdated laws which make no sense in the present time. Both take up social issues which are based on some deep-rooted vices in the society.

Currimbhoy is a vigilant observer of society. He has tried to depict the people from the lowest to the highest strata of society. He believes that each political incident has its influence on the society, so he relates the chaos in the society with a particular political incident. Thus he differs from Padmanabhan on the grounds of the choice of theme.

The Naxalite Movement in the Eastern India is the subject of the three act play *Inquilab* (revolution) which throws light upon the origin and development of the revolutionary activities of some agrarian communists who opt for violence. Prof. Datta is in conflict with his students whose emotions are roused by their new notion of revolt against the existing order. The group consists of the Professor’s son Amar, Shomik, Ahmed and others. In spite of provoking the villagers, their violence leads to the torture and death of both the Professor and the landlord.

In his one-act play *The Refugee*, the playwright shows his concern for the burning problem of the refugees of Bangladesh who came in India during the 1971 War. Pakistan’s massacre of intellectuals in the universities there across the border
led to an exodus of refugees like Yassin from Comilla University. He is given shelter in the household of Sen Gupta who has had to leave his home in East Bengal at the time of the Partition. He gets a job in the local university with the help of Prof. Mosin. But, being a part of the refugees, he decides to go back across the border and fulfil his duties to his fellowmen there. P. Bapaya Reddy remarks:

Like Arnold Wesker, Asif Currimbhoy is a playwright with a social purpose. He not only seeks to present men and things as he sees them but offers an artistic assessment of them. Nevertheless, he has taken every care to present his thought by implication, indirection and innuendo rather than by direct statement. His purpose is to provoke thought rather than to persuade the audience to adopt a specific plan of action.\textsuperscript{2}

Manjula Padmanabhan also takes up social issues but they are slightly different from those of Currimbhoy. Her plays are not based on any particular political issues. Though the play \textit{Hidden Fires} is about violence and riots but Padmanabhan largely focuses on the violence against women. The plays \textit{Harvest} and \textit{Lights Out} are the examples of it. She targets the human nature in her plays. The play \textit{Lights Out} is about what we normally preach, we do not practise. Men usually pretend that they care for woman but they really do not. Urban society has its well defined ethos that’s why men are silent when crimes like rape are committed. Men in cities are governed by a policy of non-interference.

The plays of Currimbhoy present a variety from the view point of structure also. He has written one act plays, two act plays, three act plays and also four act

plays. He has rejected the conventional five acts dramatic structure, the division of a play into five acts. All his plays present a beautiful exposition and provide the audience with every piece of information necessary for the proper understanding of the play.

Similarly, Padmanabhan does not adhere to the conventional dramatic structure of five acts but takes up the form and acts which suit to the theme of the plays. Padmanabhan’s plays have different structures. She does not follow any set pattern of writing plays. It is the theme on the basis of which the pattern is chosen. The plays *Lights Out!* and *Harvest* are written in three acts but the play *Hidden Fires* is totally different from this pattern as it is written in the form of monologues.

*The Refugee* is a finely balanced and tautly knit play. Asif Currimbhoy has chosen the dramatic form of the one act play to lay bare the horrors of social reality. This one act play has five scenes, all set in different places and different times. Thus it gives the effect of a full-fledged play of five acts, with a lot of action. In this play, we can find all the characteristics of a full-fledged well made play, consisting of exposition, rising action, climax, denouement and conclusion.

The first scene is expository in nature, establishing the background and introducing almost all the characters. The action slowly reaches to a climax where Mita’s influential dialogues inspire Yassin to search for his conscience. In Scene IV, the denouement begins, and the play comes to a conclusion when Yassin leaves Sen Gupta’s house.

The plays of Padmanabhan seem realistic in terms of theme and style. They are real because they portray the lives of common people through the incidents dramatized in such a way that they easily make the audience feel the gravity of the
problem shown on the stage. For example, the play *Lights Out!* was written after she had come to know about such an incident through one of her friends. In an interview, Padmanabhan says:

The first one, *Lights Out*, started out as a piece of journalism. A friend told me about a particularly horrific incident, when she and a party of people became witnesses to a gang rape taking place in the neighbouring compound. The hostess of the party claimed that this was a regular occurrence and that residents of that area had had to adjust their daily schedules around these gruesome open-air 'performances'. It was such a shocking story that I felt it surely merited a newspaper report.⁵

Thus, realism becomes an inevitable part of the plays of Padmanabhan and Currimbhoy. The plays of Currimbhoy are inspired by some major political and social incidents of the contemporary times. P. Bapaya Reddy has thus remarked about Currimbhoy, "More than any contemporary Indian dramatists in English, he brilliantly succeeds in projecting an image of the times."⁶ Similarly, Padmanabhan takes up a current issue and projects it in her plays in a realistic manner. As she comments in an interview:

No. I feel my responsibility as a writer is to be true to the moment. That doesn't mean that I throw in every bit of salacious detail that I can scrape up but I won't flinch away from what must be described. I don't tiptoe around those scenes as if they were different to any others but I do look for inconsistencies in language that may arise out of the very

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different expectations people have when thinking about or describing intimate matters.\(^5\)

Manjula Padmanabhan, in her plays, gives importance to female characters rather than the male ones. Her plays are mostly woman centric. They deal with the lives of women, their status in society as well as family and their mind set. Her plays expose the pitiable condition of women in every stratum of society. Woman does not have any right to take her own decisions. The plays *Lights Out!* and *Harvest* are the examples of Padmanbhan’s sympathy for the female section of the society. Both the plays begin at a crucial point where a final decision has to be taken.

The play *Lights Out!* is set in an apartment of Leela and Bhaskar. The first scene establishes the fact that Leela is traumatized by the horrible screams and crying of women in the neighbouring compound. It is proved through her dishevelled appearance and tense words which she describes in this way, “Well, I don’t! I feel awful. I feel sick. I can barely eat, I feel so sick.” As soon her husband Bhaskar enters on the stage, her first words are to find out whether he has informed the police or not about the disturbance going in the neighbouring building:

Leela: (when she is near him.) did you...do it?

Bhaskar: (absorbed in his paper) Mm.

Leela: (stares at him, then, buries her face in her hands.) no! You didn’t!... how can you forget?

Bhaskar: (his gaze has not left the paper) huh?

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\(^5\) Interview with Manjula Padmanabhan http://dhvani.wordweavers.in/manjula_padmanabhan.html
Leela: I wish I could!

Bhaskar: could what?

Leela: forget?  

This conversation between Bhaskar and Leela is evident of Leela’s helplessness and Bhaskar’s apathetic attitude towards the plight of Leela. He is not at all concerned about her condition, therefore, does not bother even to remember her problem. On the other side, Leela is helpless to take any serious action on her own but totally depends on her husband. He casually asks for the tea from his servant while reading news paper and informs Leela that he had forgotten to call the police. Leela gets very much agitated at his words and attitude but her agitation and anger has no effect on Bhaskar who suggests to her to relax with some yoga.

The first scene of Harvest shows Jaya waiting for her husband Om anxiously. She keeps on looking out of the window with worry on her face. The cause of her anxiety is clearly understood when the spectator comes to know about the kind of job Om has gone for. Om takes up the job of selling organs against the will of his wife Jaya. He even makes her promise not to tell to his mother about his job. The playwright shows the confusing state, the two women are in. They do not have freedom in their own homes nor do they enjoy any right of making their own decisions. At this point, their sentences are broken, hesitant and incomplete. For example, Leela utters in broken sentences, “Because...because I’m frightened! I can’t bear it anymore!”  

The dramatization of these women’s helplessness serves

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7 Ibid. 114. Print.
the purpose of creating empathy of shared experience with the women in the audience as they are able to relate themselves with the women in these plays.

On the other side, in Currimbhoy’s plays, though the primary characters are generally men but he endows his women characters with strength and power. In most of his plays, women dominate men. In other words, the female character is responsible for the transformation in the male character. They emerge as stronger than the male characters in the play. Though in the centre, there is always a male character caught in conflict but female character is shown as equally important in resolving the conflict.

In the play, *Inquilab*, Supreya plays an important role in resolving the conflict in the mind of Amar, the male protagonist of the play. Amar supports the Naxalties in the beginning but later with the help of Suprea, he is able to realize his mistake and accepts his father’s views as the right ones. The conversation between Suprea and Amar is evident of Suprea’s assertive nature:

Amar: it’s a war. It’s a war, Suprea. That’s what they claim. Any attack on a policeman is a war with the Government. All’s fair in love and...


Amar: both sides are prepared.

Suprea: and the innocent ones...?

Amar: none are innocent. None can abstain. We’re all involved.
Suprea: even the poor woman who died on the footpath near the police van, and the child who was injured?\(^8\)

The argument between Amar and Suprea reveals the assertive nature of Suprea who has the power to challenge the views of Amar and enables her to prove him wrong in this discussion. With the effort of Suprea, Amar is able to select the right way of bringing reformation in the society. Similarly in the play, *The Refugee*, the protagonist is Yassin who is a refugee living in Sen Gupta’s house. He also undergoes the conflict in his mind which is the central theme of the play, i.e., search for conscience. Mita, the female protagonist, in the play and daughter of Sen Gupta, helps Yassin in resolving the conflict so that he could choose the right path for himself. It is evident in their conversation:

Mita: no, no, I don’t agree with you. Life for me means involvement, means action. Leave it alone, and you commit wrong.

Yassin: (surprised, affected for the first time) what do you mean?

Mita: oh Yassin, Yassin, touch me! Can’t you see I’m human being? Can’t you see I’m real? Aren’t you moved? (she touches her face tenderly.) the refugees exist the same way. They’re alive, and oh only too real. They bring tears to my eyes, their suffering touches my heart. I can’t bear to leave them alone. All of life draws me... the human condition. The need and its recognition. If ... if all of us were to... abstain the way you do, we’d be doing harm, don’t you see, the kind of harm that is deliberately done through neglect. Do you understand, do you understand me, my dear...

Yassin: (troubled) I shall try, Mita, I promise you I shall try.  

This conversation reflects that female protagonists in Currimbhoy’s plays are bold and courageous. They have good understanding of human nature. We see the male character expressing his confused state of mind only before the female character and thus she is able to support him to get rid of the conflict he undergoes. In the play, *The Hungry Ones*, Razia is another strong female character who enhances the curiosity of the two beatniks to understand the mystery of India. Both are highly impressed with Razia and remain curious to understand her nature throughout the play.

In Padmanabhan’s plays, we see a gradual change in the female character. In other words, the character does not remain the same as she appears in the beginning. In the play *Harvest*, Jaya is the best example of women empowerment. When she realizes that she is the actual target of the buyer Virgil, she lays down her own conditions. She comes to know that after using the bodies of Om and Jeetu, now Virgil wants her to give birth to his child through some mechanical way to continue his race irrespective of her wish, she locks herself in a room and counters his threats with her own condition. Knowing very well that she is the important factor for the implementation of his plans, she puts her condition that she will agree to conceive his child only if he comes to her and goes through the natural process otherwise she’ll commit suicide if any other means is forced upon her. She says: “this game is over! Either you have to erase me and start again or...you must accept  

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a new set of rules." Jaya’s empowerment comes with the fact that she is ready to win by loosing but it is also on her terms and not according to the wish of others.

Manjula Padmanabhan and Asif Currimbhoy, both introduce some kind of conflict at different levels in their plays. Thus, the conflict is in the centre. It builds up in the first half of the play then reaches to its resolution in the second half. In the plays of Asif Currimbhoy, the conflict is very well brought out and resolved at the end. In the play, *Inquilab*, he introduces the clash between two different approaches of bringing change in the society. The first one is the application of violence represented by Naxalite rebels in order to bring the immediate change in the society and, on the other hand, the opposite approach is the non-violence represented by Prof. Datta. He is against the beliefs of Naxals that the society can be reformed through violence. Prof. Datta professes his students to adopt the path of non-violence preached by Gandhi Ji.

Another conflict in the play, *Inquilab*, is the clash between the rich and the poor. This class struggle is not a recent issue but has been existent in the society since ancient times. The difference is only of the grounds on which the society is divided into sections. Sometimes it is on the basis of class, caste, gender or religion and sometimes it is because of money and inherited lands or property. It is the excellence of the dramatist that in relation to a political incident i.e. the Naxalite Movement, he has exposed the deep-rooted vices of the society which have led to such disastrous outcomes.

Unlike Padmanabhan, Currimbhoy has thrown light on the internal conflict in the characters which is more prominent in his plays than those of Padmanabhan.

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The main protagonists of his plays suffer from internal conflict which is resolved at the end of the play. Amar, the protagonist of the play Inquilab, Amar and Yassin of the play The Refugee, both go through this internal conflict. The conflict of Amar is evident in his dialogues as he says, “I’m not sure. I’m not sure Suprea. I keep driving myself... to believe, but can’t make it there. I hear my father saying the same things over and over again, at home, on the dais in the classroom, and I feel like tearing the whole apart....”11

The similar conflict regarding the choice of the right action in adverse situation is brilliantly brought out in the play The Refugee. As the character Yassin is in search for conscience, he says, “(hard smile, sarcasm too.) I’m searching for my conscience, Professor Mosin, or don’t you know? There may be others... amongst the refugees... who have also lost their soul. Besides everyone seems so damned keen that I visit the refugees. They keep reminding me all the time that I am one.”12

Thus the conflict is very well brought out by Currimbhoy in his plays. On the other hand, Padmanabhan has also projected the conflicts among the characters in her plays. In the play, Lights Out!, the conflict is between the approaches of the male and the female sections towards the plight of the victim of gang rape. The growing social apathy is the focal point of the dramatist in the play. The sensitive attitude of Leela for the victim and the insensitive attitude of her husband Bhaskar and his friend Mohan come in clash with each other.

As both the dramatists aim at exposing the ugly picture of the society, therefore, their plays are infused with some messages. They do not simply express

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their views but suggest their thought of line through the characters. As about Asif Currimbhoy, P. Bapaya Reddy comments:

Currimbhoy’s plays are freighted with a message, they are not merely vehicles for expressing his thoughts. They are not merely vehicles for expressing his thoughts. They are works of art. Currimbhoy never forgets that he is a dramatist than a moralist or a philosopher. His plays are meant for the stage and they demonstrate his fine sense of the theatre and his skill as a dramatist.¹³

The play *Inquilab* is about the clash between a professor and his students but the idea conveyed by the dramatist is that violence is not the solution to any problem. Through love and generosity only, the evils and hatred of the world can be eradicated. Currimbhoy’s purpose in *The Refugee* is to suggest that refugees are not masses of people merely but they are individuals having their uniqueness. The idea of the play *The Hungry Ones* is that love and hunger remain unaffected in an environment of loot and rapine.

Manjula Padmanbhan’s plays also convey her message. The play *Hidden fires* is about the violence and riots in the nation. The idea of the playwright is that the violence is futile. It brings no good to the society. She is against the killing of people which is an inhuman and merciless act without having any basis. About this play, Padmanabhan has said in an interview:

The despair I felt in 2002 was no different to what I had felt during the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 or while reading about the pogroms against the Jews in Hitler’s Germany. There is a sameness about violent mobs that

transcends nations, communities, religions, politics. We go to war because of imagined differences between ourselves and our enemies but we are all much more the same than we are different. It was in the name of that sameness that I wrote these pieces.\textsuperscript{14}

Apart from this play, Padmanabhan has targeted the growing social apathy among the upper middle class society in her play \textit{Lights Out!}. Through the long and insensitive discussion among the characters, the playwright has made the viewers realize their own follies as they can easily relate themselves with the characters on the stage. The play \textit{Harvest} throws light on the pitiable condition of the poor in a developing country and how they are being used by the rich class of the developed countries.

Apart from society, these dramatists also target the vices prevailing in politics. Asif Currimbhoy very skilfully depicts the failure of the political leaders to tackle the revolution. Political leaders fail to take any stern action because they are afraid of losing their votes. Devdas, the politician, remarks about the political chase, “Everyone’s vying for a vote here. Everyone’s climbing on each other’s back. We’re jockeying...with the lead now, but there are a pack of wolves behind me.”\textsuperscript{15} Similarly, Padmanabhan has exposed the hypocrisy of the politicians that they show false concern for the people but their aim is to protect themselves and their position first. They can leave nation in the time of despair in order to save themselves.

Both the dramatists make an effective use of different dramatic techniques in their plays. Asif Currimbhoy successfully uses the technique of parallel and contrasts to strengthen the structure of the play. Every character has been conceived as a

\textsuperscript{14} Interview with Manjula Padmanabhan. http://dhvani.wordweavers.in/manjula_padmanabhan.html
parallel or contrast to the others. Yassin and Sen Gupta are both refugees, but they differ in their attitudes to life and demeanour, both cherish the ideal across the border symbolized by Yassin’s mother and Sen Gupta’s daughter. Yassin and Ramul are refugees but their ways are entirely different- one closes one’s eyes to the problem and leads his own comfortable life while the other indulges himself in the problem and reigns supreme in the world of the refugees. Both Yassin and Mosin are Muslims but the dispute is evident in the last scene when one identifies himself with the Pakistani Muslim and the other with the Indian Muslim.

In the plays of Manjula Padmanabhan also, we find the technique of parallel and contrast. In the play, *Lights Out*, Naina and Leela are in contrast to each other. On one side, Leela is unable to call the police as well as can’t convince her husband to stop the crime going on near their residence. She remains disturbed throughout the play because of the continuous screams she hears all the time and in the last scene loses self control and faints. She is not bold enough to call it a crime. On the other hand, Naina is in contrast to Leela. The moment, she looks out of the window, her immediate reaction shows her assertion when she boldly calls out it a gang rape and asks for the urgent action against the crime.

Currimbhoy gives more importance to action rather than speech which Padmanabhan does not. In the play, *The Hungry Ones*, When he wants to convey the deeper feelings of the two Americans, he gives them action rather than speech. This is another technique of creating an impact on the viewers and makes them feel what the dramatist wants. In this play, Sam and Al, in their search for that Indian woman and her man, witness the death of a beggar, “Sam and Al let out a cry and approach the man victoriously...as they touch him, the man slumps, lifeless...they catch him by the hair and twist the head to catch the lamplight’s fiare, a mute dead
face, lean and gaunt..."16 through this device-the device of giving a character action rather than speech- the dramatist makes action more persuasive as it provides “visual images to stimulate the minds, the ears, and the eyes of his audience.”17

In comparison to Currimb hoy, Padmanabhan has made use of advanced techniques in her plays. The objects used by her are very significant as well as absolutely new in Indian English drama. The objects are so important that without it, the play cannot be performed. In the play Lights Out! She makes use of a window which is very significant in the play. Through the use of the window, the audience easily understand the crime going on in the neighbouring compound. The playwright does not have to show it on the stage. Through the description given by the characters and the use of auditory images, the audience easily guess the crime even if the characters do not call out it a crime.

In another play, Harvest, Padmanbhan makes use of the device i.e. a contact module which she calls a ‘white faceted globe’. This device is very significant in the play as it enables the buyer to keep an eye on the lives of the donors without being physically present on the stage. This device establishes contact between the buyer and the receiver. It also gives an opportunity to the buyer to control and guide the lives of the donors on his conditions. It also hides the real person or the receiver and his intentions. Through this device, the dramatist fulfils several purposes simultaneously.

Padmanbhan and Currimb hoy create the horrible picture of violent acts in the minds of the audience through such devices that it evokes the fear and pity in their hearts as per the definition of tragedy given by Aristotle. It is their talent to make the

viewer feel the sense of fear and pity while the violent act is described by the characters. In the play Inquilab, the murder of Jain is suggested as, “a scream; a penetrating horrifying scream: Suprea’s shattering... simultaneously two images: the tenth arm of Durga carries a bloody severed head of clay and together the beam of the torch shines full on Jain’s severed head hung on two poles, eyes dilated into death, hair dripping with blood.”

In the play, Hidden Fires by Padmanbhan, the description by the character in the first monologue is in itself very frightening. The victim of riots describes the brutal killing of his entire family by the people involved in the riots. He says: “They didn’t even ask questions. They just began to beat me up. Then they threw me out of my house and set fire to my wife. She was not yet forty. They took away my sisters and their daughters. They strangled my son in front of me and pissed inside his dead mouth.” Another pitiable description is given in the play Lights Out by Padmanabhan where the two insensitive characters Bhaskar and Mohan watch the live crime and discuss it as an act of exorcism:

Mohan: earlier I saw them actually sort of pounding and kicking-in rhythm, almost-

Bhaskar: see, they’re kicking her-

Mohan: yes, around the stomach and the-uh- chest and in the face.

Bhaskar: and there now- they’re hitting her with their fists, aren’t they?²⁰

Such descriptions arouse the sense of pity for the victims as well as expose the follies of the society. These dramatists make use of several images in their plays to make the play more effective. The auditory image is used in the play *Lights Out!* The screams and crying of victim from the neighbouring compound is heard continuously through the window. The dramatist has taken care of these sounds as it should not be so loud as to appear too near which overshadow the conversation going on the stage nor are they to be so slow that they can be ignored.

Another similarity between both these dramatists is that they portray the East-West relation in their plays but the difference lies in their approaches. In Currimbhoy’s plays, the sympathetic attitude of the people of the West is shown towards the poor people of India as in the play *The Hungry Ones*, the two poets from America feel sympathize with the hungry people and try their best to help them. On the other side, Padmanabhan exposes the extent to which the poor people of developing nations are exploited in the hands of developed nations in her play *Harvest*.

Asif at several times introduces the inmost mind of his characters through soliloquy. The pangs of Prof. Datta’s heart and his frustration at the destructive approach of the younger generation find a beautiful outlet in the soliloquy of Prof. Datta. Whereas Padmanabhan uses silence as other aspect of language which is prominent in her plays. She uses silence in both ways- as a strategy of resistance to the oppressive power and as a weapon used by the powerful. Frieda’s presence on

stage is seen and not heard in the play *Lights Out!*. She is like a robot seen bringing tea and cleaning the broken shards of glass even before anyone asks her to do it. One can assume that she fulfils her duty according to her status as a servant in the house. The sounds that traumatize Leela, do not affect her. Freida’s silence suggests her fear of being abused because of her being a woman of a lower economic stratum. She remains silent in order to protect herself from subjugation. Through Naina in the play *Lights Out!* Padmanabhan shows how silence can be used as a tool for subversion. As the others continue planning the attack with knives and acid, she looks out of the window and sees the goons and the rape victim leaving but she does not inform Surinder or the others about it. Her silence works to prevent further violence, just as she had wanted. So for Naina silence works as a tool to subvert the hegemony of power.

Currimbhoy and Padmanabhan exhibit their excellence in giving title to their plays. On one side, Currimbhoy makes use of *Hindi* or *Urdu* words in the title of his plays such as *Inquilab*, an *Urdu* word which means reformation. On the other, Padmanabhan uses ironic titles for her plays. The title of the play *Harvest* suggests the idea that the body is like a food which can be harvested whenever one needs it. It is used in ironic way. The title *Lights Out!* is symbolic. It suggests darkness in the physical as well as mental world. The darkness of physical world is portrayed through the rape of woman in the compound and the attitude of people towards this heinous crime shows the darkness of mental world.

Currimbhoy has also made an effective use of images in his plays. In the play, *The Hungry Ones*, he presents the atmosphere of gloom, melancholy and despair. He makes use of a visual image and gives the description:
Sam and Al look around slowly, peering through the darkness. They see along the footpaths, rows upon rows of maimed and deformed beggars, some begging for alms, some moaning softly, some bearing patiently, some waiting. They start at the beginning of the row, lighting matches to see the faces of each individual beggar that blazes out shockingly in disease and deformity.²¹

Currimbhoy’s satiric attitude is prominent in the play. As in the play The Hungry Ones, he ridicules the college students who stupidly place the beatniks at par with the Indian saints and patriots. “after all we need your help too. We haven’t come across anyone quite like you since...Swami Vivekanand and Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu, Subhash Chandra Bose and Ram Mohan Roy.”²² The dramatist also ridicules the ‘Swamijis’ in India who ask people to meditate all the time. The Guru tells his disciple to “go then home, my son, and meditate...meditate so deep that none may disturb you..meditate in yoga all the time.”²³

Padmanabhan also uses satire to bring out the evils of the society. In the play Lights Out! She satirizes the hypocrisy of the urban middle class society and the growing social apathy in the society. She also targets the indifferent attitude of male section towards the plight of women. The play Harvest is the satire on the trade of human organs where money has become more important than the human body. The play Hidden Fires highlights the futility of violence and satirizes the people who support the violence in the nation.

²² Ibid. 32. Print.
²³ Ibid. 48. Print.
Thus, Asif Currimbhoy and Manjula Padmanabhan are the two famous dramatists in Indian English Drama who have occupied a respectable place in the world of English theatre. In comparison to Manjula Padmanbhan, Asif Currimbhoy is versatile as we see the variety of themes in his works. Though both aim at exposing the vices of the society yet there is difference in the issues they take up. Both portray the problems prevailing in the contemporary times therefore, the issues differ because they belong to different times. Currimbhoy wrote in the period of 1959-75 and Manjula Padmanabhan came later. She is appreciated for taking up the new and controversial issues. On the other side, Asif Currimbhoy is known for variety and versatility in his plays. In regard to style and technique, both have their distinct qualities as both are innovative in their own ways. The common aspect of their writing is their social commitment. Manjula Padmanabhan and Asif Currimbhoy both prove themselves truly social critics.