CHAPTER-1

Introduction

1.1 The idea of Comparative study:

He does not know English literature who only English literature knows.¹

-Matthew Arnold

Matthew Arnold’s remark emphasizes upon the importance of ‘Comparative Literature.’ Since human nature is the same all over the world, its expression in different literatures is bound to have deep-seated similarities and affinities. Language or culture may be different but human sentiments remain essentially the same in all literatures of the world. Thus, it is quite natural to study the uniqueness of human consciousness in various literatures through a Comparative Study.

In comparative literature two or more literatures are studied side by side, which makes the subject matter broader and the perspective wider. Despite their circumstantial and surface differences, there is always something in literatures of the world that can be regarded as the common heritage of mankind and consequently has the comprehensiveness to include every aspect of human experience.

A Comparative Study also explores the inter-relationships of the literatures of various people, speaking different languages. To speak about the origin of comparative literature, it starts with Aristotle, who has compared and contrasted different Greek dramatists and literary forms. Aristotle was the first critic to consider the relationship between sister arts. However, the most remarkable contribution in this regard was made by Longinus. He was the first to introduce comparative method in a serious manner, looking for certain universal features in literatures. Dryden’s Essay on Dramatic Poesy is also considered a remarkable comparative study.

The term ‘Comparative Literature’ overlaps with related terms and concepts such as “Universal Literature,” “International Literature,” “General Literature,” “World
Comparative literature does not mean mere comparing of literature with a view to setting one against another, but highlighting and appreciating the finer aspects. Rene Wellek explained the term as:

An examination of literary texts (including works of literary theory and criticism) in more than one language, through an investigation of contrast, analogy, provenance or a study of literary relations and communications between two or more groups that speak different languages.²

We are living in the age of Globalization where one can talk about universal men, universal feelings and universal expression. The idea of comparative study is not new. The comparative study has been exercised since the time of Vedas and Upanishads. In India, Bankimchandra’s essay on Shakuntala, Miranda and Desdemona which appeared in 1873 was probably the first comparative study. However, the term ‘Comparative Literature’ was used in India for the first time by the Noble laureate, the national poet, novelist, dramatist, painter and educationist- Rabindranath Tagore in 1907 in an essay titled Visva Sahitya or World Literature³. Tagore’s view of universal literature was far superior to a regional or parochial view. Maharshi Aurobindo too, was in favour of synthesizing Indian and European approaches. But it was Bankimchandra who can be considered as the first real practitioner of ‘Comparative Literature’ in India.

It is worth considering to observe the remark made by Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the first Indian English playwright, regarding comparative study, in one of his letters to a friend, (1 July 1860), that suggests the importance of comparative study, “As for me, I never read any poetry except that of Valmiki, Homer, Vyasa, Virgil, Kalidas, Dante, Tasso and Milton” (Pathak: 31).

Since this dissertation is about a comparative study of two prolific Indian playwrights, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani, it would be essential to study the origin of Indian English drama and the playwrights’ contribution to it.
1.2 The Origin and Development of Drama:

According to Nand Kumar,

Drama, being an audio-visual medium of expression,
has been a very effective genre in world literature.

True to Nand Kumar’s words, being a performing art, Drama has an immediacy of appeal in comparison to other forms of literature. Drama, after poetry, has its origin in religious places. It as a theatre has had a glorious tradition and in India it has been a popular folk entertainment. Since Indians are known for their cultural heritage and religious fervour, their devotion towards their religion and Vedas is exemplary. Drama in Sanskrit literature is covered under the broad umbrella of rupak which means depiction of life in its various aspects represented in forms by actors who assume various roles. A rupak has ten classifications of which ‘Natak’ (drama), the most important one, has come to mean all dramatic presentations. The Sanskrit drama grows around three primary constituents namely Vastu (Plot), Neta (Hero), and Rasa (Sentiment). In short Bharata’s Natyashastra is the most significant work on Indian dance and drama.

Natyashastra by Bharata is probably a unique work on dramatology in world’s literature. The sixth chapter of Bharata’s Natyashastra gives us for the first time, an outline of Poetics. This is the earliest existing Kavya. The word Natya has been derived from “the root Nat which means ‘to act’ and hence as he acts again and again the stories of men with sentiments, states and temperaments, he becomes a Nata.” (Manmohan Ghosh’s Natyashastra 2002, P.2) The origin of drama is traced to the creator, Brahma, himself. When Kratayuga has passed, and Treta had fully commenced, the purity of mind and conduct declined. In this situation Brahma created a means of entertainment which would be perceptible by ears and eyes, i.e. audio–visual. Thus, Drama is also known as fifth Veda–the culmination of all the four Vedas.

In India classical Sanskrit plays were performed in temples to appease Gods and there was no source as effective as drama itself. Such plays based on religious books, events and Hindu mythology were performed in temples on different religious occasions. As the plays were performed in temples, they called it Temple Theatres. They praised gods, kings,
princes, queens and great heroes of the time, and the demons were cursed orally on the stage.

Close to 200 BC Drama and dramatic technique had developed to a notable height. Many poets and playwrights of Sanskrit literature emerged with noteworthy contributions and then classical drama blossomed. Poets and playwrights of this time were Ashwaghosha, Bhas, Kalidas, Sudraka, Bhavbhuti Magha, Dandi and many more. Among all, Kalidas was the most outstanding playwright who is known to the whole world even today. Apart from Kalidas and Bhasa, the contribution of Sudrak and Bhavbhuti is also great. The study of all such contributors, along with their plays, reveals that the plays of the past are great and rich. But all these classical plays were confined to the elite group only. Moreover, a time came when classical drama witnessed a great setback. Classical Sanskrit drama had declined by the end of the 17th century A.D. after the Muslim invasion. But being godlike in spirit, drama could not die even after the foreign invasion; rather it revived into folk forms in various regions of India, like Jatra and Nautanki in Bengal. Khel, Tamasha and Dashavtar in Maharashtra, Rasadhari in Mathura, Mohiniattam and Kathakali in Kerala, Bhand Jashn in Kashmir, Ramlila in Northern India, Bhavai in Gujarat, Yakshagana, Attadate, Sonnata, Bayalate in Karnataka etc. Thus, Drama on the Indian stage survived during its critical period. It covered a large area with the growth of vernacular languages.

It was only after the British set up their regime in India that the crippled Indian drama received new strength and witnessed a revival. With the impact of Western civilization on Indian life, a new renaissance dawned on Indian arts including drama. Furthermore, English education gave an impetus and a momentum to the critical study of not only Western drama, but also classical Indian drama. English and Italian dramatic troupes toured India and performed many English plays, mainly Shakespeare’s in cities like Bombay and Madras. The Portuguese brought a form of dance-drama to the West Coast. A Russian music director, Rebedoff, is said to have produced the first modern drama in Calcutta towards the end of the 18th century. Thus, the Western impact awakened “the dormant, critical impulse in the country to bring Indians face to face with new forms of life
and literature, and to open the way for a fruitful cross-fertilization of ideas and forms of expression.”

The newly awakened creative efforts first took the form of translations and adaptations from Sanskrit and English drama. Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala* was translated into quite a few regional languages. *Mrichchakatika* was translated into Maithili by Ishanatha Jha and *Ratnavali* into Sindhi by Dewan Kauromal. Shakespeare was naturally the most sought after, and among his plays the frequently translated or adopted were *Comedy of Errors, The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Othello* and *Cymbeline*. To cite but a few examples, Viresalingam Pantulu’s rendering of *All’s Well That Ends Well* came out in 1897, a Tamil adaptation of *Cymbeline* in 1898, and a Bengali edition of Shakespeare’s plays in four volumes was issued between 1896 and 1902. K.S. Ramaswami Sastri translated *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* into Sanskrit. Apart from Shakespeare’s plays, Goldsmith’s *She Stoops to Conquer* was a favourite play among Indian translators.

1.3 **The History of Indian English Drama:**

India is basically a land of rich cultural heritage having a glorious tradition of art, culture, drama and dance. It was only during the British set up in India that Indian English drama started to get its popularity. During the British Government Indian Drama stood apart as the weapon of protest against the Britishers. The contemporaneousness of the varied facets of English drama in India presents the reality of daily life such as the poverty, suffering and agony of the common people. Indian English drama was introduced in the later part of the 17th century, with the establishment of East India Company. Thus, British Colonialism then did play a major role in Indian dramaturgy.

By the end of the 19th century, Indian English Drama was designed on the lines of Western literature and drama. The Modern Indian Theatre was greatly inspired and influenced by Western traditions. It had little to do with the tradition of classical Sanskrit Drama. Indian elitists started to expose western literature with an attempt to seek an identity of its own. Moreover, they entertained the English community which resided in the Indian Metro cities like Kolkatta, Chennai and Mumbai.
The aim of such emerging theatres was to cater to the interests of the English people or the elites. However, they suffered a great setback due to the growth of vernacular languages. English, as a foreign language, becomes the main reason why Indian English drama did not develop in India. The growth of vernacular plays flourished in the regional languages. However, Indian drama in English failed to appeal to the common people who were much influenced by the regional plays of the time. The elites admired English, as a language but could not appreciate its relevance in dramatic portrayals of the Indian situations on stage. Drama cannot appeal if it loses its link with life.

Another reason for the failure is that the writers have failed to highlight Indian ethos, culture, myth and heritage through a foreign language. The richness of ancient Indian drama eluded the British rulers. They were not amused with the themes and techniques inspired by the traditional modes of dramatic conventions like the Ram-Lila, Jatra, Tamasha etc. The hiatus between the author and the audience widened. The appreciation of early Indian English plays required a cultural transgression or at least a comprehension of the other culture. The colonial masters did not appreciate the plays written and performed by the Indian playwrights. Similarly, the Indian public too did not comprehend and appreciate plays that drew inspiration largely from the contemporary British stage and society. So, they tended towards those plays, written in regional languages, where life and emotions portrayed on stage were closer to the heart.

The Amateur Club came out with writers like Ibsen, Chekhov, Camus, Eliot, Fry, Ionesco, Brecht and many more. But such writers could not do much in the field of Indian English drama. When Bombay Theatre was founded, priority was given to English plays and not to Indian English Drama. There were some English plays which were staged with Indian themes and Indian mythology but they also could not do much as the audience was more interested in vernacular languages and not English. R.K. Dhawan rightly says:

It is a well-known fact that the real success of a play can be tested on stage. A playwright needs living theatre to put his work on acid test, evaluates its total effect on the audience and thereby gets a chance to improve upon his performance. This handicap has
Thus, Indian English Drama has not been so fortunate as some other branches of Indian writing in English. Like the Cinderella story, waiting for her prince, it has to wait for its proper time.

So far as dramaturgy is concerned, Indian-English Drama has had access to three dramatic traditions: Sanskrit, folk and Western. The Post-Independence playwrights are conscious of their own culture but work under a creative tension because they are burdened with the English poetic tradition. In the 19th century the play in English, as a purely literary text was circulated in the universities, especially for the benefit of the English–speaking imperial rulers.

1.4 Pre-Independence Indian English Playwrights:

Among the earlier pillars of the Indian theatre, there are two Indian Playwrights, Krishna Mohan Banerjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt who deserve special attention for their contribution. Indian English Drama saw the first light of the day when Krishna Mohan Banerjee wrote *The Persecuted or Dramatic Scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindoo Society in Calcutta* in 1831. But the real journey of Indian English Drama began with the publication of *Is This Called Civilization?* by Michael Madhusudan in 1871 who was successfully followed by Rabindranath Tagore and Maharshi Sri Aurobindo. Of course Tagore wrote in Bengali but his plays were translated almost into all the languages of the world.

Bengal in spite of its rich literary tradition failed to provide a secure local theatrical inhabitation. After the contribution of Krishna Mohan Banerjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Indian English Drama has witnessed a long dark period. No single creative effort was seen till the early 20th century. There was obviously a dearth of dramatic tradition. Early Indian English drama in Bengal grew only as a closet drama with exclusive emphasis on music and dance. It was left only to Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Harindranath Chattopadhyay to prepare a native tradition of Indian English drama and to establish it as an authentic mode of creative expression.
However, the Western impact opened an exciting chapter in Modern Indian drama which was written originally in the vernaculars. The earlier dramatists from different regions of the country tried their hands at different forms—romances, opera, comedy, farce, tragedy, melodrama and historical play with ‘puranic’ themes and various approaches. By 1920, in almost all the Indian languages a new drama was thriving, reflecting potent influences of Marxism, Psychoanalysis and the symbolist and surrealist movements.

Under Western influence, the pre-independence era saw some stalwarts like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T.P. Kailasam, A.S.P. Ayyar, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Bharati Sarabhai who contributed substantially to the evolution and development of Indian English Drama. Among all of them, Tagore and Aurobindo, the two great sage poets of India, were the first Indian dramatists in English of true value.

The canvass of Aurobindo’s dramatic art is wide and varied with diversity of themes, locales and traditions. He was essentially a poet and thinker. Between 1891 and 1916, he wrote five complete and six incomplete verse plays. All the five complete plays with the exception of Perseus, the Deliverer were published later between 1957 and 1960. His The Witch of Iini and Achab and Esarhaddon were written under the impact of Elizabethan models. The Maid and the Mill seems to echo the tradition of Goldsmith’s She Stoops to Conquer. It is a comedy with Spain as the background and The House of Brut is a tragedy of unbounded egoism. The play Vasavadutta is based on a story in Kathasaritsagar. The rest of the plays are Rodogune, The Viziers of Bassora, Eric, The Birth of Sin and Prince of Edur.

In Aurobindo’s plays, the idea of human evolution and the celebration of love as a benevolent force are the central motifs. The cultural ethos is experienced in the mood of the characters in Aurobindo’s plays. In spite of his serious efforts, Aurobindo’s poetic impulse and his over–consciousness for diverse traditions rendered his art weak. But as a dramatist, Aurobindo made experiments with the diversity of themes, locals and tradition. His plays have been widely appreciated for fine blending of story, incident and situation. Aurobindo’s keen insight as a dramatist lies in making a balance of internal situation of characters with the external paraphernalia evolved in the structure of drama. In his treatise, The Future Poetry, he reveals his vision about drama:
Drama must have interpretative vision; the vision must contain an explicit or implicit idea of life, the vision and idea seem to arise out of the inner life of characters, and through an evaluation of speech leading to an evolution of action, the true movement and result in all great drama is really psychological (Aurobindo: 1953, 91-94).

Another great sage is Rabindranath Tagore who was a versatile genius. He had an intimate knowledge of Indian epics. He has also made alive to the European dramatic tradition. An ardent admirer of Kalidasa, Shakespeare and Ibsen, he tried to emulate these great forerunners. Yet he wanted his plays to be different. As the son of Bengal, he tried to construct the spirit of Indian English drama with his humanitarian vision, patriotic impulse and mystical perception of human existence, spontaneous poetic sensibility and the immense possibilities of dramatic innovations. He adapted themes from Indian mythology, legends and classics. He also employed astounding imagery and symbolism to reveal his poetical temperament and outlook. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has rightly analyzed Tagore’s rare ability, artistic capability and poetical bent of mind into the following words:

Tagore could start the play, strike the opening chords, name the characters, and memory and imagination would do the rest. Not the logic of careful plotting but the music of ideas and symbols is the ‘soul’ of this drama. (IWE: 123)

For Tagore, drama was not an isolated activity but it was an extension of his poetic creed. The dramatic canvas of Tagore is vast and varied. Out of the fifty-three separate items listed in the bibliography only seventeen have been translated in English and out of them thirteen are transcreated by Tagore himself.

Tagore’s famous plays are – Chitra, The Post Office, Sacrifice, Red Oleanders, Chandalika, Mukta Dhara, Natir Paj, The King of Dark Chamber, The Cycle of Spring, Sanyasi and The Mother’s Prayer. Tagore wrote more than forty plays in his career spanning more than five decades. His plays have variety but there is repetition of themes in some of them. The characters speak the same language. However, in his English translations of the original Bengali plays, Tagore has severely cut down many of the
humorous and farcical dialogues and situations. Thus, problems of language and translation have affected some of his plays. Moreover, Tagore’s English translations lack the flavour and spirit of the originals in Bengali. Tagore himself used to say that future generations would remember him by his songs, short stories and paintings. He was right. Today, Tagore is chiefly remembered more for his poetry than for his plays.

Closely following, these two towering figures, the third of the great Indian playwright trio is Harindranath Chattopadhyay. He also enriched the tradition of Indian drama. His dramatic output could be classified as devotional plays, social plays, historical plays and miscellaneous plays. His devotional plays are biographical in nature and deal with the lives of saints from Maharashtra. These plays include Raidas, Chokhamela, Eknath, Pandalik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva and Tukaram. Tukaram, is said to be the best in terms of characterization as well as the development of plot. The distinction of this play is that it is effective both as a ‘closet play’ and a ‘stage play’. The most important social plays of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya are to be found in his collection entitled Five Plays (1937). It includes The Windows, The Parrot, The Sentry’s Lantern, The Coffin and The Evening Lamp. The study of all these plays shows the playwright’s acute social awareness. Sympathy for the exploited; revolt against a stultifying code of morality; insurgence against the brute forces of imperialism; and a plea for purposeful writing constitute the themes of these plays. They may be called symbolic, didactic or propagandistic plays. K.R.S. Iyengar describes them as “manifestoes of the new realism” (IWE: 234), as they belong to an era when ‘the Progressive Writers Movement’ was gaining momentum in India and elsewhere.

Besides the contribution of this trio, Indian English drama was also enriched by T.P. Kailasam, Bharati Sarabhai, Sudhindranath Ghose, R.K.Narayan, K.R.S. Iyengar, Balwant Gargi, Mrinalini Sarabhai and many others. T.P. Kailasam, a distinguished writer of original talent, wrote plays which possess high literary qualities but are not suitable for stage representation. Among the women dramatists, the most distinguished playwright is Bharati Sarabhai. Her plays are remarkable for their poetic fervour. Dhan Gopal Mukherji, A.S.P. Ayyar, J.M. Lobo Prabhu, S. Fyee Rahamia, and several others have written Indo Anglian dramas of considerable merit, but they have not achieved much success on the stage. Observing the dearth of Indo–Anglian drama, K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger, states:
The natural medium of conversation with us is the mother tongue rather than English and hence, unless the characters and situations are carefully chosen, it would be difficult to make a dialogue between Indians in English sound convincing. (IWE: 247)

1.5 **Post-Independence Indian English Playwrights:**

In the post–independence era, the patterns of Indian English drama underwent a drastic change. Theatrical activities were organized and it accumulated a new force with the lively contribution of the dramatists. In this period Indian English drama became more and more Indian in content, quality, technique, form and feelings. The Indian playwrights like Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, Gurcharan Das, G.V. Desvani, Pritish Nandy, P.A. Krishnaswami, S.D. Rawoot, P.S. Vasudev, S. Raman, Nissim Ezekiel, Girish Karnad and many others tried to understand Indian feelings, ideas, passions and experiences in a better way.

Moreover, institutions for training in dramatics were founded in big cities. Drama departments also started functioning in several universities. The Annual Drama Festivals started in New Delhi by the Sangit Nataka Akademi in 1954. Visits of foreign troupes were arranged from time to time by the British Council and the US Information Service. With so much support coming from so many quarters, drama began to prosper. But plays in regional languages seem to have taken all the stimulus while Indian plays in English were still staged very occasionally even in big cities like Bombay and Delhi.

In post–independence era, G.V. Desani enjoyed exclusive reputation with his solitary play *Hali*. It was published in 1950. In this play Desani made experiments with a new theatrical mode in which the actor remained invisible and his identity was felt in the play only through his voice. The play *Hali* has been appreciated for its refined style and deep philosophical message. In the structure of the play, Desani sustains the spirit of high standards of classical tragedy along with his concern for man’s helplessness against the invisible forces of God, Man and Nature.
Among the post–independence playwrights, Asif Currimbhoy has secured a prestigious status for himself with a contribution of thirty plays on a variety of themes. As a playwright, he was more interested in exposing the documentary evidences of socio–political issues. East–West encounter is the central theme in the plays like *The Tourist Meeca, The Hungry Ones* and *Darjeeling Tea*. In the plays *The Clock* and *The Dumb Dancer*, he tries to expose the psychological aspects of human behaviour.

As a dramatist, Asif Currimbhoy experimented with different issues but he failed to give a strong and stable theatrical tradition. The excessive emphasis on social and political issues makes his plays deficient in balanced plot construction and fine characterization. His dramatic art is not suitable for the exposition of the clash of motives at the psychological level. In spite of certain limitations, he has been admired for his versatility, theme and the strength of structure. His works reveal a social consciousness which has a deep preoccupation with the search of truth.

The other eminent contributors are Pratap Sharma and Nissim Ezekiel. Pratap Sharma has extended the horizon of Indian English drama by exposing the theme of sex in two of his plays – *The Professor Has a War Cry* (1970) and *The Touch of Brightness* (1970). They were staged abroad successfully, though they could not be staged in the country. The existential quest of the Western influence is apparently seen in the play, *The Professor Has a War Cry*. It presents the mental insecurity of a young man who is a Kathakali dancer. Further, the revelation of the fact that he is an illegitimate child of a mother, raped by a Muslim and an English man, he becomes frantic losing control over himself. He resolves to avenge the injustice done to his mother by his unknown father who was a professor. Pratap Sharma has been appreciated for his skill in evolving strong dramatic situations appropriate to fulfil the requirement of the high standards of tragedy.

Nissim Ezekiel is gifted with an extraordinary vision. His plays reflect Indian culture and people of modern India. The themes of artistic value, hypocrisy, family relationship, husband and wife relationship and craze for the west have been greatly exploited through his plays. However he is best remembered for his poetic creation and not for his dramatic craftsmanship.
In the realm of Indian Drama, Ezekiel is acknowledged for his rare dramatic sensibility. His plays reveal that he can make good use of his personal life as raw materials for his plays. His celebrated plays are *Nalini: A Comedy*, *Marriage Poem: A Tragi Comedy* and *The Sleep Walkers: An Indo American Farce*. These plays have a distinctive reputation for a fine combination of ironical fantasy. However, Ezekiel could not transform his poetic talent into appropriate dramatic talent. His plays can be appreciated for symmetrical construction of irony. They unveil his sharp observation of the oddities of human life and behaviour.

In the Post–Independence period, nineteen sixties was an important decade for Indian drama in English. The impact of innovations and experimentations carried out by exponents of drama in other Indian languages provided the much needed stimulus to Indian English drama. Playwrights like Dharmavir Bharati, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad came out with freshness and energy. These dramatists endeavoured to write plays primarily for the stage. It established a new genre of writing – Indian Drama in English Translation. Deviating from the philosophical creed of their predecessors, the new pioneers of theatre in India set a new direction of drama that could have been instrumental in representing the real voice of Indians. Dramatists started making experiments both in thematic and theatrical patterns and theatrical techniques. They made experiments with world drama by reinvestigating and recontextualising history, legend, myth and folklore. The collective efforts of Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad and Mahesh Dattani gave a new identity to Indian drama. The contemporary Indian English drama emerged as a flower vase with the culling of flowers from diverse native and western reservoirs but with a distinctive fragrance of its own. In these plays, the dramatists have tried to expose the socio–psychological spectrum of the predicament of man in shifting social conditions and moral values.

During the last few decades of the twentieth century, Drama in English translation has registered a remarkable growth. While the drama in English found it difficult to sustain itself, drama in other Indian languages was busy experimenting. The regional theatre specifically in Marathi, Bengali, Kannad and Hindi was active. The Four Musketeers, Vijay
Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh have brought great change to the Indian English Drama by their innovative experiments with Indian English Drama.

The contribution of these new Post–independence playwrights has been manifold. It placed a demand on the audience to be weaned away from the classics; on the directors to explore the possibilities of realistic representation and on the critics to think in terms of relevance and ideology. Their success can be measured in terms of the controversies they raised. Tendulkar’s play Ghashiram Kotwal was banned even before it was performed. The new language of the stage and its naturalistic trend, especially in Tendulkar’s plays, was a source of embarrassment to the middle classes, but it was true to the class of people he chose to portray. Even Mohan Rakesh, especially in Aadhe Adhure, chose to focus on an urban middle class couple with their fragmented desires as modern life with its bundle of temptations knocked at their doors. The fragmentation was portrayed through multiple love-relationships, all of which ended in a sense of incompleteness.

Indian English drama in this period has registered a remarkable growth and maturity. In fact, Modern Indian playwrights combine the best of both the Indian and the western tradition in their themes and techniques. They have revived the forms and technique of the Indian classical and folk drama and, at the same time, have made use of modern trends of western drama. The regional drama in India is slowly paving a way for a national theatre into which all streams of theatrical art seem to converge. The major language theatres that have been active all through the turbulent years of rejuvenation and consolidation are those of Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Kannada.

As a new drama, Indian English drama has emerged as a process of decolonizing Indian theatre. Erin Mee says,

The decolonizing of theatre, a politically motivated need to devise tools for an indigenous aesthetic and dramaturgy that was not a mere derivative of the western models.7

Originally, the tendency to write drama in English was treated as a link language between diverse linguistic groups. Moreover, the use of English was common among the
elitist in metropolitan cities and all the sections of society associated with higher education. Thus, English drama comes out of eclipse of folk tradition and classical drama. It also shows immense positive possibilities.

Mohan Rakesh’s *Ashadh Ka Ek Din, Lahron Ke Rajhans* and *Adhe-Adhure* are remarkable for the smooth flow and meaningful depth of dialogues and the psychological conflict in the minds of characters. He has presented historical characters of contemporary life.

The great contemporary Bengali playwright, Badal Sircar, projects in his plays a sense of utter meaninglessness of human existence in modern times which leads to a sort of Metaphysical anguish. His early plays *Evam Indrajit, Baki Itihas* and *Sheish Nei* are based on political, social and psychological problems of life. His later plays *Mechil, Bhona, Basa Khabar*, follow the third theatre techniques with no distinct characters, plot or story line. In his book *The Third Theatre*, Badal Sircar expresses his discontent with the gulf between city and village theatres. He wants to synthesize the folk theatre and the urban elite theatre. He also wishes close interactions between the actors and the audience. He has formed the theatre group “Satabdi” to take the drama presentation away from proscenium to ‘free’ theatre which requires no auditorium, no stage decoration, lighting system or costly costumes. Instead of ticket charges the theatergoers can pay voluntary contributions. In fact, Badal Sircar stands today, in the forefront of a new theatrical movement in India.

Girish Karnad, the kannad playwright, combines traditional Indian themes and techniques with modern trends in the theatre. Karnad, a very meticulous, conscious and creative artist and an outstanding dramatic genius, has emerged as the most significant playwright of the post-Independence Indian theatre. His plays first written in Kannad and then translated into other languages including English, have brought him national and international recognition in several ways.

Karnad’s fame rests on his incredible plays *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1972), *Naga Mandala* (1988), *Tale Danda* (1990), Agni Muttu Male (1995). Karnad does not write plays merely as literary exercises. Drama is stage play and it comes to life only on the stage. Karnad’s plays have been acted successfully on stage directed by eminent directors like B.V. Karanth, Om Shivpuri, Alyque Padamsee and E. Alkazi. His
plays have also been widely performed in Europe and America and have received international recognition. Karnad’s success rests mainly on the depth of his vision and performance of his plays. He is a skilled translator. He has translated five of his plays—Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Naga Mandala, Tale Danda and The Fire and The Rain into English. He has also translated some of the plays of his contemporaries, notably those of Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar. Karnad borrowed his plots from history, mythology and old legends but with intricate symbolism, he tried to establish their relevance in contemporary socio-political conditions. The play Yayati reinterprets an ancient myth from Mahabharata in the modern context. It is an existentialist drama on the theme of responsibility. The plot of the play Hayavadana is adopted from Katha Saritsagar, an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. Tughlaq is Karnad’s best historical play where he mingles fact with fiction. Here Karnad projects the curious contradictions in the complex personality of Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. In the play Tale Dande, he discovers the vital relationship between contemporary society and literature. Here he presents a power-packed drama of change, resistance and resultant horror. It can be interpreted as an instrument of ‘social change’. His use of myth as a structure and metaphor in his play gives, “new meaning to the past from the vantage point of view of present.” In the play Nagmandala, the conflict is between patriarchal and matriarchal views of society. It is about the life of a Rani, a typical Indian woman in male dominated society. She is married to Appanna, a wealthy village youth. The focus in the play is on the sexual liberty of the two sexes: male and female. In order to counter male dominance, Karnad adopts a strange device in which King Cobra gets sexually involved with the Rani and ultimately she becomes pregnant. Like Karnad’s other female protagonists, she is encouraged to pass through a chastity ordeal. Rani’s ordeal in the play suggests that the position of woman remains the same even in the modern period. Nothing can fetch her out from the rigid social pattern in which she has to be accepted either as daughter, as wife, as mother or as sister. Regarding the position of Rani, Smita Nirula holds,

Rani is never free to express herself, to be herself. She is either daughter, wife, lover or mother. She is always playing a role imposed upon her, except in her dreams in the lonely nights that engulf her. She
is a woman used, abused. She can either live as a whore or a Devi. There is no element of person for her.\textsuperscript{9}

Though there are certain drawbacks in Karnad’s dramatic art, his success lies in his technical experiment with an indigenous dramatic form. The collective efforts of Karnad and Narayana Pannikar are significant in their binding of the traditional forms of Indian theatre with the modern. Both of them happen to be exponents of what Suresh Awasthi terms the “Theatre of Roots’ movement.”

Besides, women dramatists also tried to enrich the soil of Indian drama by projecting the inner – psychical feminine world of the Indian Theatre. Infact, the Women’s theatre coalesces with the Street Theatre movement, using the same technique in performance and production. It can be attributed as a ‘Theatre of Protest’ because women writers expressed their resentment against the politics of exploitation on the basis of gender discrimination. The issues like subjugation of women, the horrors of dowry deaths, female infanticide, violence against women, identity crisis and prostitution have successfully been presented through dramatic performances. They also revived the traditional myths of Sita and Savitri and tried to reinterpret the epics from women’s point of view. The dramatic works of Usha Ganguli and Mahasweta Devi can be placed in this category. Mahasweta Devi emerged as a dramatist having a quest to explore something challenging and new. Her plays are characterized by an inflicting commitment and passion for the weaker and exploited sections of society.

Mahasweta Devi documents authentically the spirit and passion of the time without any touch of romanticism. Her five plays are \textit{Mother of 1084}, \textit{Aajir}, \textit{Urvashi O’Johnny}, \textit{Byen} and \textit{Water}. The play \textit{Mother of 1084}, is a moving account of the anguish of a mother who had witnessed the horrors of the Naxalite Movement. In \textit{Aajir}, Mahasweta Devi deals with the issue of the fast deterioration of values and their effects on society, particularly on illiterate people. \textit{Urvashi O’Johnny} is a play written for emergency through the love affair of Johnny with Urvashi, a talking doll. The play \textit{Byen} presents a moving account of the life of a tribal woman who was given the duty to guard the graves of infants. The play \textit{Water} is the story of a professional water–diviner, Maghai Dome who is an untouchable
boy. Her plays represent a profound concern for human predicament and a sincere hope for
the better future of mankind. She focuses on the social evils and tries to find solutions to
problems. It is said that,

Women’s subjugation is portrayed as linked to the
oppressions of caste and class. But in writing, she
quite brilliantly and with resonance, explores the
articulation of class, caste and gender in the specific
situations she depicts.\textsuperscript{10}

The Post-Independence Indian English Playwrights attempt to revive Indian
feelings and experiences through Indian English dramas. Since this dissertation is about
two great Indian English playwrights – Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani, it would be
appropriate to have some idea about the playwrights’ lives and works.

1.6 \textbf{Vijay Tendulkar- His life and works:}

Vijay Tendulkar is a leading contemporary Indian playwright, screen and television
writer, literary essayist, political journalist, and social commentator. For the past four
decades he has been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in Marathi. A
resident of the city of Mumbai, Tendulkar (1928–2008) is the author of thirty full–length
plays and twenty–three one act plays, several of which have become classics of modern
Indian theatre.

Tendulkar was born in a Brahmin family on 7\textsuperscript{th} January 1928. He wrote his first
play while still in school and later worked as an apprentice in a bookshop. He took up
journalism and was an assistant editor of Marathi dailies like \textit{Navbharat, Maratha} and
\textit{Loksatta}. Tendulkar has written plays, short stories, features and television serials in Hindi.
He has received many prestigious awards like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya award, Sangeet
Natak Akademi award and Kalidas Samman award. Tendulkar is noted for criticizing the
hypocrisies, promiscuity, dishonesty and such other vices existing in the society.

Vijay Tendulkar created a furore with the production of his plays like \textit{Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe} (Silence! The Court is in Session, 1967) and \textit{Ghashiram Kotwal}
(Ghashiram the Constable, 1972), a musical combining Marathi folk performance styles
and contemporary theatrical techniques, is one of the longest-running plays in the world, with over six thousand performances in India and abroad, that won him a place among the leading Indian playwrights and made a room for him in the international galaxy of literature. Tendulkar synthesizes the new awareness and attempts of Indian dramatists of the first quarter-century, to depict the agonies, suffocation and cries of man, focusing particularly on the middle-class. He has also been vocalizing different human relations and the tensions implied therein, through his plays.

Vijay Tendulkar is an important translator in Marathi, having rendered nine novels, two biographies and five plays. Among them are Mohan Rakesh’s Adhe Adhure (Hindi), Girish Karnad’s Tughlaq (Kannada), and Tennessee Williams’ A Streetcar Named Desire (English). He is also the author of stories and screenplays for eight films in Marathi, including Samana (Confrontation, 1975), Simhasan (Throne, 1979), and Umbartha (The Threshold, 1981), the last a groundbreaking feature film on women’s activism in India.

Tendulkar has also contributed to Indian Cinema as a screen-writer in Hindi, the world’s largest film industry. During the 1970s and 1980s he wrote the original scripts and dialogue for eleven Hindi films. Among them Nishant (The End of the Night, 1975), Manthan (The Churning, 1977), Akrosh (Raga, 1980), Ardha-Satya (The Half-Truth, 1983), and Aghat (The Wound, 1986) have been prominent.

Tendulkar’s contribution in the literary field as well as cinematic field is well recognized. His dramatic output and theatrical activities in Marathi and his work in Hindi cinema have received wide recognition over the past three decades, bringing him the Maharashtra State Government Award (1956, 1969, 1973), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1971), and the Filmfare Award for the best original screenplay (India’s equivalent of the Oscars, for Akrosh in 1980, and for Ardha-Satya in 1983). His lifetime achievement in the literary and performing arts has been recognized by the Government of India’s Padma Bhushan (1984), the Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar (1990), the Janasthan Award (1991), the Kalidas Samman (1992), the Saraswati Samman (1993). Among his other honours are a Nehru Fellowship (1973–74), an Honorary Doctorate from the Ravindra Bharati University, Calcutta (1992), and a Lifetime Fellowship from the National Academy of the Performing Arts, New Delhi (1998).
In the Post–Independence Indian theatre in English, Tendulkar is known as an *avant-garde* Marathi playwright. He portrays the themes of isolation and alienation of an individual and his perpetual struggle with hostile surroundings. He is regarded as one of the powerful voices of the contemporary Marathi literature because of his innovations of style and variations of themes. He has won name and fame through his plays such as *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *The Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder* and *Ghashiram Kotwal*. Though his plays are sometimes criticized for excessive use of sex and violence, they are basically a part of modern man’s anguish. He has added the element of cruelty to the Marathi theatre and created awareness among the masses about some of the basic problems of life.

In Tendulkar’s plays, one can clearly notice his candid scrutiny of life. A majority of his plays are based on real-life events and incidents that Tendulkar himself has witnessed. The characters in the plays are victims of hostile situations or harsh circumstances. The characters, either tender – hearted or aggressive, are the victims of chance, fate or circumstances. They are sufferers and victims. The playwright’s mute sympathy goes with these victims. In the treatment of his theme and delineation of characters, Tendulkar is outrightly a humanitarian, but for that, one has to read his plays between the lines. Even “Silence” in the places with “Pauses” is eloquent.

There is apparently no place for the cause and effect theory in Tendulkar’s world, as there is none for supernatural forces or abstract mythical presences. His own journey as a journalist and the constant switching of ‘writerly’ roles plunged him into a stark, real world even as the imaginative processes work overtime.

Tendulkar has been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in the realm of drama. He is a man of radical and progressive views. In all his plays Tendulkar is concerned with the middle class individual set against the backdrop of a hostile society. For Tendulkar the primary compulsion is and has always been humanistic. Man’s fight for survival, the varied moralities by which people live, the social position of women, the covert or overt violence in human nature, these are his abiding concerns. Tendulkar belongs to the group of writers who were part of the dramatic renaissance which took place in the post–Nehruvian phase and was parallel in time to the “Angry Young Man” movement of
the British writers and the anti-establishment existentialist work of Albee and others. Tendulkar, particularly experimented with the theatrical form.

In order to understand Tendulkar, as a playwright and to place his works in proper perspective, it would be better to see him with reference to the Indian theatre that came into prominence. If compared with the other contemporary dramatists in Bengali, Kannada and Hindi, respectively Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh, Tendulkar’s name is also taken with great respect. Most of his contemporaries derived inspiration from the conventions of the classical Sanskrit Dramaturgy and many other regional folk traditions. Moreover all of them were quite familiar with the theatre in Europe and its dramatic tradition. In the recent book entitled The Politics of Modern Indian Theatre, Vasudha Dalmia truly supports this view:

Besides Mohan Rakesh, the other playwrights of national stature whom Mehta went on to consider in her article were Badal Sircar, who wrote in Bengali, Girish Karnad, writing in Kannada and Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi. These were the ‘Big Four’ of the new upsurge in the theatre and their names would be invoked again and again. (Dalmia: 5)

The best known examples are Dharamvir Bharti’s Andhayug, Vijay Tendulkar’s Ghashiram Kotwal and Girish Karnad’s Hayavadan. These have become classics of modern Indian theatre and a great deal of literature has sprung around them. (Dalmia:6)

The objective behind studying Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh and Badal Sircar in detail is to show how these playwrights of the fifties and sixties were instrumental in making the educated urban audiences aware of the theatrical form over and above the folk forms. They addressed the issues of the proscenium theatre, rather than the openness of the folk. At the same time they created space for folk dramatic forms within the stage – play. Their work spurred academic interest, their experimentation was vibrant

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and these plays were staged, talked and written about. Through the translations they prepared the ground for the reception of plays in English.

Tendulkar distinguished himself in comparison to his contemporaries by his innovative themes. While the other playwrights fetched their themes from the myths, legends and folks, Tendulkar experimented with the Indian social themes. In that sense Tendulkar has expressed his modern ideology in his plays. He unveiled the marginalized sections of the society which have been neglected and ignored in the society. Marathi theatre has been one of the most fertile grounds for the expression of modernity. The modern theatre represented by playwrights like Tendulkar, Dalvi and Elkunchwar in Marathi, presents itself as an interesting area of study because the themes of gender relations, sexual norms, institution of marriage and issues of conventional morality have featured prominently in their writings.

As a journalist, Tendulkar saw violence, oppression and exploitation in the society and he became restless to make a representation of it through the theatre. He realized that the acceptance of torture had been a way of life and he tried to expose it through the various manifestations of violence. Gowri Ramnarayan in his reflections on the nature and spirit of Tendulkar’s drama points out,

> With his exposure to Marathi theatre from childhood and journalistic background, Vijay Tendulkar turned contemporary socio–political situations into explosive drama. (Gowri: *The Hindu*, 16)

Like the British poet, Ted Hughes, Tendulkar accepts that violence is an expression of energy and forces and it can safely be accepted as an index of the energy of life. His creative writings are based on the assumption that violence is integrated in human self and it seeks its outlet in the various forms expressing man’s helpless defence against the adversity of the life conditions. He also confesses:

> Unlike communists, I don’t think that violence can be eliminated in a classless society, or for that matter in any society. The spirit of aggression is something
that the human being is born with. Not that it’s bad. Without violence man would have turned into a vegetable. (Tendulkar: *Interview*, 157)

In fact, according to Tendulkar, the perception of cruelty existing behind the scheme of things is the perception of truth. Man for his survival depends on this additional fund of energy. In one of his conversations Tendulkar reveals that life is dark and cruel. The realization of the reality of life is uncomfortable but it is essential to see the truth. Samik Bandopadhyaya in his ‘Introduction’ to the collected volume of Tendulkar’s plays admits that Tendulkar adopts “the emerging pattern of violence”. (CP 141) He traveled widely to study the various patterns of violence. He perceived the violence in the functioning of police, judiciary, politics and personal relationship. With these perceptions, Tendulkar studies violence with curiosity. To quote:

Curiosity about violence—not as something that exists in isolation but as a part of human milieu, human behaviour, human mind. It has become an obsession. At a very sensitive level, violence can be described as consciously hurting someone, whether it is physical violence or psychological violence…violence is something which has to be accepted as fact. It’s no use describing it as good or bad. Projection of it can be good or bad. And violence when turned into something else, can certainly be defined as vitality, which can be very useful, very constructive. So it depends on how you utilize it or curb it at times (Tendulkar: in Interview with Elizabeth Roy).

Under the impact of the Western influence, it may be possible that Tendulkar’s perception of violence becomes the voice of truth in his works. Tendulkar carries the image of the “angry young man” after the fashion of John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* (1956). The term “angry young man” was used by the British writers to outlet harshness and
realism in the theatre. Tendulkar as avant-garde, exposes vices of the society such as hypocrisy, vulgarity, barbarism, corruption etc. and shows his wrath and anger against the oppression in the society. Tendulkar was obsessed with individual right for liberty. He wanted to play the role of a socially– aware person and to use the stage to articulate the voice of protest against all pervasive exploitation. In short, Tendulkar’s plays should be viewed from a social and psychological point of view.

Vijay Tendulkar’s first major play Manus Navache Bet (An Island Called Man, 1955), gave expression to the tormenting solitude and alienation of a modern individual in an urbane industrialized society. Manus Navache Bet was followed by a number of plays like Madhlya Bhinti (The Walls Between, 1950), Chimnicha Ghar Hota Menacha (Nest of Wax, 1950), Mee Jinklo Mee Harlo (I Won, I Lost, 1963), Kavlanchi Shala (School for Crows, 1963) and Sari Ga Sari (Rain, O Rain, 1964). In all these plays Vijay Tendulkar is concerned with the middle class individual set against the backdrop of a hostile society. He presents modern man in all his complexities.

Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe (Silence! The Court is in Session, 1967) was his first play in which he marked out as a rebel against the established values of the society. This play combines social criticism with the tragedy of an individual victimized by society. The play represents the mental conflict of the protagonist, Miss Leela Benare who appears during the mock-trial as an accused. The plot of the play revolves round the trial of Miss Benare. Her role eclipses the roles of her male-counterparts. In love, she is cheated twice; first by her maternal uncle and later by Prof. Damle, her loving-companion. However, in the first event, the guilt passes unnoticed and hence, unpunished. But, in the other one, she is caught in a trap, through the cruel game cunningly arranged by her companions, as her love affair has been already exposed by her pregnancy. She is sexually involved in a love affair with Prof. Damle, considering him as “an intellectual god.” (118) But he too, like her previous lover, is interested only in physical love.

Benare has been victimized by her lover, since she has no backing and support. She is forced to live a lonely, solitary life. So, it is easy for them to treat her as though she were a use-and-throw object. However, she becomes an object of ridicule among her companions who pose that they are the upholders of moral values in the society. Thus,
Benare becomes a scapegoat. She is ill-treated by her colleagues. The play is also an example of social satire on the male-dominated society, in which a woman can neither get a sympathetic response nor win a man to give legitimacy to her child. Woman can be acknowledged in her traditional role only, either of a mother, a sister, a daughter or a wife. Further, ‘silence’ is the best shelter for a woman. Often she escapes into such silence because society never allows her to raise her voice against injustice. This play earned Tendulkar a special place among the leading Indian playwrights in the late sixties.

Tendulkar’s second translated play is Dambadwipcha Mukabala (Encounter in Umbugland, 1969). It is one of his first political plays. It is a political allegory in the sense that the characters represent the historical personages and the story reveals the political situation in India of the late sixties and the early seventies. Soon after the death of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the question arose, After Nehru, who? This question finds an echo in the play – “After Vichitravirya, who?” (CP 284) In this play, Tendulkar seems to bring his own observations of the world and the inhabitants around him. Being a journalist, he perceived the possibilities of using the art of journalism for theatrical effectiveness and it helped him to break the theatrical colonialism and the philosophical creed practised by the dramatists of the first generation. The exceptional awareness of public opinion on the various political intrigues inspired Tendulkar to create a powerful political allegory in the form of Encounter in Umbugland. It was initially written in Marathi in 1968. The play is in three acts. Besides the various dimensions of power game, the play also exposes the issues like the deterioration of human values, lust for political power, double dealing and above all, the gender politics that determines the structure of social relationship. Arundhati Banerjee comments, “But the play is not merely topical, it unveils the essential nature of the game of politics as also the basic craving for power in human nature.” (Banerjee: 573)

Gidhade (The Vultures, 1970) is the next play, published after Mukabala. In this play violence tends to become an end in itself. The play is the most powerful argument of Tendulkar on the unbridled upsurge of violence. It has become more relevant and intense because in The Vultures it is manifested amid the framework of family and familial relationship. The violence inside the family has a greater tragic impact because it is not only a sign of social discontent but a positive exhibition of the disintegrated psyche.
The play was written in 1971 in Marathi, just after *Mukabala*, fourteen years before its production. Translated by Priya Adarkar, *The Vultures* is a distinctive type of play in comparison to the other plays of Tendulkar. In this play, Tendulkar manipulates various types of violence, emerging out of drunkenness, greed, sexual aberration and immorality, anticipating a complete collapse of value system, sanctity of family and familial responsibility, man’s disobedience to the social orders and moral principles. After the first production of this play Girish Karnad wrote that the staging of *Gidhade* could be compared to the “blasting of a bomb in an otherwise complacent market place.” (*Notes: 575*) The play is also an example of Tendulkar’s modernity. It is about the inhuman violence due to self-alienation as well as due to selfishness and avarice. “It was with the production and publication of *Gidhade* that Tendulkar’s name became associated with sensationalism, sex and violence. There ensued a long war with the censors who condemned the play as obscene and in bad taste. Conservative sections of Maharashtrian society were stunned by the open display of illicit sexual relations and scenes of violence that constituted the plot.” (*Notes: 575*)

The title of the play, *The Vultures* itself signifies the unpleasant atmosphere of the play. The vulture is a ferocious and ruthless bird that eats the flesh of animals that are already dead. A person who hopes to gain from the troubles or sufferings of other people can be termed as a vulture figuratively. The play tells the story of the Pitale family: Mr. Hari Pitale, his two sons, Ramakant and Umakant, daughter Manik, and daughter–in–law Rama. Another member of the family is Rajaninath, Pappa’s illegitimate son. The play shows the cruelty, greed and cunningness of the vulture in all the members of Mr. Pitale’s family except Rama and Rajaninath. Pappa, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik display the savagery of vulture through their words as well as actions. All their strength is spent in searching inhuman tricks to cheat others. In short, the play is a brutal portrayal of the dark side of human nature and depicts its inborn evil tendencies like greed, selfishness, wickedness and violence.

*Sakharam Binder* is Tendulkar’s next play published in 1972. The play is Tendulkar’s most intensely naturalistic play. The play explores the complication of human nature and the manifestation of physical lust and violence in a human being. “Soon after
writing *Gidhade*, Tendulkar commented that he did not think that he could write such a play, wrought with violence and sex, again. But he did. Just sixteen months later he wrote *Sakharam Binder*. In the words of a critic, commenting on the play soon after it was produced: ‘For many decades no play has created such a sensation in the theatre world of Maharashtra as Vijay Tendulkar’s Marathi play *Sakharam Binder.*’ It evoked even more resistance from the censor boards than *Gidhade* had.” (Notes: 577)

The play is translated by Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhale. Here Tendulkar develops a dramatic situation through unconventional ways of the protagonist. Sakharam, the protagonist, exploits women in the play. Tendulkar through Sakharam tries to establish a more dynamic and flexible vision of personal relationship in which socio-economic security is not the ultimate destination. The honest and unconventional relationship adopted by Sakharam seems to be a more desirable option to resolve the conflict born out of gender discrimination. Sakharm’s thesis of life presents a very vital argument that double dealing in the name of morality is more dangerous than the open display of the meanness existing in the human soul.

Sakharam, the book-binder, is an outcaste, having a Brahmin father and a Mahar mother. Due to the constant, inhuman beating of his father, he leaves his home at the age of eleven. The bitter experiences of life harden him and make him violent. Having no belief in the institution of marriage, Sakharm remains a bachelor. But he makes a contractual arrangement based on mutual convenience with a woman in all her helplessness. Laxmi is the seventh in the series of such helpless women. Each character in the play is the combination of strength and weakness, good and evil. Sakharam appears crude, aggressive and violent. But in his association with Laxmi, he displays tendencies of having been a religious and family loving man. As soon as Champa enters his life, all the desired changes evaporate, and he is shown as transformed into a sensual drunkard with perverted thoughts of sexual enjoyment. In fact, after the production of *Sakharam Binder*, Tendulkar was accused of deliberately choosing sensational themes to get cheap publicity.

*Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) is a political play by Tendulkar. This play is a musical combining Marathi folk performance styles and contemporary theatrical techniques. *Ghasiram Kotwal* is one of the longest running plays in the world with over six thousand
performances in India and abroad. This play is set in a historical background and every
detail of dress, gesture and movement described is very realistic. It focuses on power
games. The play has been appreciated as Tendulkar’s “best work today.” (Coelho: 34)

The thread of the plot of *Ghashiram Kotwal* has been borrowed from history but
the historical events have been organized with the motive to expose the corruption, cruelty
and crime prevalent in contemporary politics. It is set in the late eighteenth century history
of Maharashtra when Balaji Janardan Bhanu through the right of heredity occupied the
position of chief administrator (Nana Phadnavis) at the age of fourteen. He married nine
women but was not blessed with any children. He lost his power temporarily owing to his
losing the good will of the Peshwa. Ghashiram was an official of Nana Phadnavis, the
Peshwa’s deputy in Pune during 1769 and 1800. Through Ghashiram, Tendulkar exposes
the political and moral corruption. However, the play has become a moral-political critique
of contemporary times.

Ghashiram is the protagonist of the play. He belongs not only to the late 18th century
Peshwa regime but can be seen in any period of human history and in any corner of the
globe. His rise and growth to power from Savaldas to the most controversial Kotwal of
Poona is symbolic of the magnitude of corruption in our society. So, the incident in the
play is historical but the way in which it is treated renders it universal. According to Girish
Karnad, “…in *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Tendulkar uses Dashavatara a traditional semi–classical
form,” and likens Ghashiram to the legendary giant Bhasmasura, who threatens to destroy
his own creator.

In *A Friend’s Story* (1981), Tendulkar uses his pen to investigate the crisis of the
community of homosexuals who are treated as sick and immoral in a society that only
accepts and permits sex relationship among the heteros. The play *A Friend’s Story* is based
on Tendulkar’s story *Mitra* that was written in the mid-50s. It was based on the life of a
girl who lived in Pune. Tendulkar, in this play, for the first time introduces the homosexual
relationship. In the framework of this unusual mode of relationship, Tendulkar explores
“violence, sensuality, wickedness that resides in human nature.” (Wadikar: 54)

The play focuses upon the struggle of a young girl Sumitra who defies the
traditional feminine roles and maintains masculine ways of living. She suffers from
physical imbalance and her male appearance shadows her femininity. Her masculinity is reflected in her dress code, thinking, feeling and behaving. When her family members become conscious that she is a ‘homo’, they, instead of understanding her problem, they tried to fix her marriage but the thought of a life partner fails to stir her feminine sensibility.

In the realm of Indian English drama, the dramatic representation of a taboo relationship on the stage was in itself radical and unconventional. To break the taboos, to expose the misery of sexually marginalized sections and to investigate man’s own struggle with his inner self confronting with socio–ethical paradigms give a specific strength to modern drama. Tendulkar in *A Friend’s Story* talks about a lesbian relationship whereas Mahesh Dattani defends the plight of gays in *On a Muggi Night in Mumbai* and in *Do the Needful*. In Indian society the identity of gays, lesbians and homosexuals has not yet been accepted and they are destined to lead a secluded life in their claustrophobic spaces. Thus, Tendulkar has made a bold attempt to introduce such a marginalized subject.

*Kamala* (1981) is a tropical drama inspired by a real life incident. Like most of his sympathetic women characters Kamala does not have the spirit to rebel against her present condition. At the centre of the play, is a self–seeking journalist, Jaisingh Jadav, who has bought Kamala for Rs. 250 at an auction in a flesh market. He wants to present her at a surprise press conference to prove that such things still happen in modern, democratic India. Using this incident in his drama, Tendulkar raises certain cardinal questions regarding the value system of a modern success–oriented generation who are ready to sacrifice human values even in the name of humanity itself.

The play *Kamala* is an uncontroversial exposition of male chauvinism that inspires sexual colonialism in Indian society. The life story of Kamala and Sarita is a testimony to the fact that woman cannot think of her own space in a gender determined social structure. It is through Sarita that Tendulkar exposes the “chauvinism intrinsic in the modern male who believes himself to be liberal minded” (Banerjee: 1972). In fact, the play, *Kamala* is based on a real–life incident. Ashwin Sarin, the correspondent editor of *The Indian Express* fetched a girl from a rural flesh-market and presented her at the press conference. Representing this real incident, Tendulkar throws light on the ghastly flesh market, the
position of women in society, the cut-throat competition that goes on in the success-oriented contemporary generation, and the egoistic hypocrisy of the young journalists.

Likewise, in the play, a young journalist Jaisingh Jadhav brings a girl named Kamala from a rural flesh market and presents her at the press conference. He accepts such a dangerous task not with a view to reforming Kamala’s life but as a part of his professional commitment. Kamala, for him, is a means by which he can get a promotion in his job and win reputation in his professional career. “He never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this expose.”

Craze for both money and success renders him loveless as well as mindless.

The play also consists of a critique on the Indian family system, where women are used either as slaves, menial servants, or stepping stones by their male counterparts. However, they themselves are responsible for their plight. Sarita becomes conscious of the selfish hypocrisy of her husband and of the fact that her position in the house is not far different from Kamala’s. But she lacks the spirit to rebel against her husband. Instead, she provides him emotional support, when he is fired.

The play *Kanyadan* (1983) is perhaps the most controversial of Tendulkar’s plays. It portrays a middle class progressive family. Influenced by her parents’ social work, Seva, the protagonist’s mother and Nath, her father, Jyoti takes a decision of an intercaste marriage. Both, her father and mother, are very sincere in their social commitments. However, they differ in their views, opinions and approaches. Seva works for the upliftment of Dalits with a determined, conscious mind. She is well aware of the reality of their lives and, hence, objects to Jyoti’s decision of marrying a Dalit boy and tries her best to give her a caution about the risk involved. But Nath hardly gives any thought to the prospects of such a marriage. Jyoti’s decision to marry Arun provides him an opportunity to follow the footsteps of the old social reformers who not only delivered speeches and wrote articles on the remarriages of widows but also married them. With her father’s support, Jyoti marries Arun Athawale, a young Dalit poet, and later on faces the evil consequences of her decision as feared by her mother. She follows the dictates of her sentimental father and ignores the forewarnings of her cautious mother, and invites serious
threats to her married life. The play, as the title suggests, centres round the theme of matrimonial relationship.

*The Cyclist* (Safar, 1991) was intended to be Tendulkar’s last play. It is clearly an allegorical attempt of some sort on one’s travel through life, quite different from his other plays. The play is perhaps Tendulkar’s last comment on himself and the reality surrounding him. Tendulkar’s plays have generally dealt with themes that unravel the exploitation of power and latent violence in human relationships, seeking always a well–deliberated resolution. The desire to write an allegorical play denoting life’s journey must be an experiment. Along with the metaphysical tone, the play has contemporary political features also. The most important lesson Tendulkar learns is the Narasimha Rao strategy – ‘DO NOTHING. Every problem resolves itself.’ When the journey of life is ultimately cyclical, all the furious pedaling takes you nowhere; When there is no escaping from the fear that our lack of knowledge ensures, then what else is there to do but nothing?

*The Cyclist* is a skillfully crafted, uninterrupted piece about the adventure of life told through a cyclist’s journey. As an experimental playwright, Tendulkar’s every play, in its form and structure, is different from the previous one. This complex theme he takes head on, and tackles with a simple form and language– an episodic structure and naturalistic *mot naif* dialogue. Life’s complexity can perhaps be best understood when told in simple terms. In this sense, Tendulkar joins other philosophic writers such as Homer (*The Odyssey*), Voltaire (*Candide*), Ibsen (*Peer Gynt*), and Beckett (*Waiting for Godot*).

*The Cyclist* is not about one but three journeys: geographical; historical (journey of the bicycle) and psychological (self-exploration). A young man is about to start a ‘world trip’ on his bicycle. There is no specific geographical location in which the play is set, but a place from which he is trying to get away. Tendulkar has made only one remark, comparing the play with the situation in India in 1999: “Life here is as in the Cyclist. It will never change. Each day we ride our old, dilapidated wheelless cycle and go places. Breath–taking static activity.”

With the publication of the play *His Fifth Woman*, in 2004, Tendulkar proved himself that his genius as a dramatist is facile both for Marathi and English Theatre. It is the first play by Tendulkar that is originally written in English. He wrote the play *His Fifth
Woman specifically for the New York Tendulkar Festival in October 2004. It is a prequel to Tendulkar’s earlier play Sakharam Binder that was published in 1972.

Tendulkar in His Fifth Woman produced an exceptional situation with Sakharam’s reluctant struggle over his dead mate’s soul; to Dawood, the Muslim fighting for the proper burial rites, to ever smart crows who enjoy all this confusion. The action of the play revolves round the bringing of the sick fifth woman by Sakharam and his friend Dawood to the hospital; her consequent demise and her last Hindu rites by Sakharam at the persistent cajoling of Dawood. In the course of this description, the dramatist has unraveled the actual position of women in the mind of men–folk, who go on changing female company like their clothes. Sakharam treats the fifth woman as a source of his physical gratification without any emotional attachment. At her death, he only thinks of the sixth woman who has to come to take her place. The reality is also ironically highlighted in the words of the crow which is supposed to belong to the next world. Here the man is found bemoaning at the loss of his source of virility which differentiates him from the female. Tendulkar’s art of handling of a serious subject with an uncompromising comical strain enables him to enjoy respect with dignity.

Vijay Tendulkar with his dramatic art tried to expand the horizon of Indian theatre by making a realistic representation of social problems that have been the subject of serious discourse in post–colonial India. The study of all these plays shows Tendulkar’s experimental dramatic skill that honours him as a true voice of the Indian theatre.

There are eight plays in translation in the Oxford University Press volume entitled Collected Plays in Translation. Out of the eight, four stage plays, and out of the fourteen, three screen plays are taken up for critical exploration and study. They are as follows:

- **The Stage Plays:**
  1. *Silence! The Court is in Session*, 1967
  2. *Sakharam Binder*, 1972
  4. *A Friend’s Story*, 2001
• The Screen Plays:
  1. Nishant, 1975
  2. Aakrosh, 1980
  3. Ardh Satya, 1983

As a sensitive writer, Tendulkar has attempted to unveil human resentment through his plays. His selected works will be studied in detail in the second chapter of this dissertation. Like Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani, an Indian director, actor, playwright and writer has also introduced subaltern themes in his plays and discusses topical issues in his plays.

1.7 Mahesh Dattani- His life and works:

Indian Drama in English, finally got an independent identity in the hands of Mahesh Dattani. In contemporary drama John McRae acknowledged Mahesh Dattani as “the voice of India.” He states:

They are the plays of today, sometimes as actual as to cause controversy, but at the same time they are the plays which embody many of the classic concern for world drama.\(^{15}\)

Mahesh Dattani is the only dramatist who originally wrote in English. In his hands, Indian Drama has been enriched and embellished by his experiments and innovations. Dattani has expanded the range of Indian drama by exposing the radical issues in theatre. He introduced themes like homosexuality, gender issues, radical images of women, awareness about AIDS victims and the growing frustration and nothingness in the middle class life and tradition.

Born on August 7, 1958, in Bangalore, Dattani is a graduate in History, Economics and Political Science. He is a post–graduate in Marketing and Advertising Management. The *International Herald Tribune* attributed Mahesh Dattani, for his comprehensiveness of thought and unconventional conception of drama, as –
One of India’s best and the most serious contemporary playwrights writing in India.
(Interview: International Herald Tribune).

The tradition of Indian English drama is to be modified and redefined to cope up with the changing socio-political conditions of contemporary India. Mahesh Dattani with originality of vision, fearless conviction, awareness of the predicament of human destiny and a remarkable innovative conception of the ‘chemistry’ of stage and audience, has given a new direction to the Indian theatre. However, he is a director, actor, dancer, teacher and writer all rolled into one. As an actor he has starred in several well-known plays and has won accolades for his sterling performance in them. They include *A Macbeth* (1987), *Where There’s a Will* (1988), *Dance Like a Man* (1989), *The Tempest* (1995), *Henry IV* (2001). He has written significant plays which are as follows:

- Where There’s A Will, 1988
- Dance Like a Man, 1989
- Tara, 1990
- Bravely Fought the Queen, 1991
- Final Solutions, 1993
- Night Queen (Short Play) 1996
- Do The Needful (Radio Play for BBC)
- On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, 1998
- Seven Steps Around The Fire (Radio play for BBC), 1998
- Thirty days in September, 2001
- Brief Candle, 2009

Drama is something more than a mere literary genre for Dattani. For him, theatre is not a diversion but it is integrated in his creative self. He perceived immense possibility in dramatic art because drama, being a genre of direct communication, affords a greater possibility for the audience’s participation. In one of his interviews, he honestly admits his favour for drama in comparison to any other art:
I think of all arts and of all writing genres, theatre perhaps is the most dynamic because no other art form is as vibrant.\textsuperscript{16}

It is Dattani’s firm conviction that drama can successfully be used as a tool of social awareness. The effective stage performance grips the conscience of audience and inspires them to participate in it. He admits that even if ancient Greek and Indian classics are relocated in the background of contemporary socio-political situations, they may produce an effect that is timeless as well as temporal. The wide and impersonal spectrum of drama can represent a better realization of life. He himself confesses his faith in drama. He says in an interview:

\textit{…the kind of chemistry that can be created between audience and performance on very immediate, on a gut level, I don’t think any other genre offers that and I think that is what makes it very valuable tool, as an agent of social change may be without being didactic or whatsoever.} \textsuperscript{17}

Mahesh Dattani appeared on the literary scene as the most potent force to mould and modify the established conventions of dramatic art. He set the direction of New Drama. This New Drama develops the stage as a powerful medium to show the position of the marginalized.

What is most appealing in this research is the realistic expression of both the playwrights, Tendulkar and Dattani. The dramatic canvas of Dattani is coloured with real life conditions and the vivid experiences related to urban cosmopolitan and middle class Indians. Most of the issues taken up by Dattani in his plays are radical, unconventional, contemporary and free from taboos. Homosexuality, lesbianism, child sexual abuse, communalism and gender discrimination are some of his favourite subjects. He prepared the stage for a specific realism on the lines of Ibsen and Shaw.

For Dattani man is an integral part of society and consciously or unconsciously the creeping influences of societal set up determine the fabric of relationship around him. For
example, in the play *Tara*, he shares the anguish of gender discrimination in society. The play *Thirty Days in September* discusses child sexual abuse. The plays *Bravely Fought the Queen* and *On a Muggy Night* in Mumbai are related with the issue of homosexuality that is deemed a taboo in society. In *Seven Steps Round the Fire*, he intends to discover the human aspect of eunuch community against the social stigma attached to their existence. In *Where There’s a Will*, presented within the mechanics of middle class Gujarati family, Dattani has referred to the suppression of patriarchy. He explores the dichotomy between male and female roles within the archetype of family managed by male members. The play *Do The Needful* is an argument on the issue of gender and alternate sexuality. In the play *Dance Like a Man*, Dattani expresses his resentment for close fisted gender roles in the conventional social framework where the passion of an artist is quashed against the restrictions imposed on individuals according to their gender roles.

In the present scenario, Dattani is certainly a new and unconventional voice in Indian Theatre. The echo of his theatrical art both in terms of form and content anticipates his prominence in the theatrical world at a global level. The flexibility and ease of expression, breaking the barriers of tight fisted dramaturgy and initiating a penetrating insight into the psycho-philosophical spectrum of human behaviour affecting human relationship at personal and interpersonal level, would add new dimensions to the area of theatrical canons. In Dattani’s dramatic world, drama instead of being an expression of art, has become a realization of life and it is a preface to the tradition of unconventional popular Indian theatre.

Being an artist, Dattani’s dramatic art is inspired by the mission to communicate profound meaning through his plays and, therefore, he exhibits keen awareness about the direction and stage performance of his own plays. His sensitive dramatic self is a fine synthesis of a dancer, director, actor, playwright, audience and commentator moving collectively towards a single direction. In an interview “Personal Agenda” published in *Brunch* on March 21, 2004, Dattani says: “The love of my life is drama and I want to write more plays.” (26) He expanded the horizon of Indian drama by including radical themes. The relevant issues like homosexuality, gender issues, the new dynamics of man and woman relationship become the themes of his plays. Moreover, the themes of communal
disharmony have been dealt with in numerous plays and novels, but Dattani looks at the issue with artistic disinterestedness creating an eerie and disturbing feeling amongst the readers of the concerned communities. In spite of his rootedness in Indian culture, the plays of Dattani demonstrate a marked universality. He has the ability to transform the Indian, local situation on a larger global canvas, with such dexterity that the theme loses its limited appeal and acquires universal relevance transcending national and social frontiers.

Dattani is not a conventional theatre artist or a theorist of drama. His identity in the realm of Indian English drama has been acknowledged as a thinker, craftsman and a devout humanist. The success of his art is hidden in the fine fabric of his subtle sensibility stirred by the suffering of the individual against the compulsions of society and his ability to make a lively representation of them in theatre. The synthesis of artist, thinker and craftsman is the essence of Dattani’s dramatic achievements.

Dattani, for whom theatre is rooted in his blood, proceeds with the mission to give Indian English drama a distinctive Indian identity to represent native sensibility and rich heritage of conventional Sanskrit drama. He conceives the position of theatre not in ‘isolation’ but as a ‘whole’ in which the distinction of page and stage diminishes. The conversion of abstract vision in concrete images, require a greater balance of performance and stage mechanism. Dattani proves himself as an expert stage–craftsman. However, as a dramatist, Dattani is not guided by any definite principles of stage craftsmanship or philosophic creed. For him theatre is a platform to bring life on the stage and to communicate the concern for those odds of life that makes human life difficult to tolerate. The award citation at Sahitya Akademi says that Dattani’s works “probes tangled attitudes in contemporary India towards communal difference, consumerism and gender…a brilliant contribution to Indian drama in English.”

In modern theatre, it has been acknowledged that drama cannot and should not survive in isolation. To seek a harmony of theatre and thought, drama must take into consideration the emerging issues related to socio–cultural practices. Dattani through his plays makes an authentic representation of several burning social issues. He conceives a situation, contemplates its various phases and transforms them in to theatrical experiences with a view to establish a direct communication with audience. It has been accepted by him
that drama by virtue of living experience can work as a more potent medium to bring social awareness. He admits:

My milieu is theatre. You can’t operate in isolation…I do want a theatre movement to happen. The major block for that is lack of sound training and professionalism. We have the talent, but theatre is more than that, it is a craft communicating through language of action.¹⁹

In Indian English drama, Tagore and Aurobindo’s plays enjoy popularity for poetic impulse, philosophical creed and wide spread human sympathy. However, the excess of emphasis on the philosophical creed often spoils the purpose of theatre. It is a tribute to the theatrical art of Dattani that he maintains a fine balance of exclusive theatrical art and seriousness of thought. Social issues are exposed and interpreted in terms of psychic reactions of individuals. Dattani’s contribution to the tradition of Indian English Drama is unprecedented and incomparable. He has altered the conventional concept of Indian English Theatre with his innovative bent, artistic perception and originality of vision.

Among all the significant plays of Dattani the play Where There is a Will, is a comic caricature of patriarchal authority in the Indian family. It is a play where traditional family values clash. The central action in the play moves around the four family members of the family. Hasmukh Mehta, the head of the family, his wife Sonal Mehta, Ajit their son and his wife Preeti. Hasmukh Mehta is an affluent business man. He is not happy about the prodigal behaviour of his son and also with the vainglorious attitude of his wife. What he expects is implicit obedience to him, as he practised it in his father’s case. The evils of patriarchy take centrestage in this play. And so, even after his death, Hasmukh haunts his house as a ghost.

Hasmukh Mehta is an autocrat and cynical man who always criticizes his son and wife and also looks askance at his daughter-in-law. To him they are all his enemies trying to squander away his hard earned money. He also had a mistress named Kiran Jhaveri about whom he had a high opinion and had made her the trustee of his property. Hasmukh Mehta does not trust his family members. Before his death he has made a very complicated
inheritance will with the help of his mistress Kiran Jhaveri. According to it, his entire property remains with the trust until his son turns forty-five. Till then Kiran Jhaveri remains the head of the will. In the will, he has also mentioned some strange conditions for his family members if they wish to inherit the property. For instance, his son will have to compulsorily attend office every day from 9 to 6 and remain under the official tutelage of Mrs. Jhaveri. And finally and most insulting to all the members of the family, Mehta’s will stipulates that his former mistress will move in and live in his family till the Trust be dissolved twenty-two years from now. All these points suggest the patriarchal dominance of Hasmukh Mehta both in the course of his life and after. Mahesh Dattani promotes the idea that the passion for power and domination signifies the insecurity of an individual. One can nourish the dream of dominating others for a shortwhile but the fact is well known that each individual frames his own dreams of life and their essential spirit can never be checked. To quote his own observation:

What interested me particularly was its philosophical twist. To be the watcher of one’s self is to make intelligent charge in this life. In Where There is a Will, Hasmukh has control over his family through his money and forges the opportunity to improve his interpersonal relationship. As do most of us. When he became the watcher of his actions, he perceives that his desire for control had led him to be the victim of his own Machination….

Where There is a Will is a play about parental authority in which the individuals become the victims. Similarly, Dance Like a Man is also about paternal autocracy. In this play the protagonist, Jairaj having a passion for dance, is ready to challenge all the restrictions imposed on him by his autocratic and authoritative father, Amritlal. Jairaj wants to adopt dancing as a vocation, but Amritlal wants his son to adopt a manly vocation instead. So, the father conspires with his own daughter–in–law, Ratna, who is also a dancer that her success as a dancer can be bright if she helps Jairaj in bringing him out of his obsession and helps in making him a ‘manly man.’ The play, thus discusses the plight of
individuals who yearn to follow their passions as their profession but the traditional patriarchal notions about certain professions prove to be the greatest hindrance. The play begins with a socio-cultural spectrum, passes through psycho-cultural dynamics and culminates in psycho-philosophical suggestiveness and here lies the strength and distinction of Dattani’s art.

Tara (1990), was first performed as Twinkle Tara at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore on 23 October 1990 by Playpen Performing Arts Group. Dattani was also awarded the Sahitya Kala Award for best production, Tara, in the year 2000. The play can be approached through the issue of simple man-woman relationship or can be responded to in terms of the disabled children’s struggle against a variety of odds, which have been put in their way by nature, or chance or accident of their birth or can be responded through the positioning of the girl-child in Indian culture and society. Among all the three the last one needs a detailed consideration because discrimination by the family is a serious matter.

Tara is a Siamese twin, born to the Patels – Mr. Patel and Bharati, his wife. Born conjoined as one body with her brother Chandan, she is separated by a complicated technologically advanced surgical operation by Dr. Thakkar who is visiting India from London. The discrimination against her begins right from the process of surgery. At the time of surgical separation from her brother, a conspiracy is hatched against her by none else than her very own mother, Bharati, who has conceived and produced her; her grandfather and Dr. Thakkar. She gets deprived of one of the two healthy legs. The Siamese twins had three healthy legs. One of the healthy legs had greater chances of survival on the girl child as the blood supply to it came from the girl’s body. But Tara was not given her due. She was deprived of what was hers because Bharati wanted to have a healthy and able son. So, Chandan was given the two healthy legs. This conspiracy needs to be commented upon in the light of what happens to the girl child in Indian society.

Further, having been successfully separated from her twin brother, her ordeal continues. Her father is not much different from his wife, though Bharati is guilty of a more serious crime against Tara. He doggedly favours Chandan when it comes to giving him higher education abroad, and a career. Tara is discouraged openly, even though she is more intelligent, sharp and witty and would perform well if given opportunities in life. Gender
discrimination is one of the favourite themes of Dattani. Through the play Dattani also suggests the disadvantage of medical technology that makes it possible to detect the sex of the foetus. This has given an impetus to the killing of the girls.

*Tara* is not the story of an individual, but of every girl child born in the Indian family whether urban or rural. Every girl child born in an Indian family does suffer some kind of exploitation and if there is a boy child in the family then the exploitation is very much visible as the privileges are consciously or unconsciously provided to the son. Mahesh Dattani mentions in one of his interviews to Lakshmi Subramanyam:

I see Tara as a play about the male self and the female self. The male self being preferred (if one is to subscribe to conventional categories of masculine traits and feminine traits) in all cultures. The play is about the separation of self and the resultant angst.

( CP 129)

Dattani’s passion for marginalization is apparently seen in his picking up scintillating social problems. The preference for the beneficence of the male child while staking the life of the female child is pathetic and takes to culmination the feeling of rejection felt by women in our society. In this play Dattani has attempted an uphill task of pulling out all the taboo subjects from under the rug and putting them on the stage for the public to review. Considering his foresight, it can be said that young playwrights like Dattani have the guts to bring forth such poignant issues.

The play *Bravely Fought the Queen* was written by Dattani in the year 1991 and it was performed at the Sophia Bhabha Hall, Mumbai. It was subsequently performed at the Battersia Arts Centre, London under the directorship of Michael Walling. Commenting on the British production of *Bravely Fought the Queen*, he says,

Post-colonial Indian and multi-cultural Britain both have an urgent need for a cultural expression of the contemporary; they require public spaces in which
the mingling of eastern and western influences can take place.\textsuperscript{21}

In this play, Dattani tries to expose the position of women in conventional society. In matters of love and sex, Dattani takes a radical and rational vision against the traditional vision in Indian society. Set in the background of familial relationship, \textit{Bravely Fought the Queen} is a portrait of the emotional, financial and sexual intricacies of joint family in modern life. It presents the clash between the traditional ideology and contemporary culture that has created a new canvas of familial relationship.

The play questions male and female roles in society. It depicts the circumstances of a woman fighting against all the odds that the forces of patriarchy have piled up against her. The Queen in the title refers to the famous Rani of Jhansi. And the women protagonists in the play, Dolly and Alka are of course the “Queen” referred to in the title of the play. The whole play is classified in three acts with different titles. Act one is called “Woman,” Act two is defined as “Man” and Act Three is called “Free for All.” In the first act, the focus remains on the home-confined identity of woman. In the second act, there is a fine exposition of the outer spaces of business world. However, in the third act, “Free for All,” Dattani proceeds with the convention that the distinction of male and female spaces is an illusion because the essential human experiences are always the same. In the play there are three couples, Dolly and Jiten, Alka and Nitin and Lalitha and Sridhar. In the first act, there is an exposition of domestic life of Dolly and Alka. Both are sisters but there is great distinction between the two. Dolly survives in her domestic spaces but Alka is frustrated and she becomes a boozier and drug–addict. Lalitha, the wife of their business partner is an emissary from the male world. In the first act, there is a hot discussion between Dolly and Alka about their brother Praful who manipulated Alka in order to get married to Nitin. Further, the presence of Baa in the play is the assertion of dominant authority who does not allow freedom of choice to her daughter-in-law. She is the mother of Jiten and Nitin and therefore she has every authority to impose her own choice on Alka and Dolly. There is also a mention of Daksha, Dolly’s daughter, who has a silent presence in the play but her presence is very essential for the painful reminder of violence, wracked by Jiten. Lalitha is isolated in her own way. She tries to seek fulfillment
in her obsessive love for her Bonsais. All three women try to escape the frustration of their claustrophobic spaces. Alka seeks consolation in alcohol; Dolly develops a fascination for Kanhaiya, the cook, while the obsession of Lalitha transmutes her passion for Bonsais.

Act II entitled “Man” shifts the spaces from the family to the office. The presence of Baa is common. Jiten dominates the business world in his highly egoistical way. His male-chauvinism becomes apparent while he and Nitin, his younger brother discuss the psyche of woman in their business settlement. They run Re–Va–Tee brand of lingerie. Jiten argues from the whole matter in terms of male perspectives whereas Shridhar, his business partner tries to argue from the female’s point of view. Jiten represents male chauvinism and reveals that woman’s identity is subordinate to male desires. He says, “man would want their women dressed up like that. And they have the buying power. Yes, so there is no point asking women a group of screwed woman what they think of it.” (CP 276) In the play Baa and Dolly share the identical experiences of male injustice. Baa is also a victim of male-chauvinism.

Act III, titled, “Free for All” is an exposition of the relationship of Praful with Jiten and the fanciful relationship of Kanhayia and Dolly. All the characters are exposed and the false appearances are lost. Dolly who in an earlier scene appeared as a tortured character, emerges as a strong and confident woman. She identifies her oppressor and fights against injustice. Alka, an alcoholic, becomes bold, as “Queen”, at the end who fights for her liberty. She very boldly questions the authority of her husband and asks for an explanation for his disloyalty. She exposes the betrayal of her brother for not revealing the existence of homosexual relations between her husband and her brother. Jiten on the other hand proves to be a cruel, imposing and most discourteous man.

The play reveals the fact that suppression cannot last long as women will fight back to question the autocracy of men. All the women characters in the play are examples of exploitation in educated urban families. But Dattani liked to explain the matter from the masculine point of view. As he said to Lakshmi Subramanyam, “I am not sure I have portrayed the women as victims in Bravely Fought the Queen. I see men as the victims of their own rage and repression. This has serious consequences on the lives of women.” Bravely Fought the Queen also presents the concept of gay culture prevalent in
big cities. Dattani presents the grey realities of the urban families and the conflicts they face.

Mahesh Dattani had the honour of winning the first Sahitya Akademi Award for English drama (1998) for his book of plays *Final Solutions and Other Plays* published by East–West Books, Chennai. First performed in Bangalore in 1993, *Final Solutions* is widely accepted as the best of Mahesh Dattani’s published plays, thanks to its theme - “a powerful indictment of the communal passions that threatens to split our country.”

The theme of the play is put in a nutshell in the first sentence of the note on the play by Alyque Padamsee: “The demons of communal hatred are not out on the street…..they are lurking inside ourselves.”

The play deals with family matters: the tension develops in the Gandhi household when two Muslim young men, Bobby and Javed, seek refuge in the household during a riot. The liberal humanist Ramnik cannot but think of giving shelter to the Muslim boys. But his wife, the religious–conservative Aruna, and his mother Hardika who is openly anti-Muslim, cannot accept the situation easily. The past reveals itself and it is learnt that Ramnik’s father had actually made use of riots to obtain the shop that belonged to Hardika’s friends and Hardika had been wrongly soured against the Muslims. Ramnik transfers his resentment at his own father’s black deed to his mother. His daughter Smita, who was secretly in love with the Muslim boy Bobby, hits out at her mother Aruna. Dattani raises the question: Can such historical wrongs ever be righted? To quote Alyque Padamsee’s note on the play in this context, “Is life a forward journey or do we travel round in a circle, returning to our starting point? Can we shake off our prejudices or are they in our psyche like our genes? Will we ever be free or ever-locked in combat…..Arabs against Jews, Whites against blacks, Hindus against Muslims? Are there any final solutions?” (CP 161) Dattani is successful in handling such a burning social issue. According to a review, “The roots of Hindu-Muslim animosity are explored in this play which is set in an atmosphere of communal violence–Religious beliefs are put under the microscope and popular myths are exploded. The unstated comment seems to be: every religion is inherently oppressive.”
Dattani is known for raising the unconventional, burning issues of society as the themes for his plays. *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* is such a play which deals with homosexuals. Certainly, Dattani’s attempt reveals the changing pattern of the conventional society. The characters in the play, most of whom are homosexuals, are not stereotypical. Sharad and Deepali are apparently comfortable with their sexuality, and yet, they have different ways of being gay. Kamlesh and Prakash, who were ardent lovers, change themselves in the changing situations. Kamlesh’s sister Kiran knew that her brother was a homosexual and she expressed her concern for the happiness of the person like his brother (homosexual) who, she thought, should marry for happiness. Ironically, Kiran is rudely shocked when it is revealed that the man she is going to marry is a homosexual and was an ardent lover of her brother. The play is a careful study of the growing homosexuality and its non-acceptance in the Indian society. The issue introduced in the play is one of those invisible issues Dattani takes on. Dattani said in an interview, “you can talk about feminism, because in a way that is accepted. But you can’t talk about gay issues because that is not Indian, (that) doesn’t happen here” (A Note on Tara in *Collected Plays*, 319) Commenting on this observation of Dattani, Erin Mee wrote, “By pulling taboo subjects out from under the rug and placing them on stage for public discussion, Dattani challenges the constructions of ‘India’ and ‘Indian’ as they have traditionally been defined in modern theatre.” (CP 319)

Dattani takes uncompromising pains, to establish appropriate bonds between audience and actors, text and performance. The script is the basic element of the play but the dramatic masterpiece remains incomplete without performance. Anne Ubserfield refers “to the written text as one that has ‘holes’ to be later filled by the performance text.” Dattani’s plays become exceptional in theme and technique because of the unconventional language experiment with the reactions and responses of the audience. For instance, the issue of homosexuality in his plays is presented in such a manner that instead of being recognized as taboo, it has become a natural experience.

*Do the Needful* is another play which deals with another complex relationship. In this play, the dual problem of love and homosexuality is deftly handled. Lata, the female character, loves Salim – a Muslim terrorist. Their marriage being an impossible event, Lata
resorts to an incompatible marriage with Alpesh, a homosexual, whose homosexuality proves to be a feasible cover up for meeting their respectable lovers—Lata and Salim; Alpesh and Trilok. Throughout the play, we are taken aback by Lata’s indifference and stubborn attitude towards her expectant parents and at the same time thwarted by Alpesh’s placidity and indecision towards marriage. It is Lata who, at the end, embarks upon putting forth her reluctance to marry Alpesh. We being Indians hold the institution of marriage with great esteem. Treatment of this great institution as a trifle contract to facilitate their selfish ends fills us with great distaste. Both Lata and Alpesh could see no way out of the marriage arranged by their parents and were not ready to give up their respective lovers, so they take another way which was suitable to both of them. But the path which they choose desecrates the sanctity of marriage and can never be acceptable to our society. This play stirs the feeling of misgiving for the characters—Lata and Alpesh. Though such characters may be existing in our midst but such blatant disregard for a sanctuous ceremony fills us with horror. Both, Lata and Alpesh decide how to deceive their family and go and meet their respective lovers.

Dattani’s emphasis in both the plays, Do the Needful and On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, has been in exposing the psycho-pathetic condition of those who struggle against fate and society. The acceptance of Kiran and Lata enunciates that unconventional humanitarian approach is the only possible panacea for the community of homosexuals. The dramatic conflict is focused not on the external forces but within one’s hidden regions of the unconscious. Through the experiences of Kamlesh and Alpesh, Dattani concludes that gays suffer because they can’t face society and cannot make their relationship acceptable.

Dattani’s Seven Steps around the Fire (broadcast on BBC in 1999 under the title Seven Circles around the Fire) deals with the hijras, who are treated as less than human by the majority of the society and are yet exploited. Dattani creates an interesting female character Uma, a postgraduate student of sociology, who belongs to the high society. She is the daughter of the Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University and wife of an aspiring police officer—who uncovers a truth behind a murder in the city’s hijra community. It is learnt that a beautiful hijra Kamla was secretly married to Subbu, the son of a wealthy
Dattani’s Collected Plays, Vol. 2, published by Penguin Books India in 2005, contains some more plays: Thirty Days in September (a stage play in Three Acts), Clearing the Rubble (a radio play for Three Voices), Mango Souffle (a Screenplay), The Swami and Winston (a Radio Play), Morning Raga (a Screenplay), Uma and Fairy Queen (A Radio Play), Ek Alag Mausam (a Screenplay) and A Tale of a Mother Feeding Her Child (A Radio Play).

Thirty Days in September was first performed at the Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai, on 31 May 2001. It is a powerful and sensitive play on child sexual abuse. It manages to bring home the horror and the pain within the framework of a mother–daughter relationship.

Clearing the Rubble was first broadcast on 17 January 2002 on BBC Radio 4. Following the earthquake in Bhuj in January 2001, Mahesh Dattani was commissioned by BBC to write a play to be broadcast on the first anniversary of the tragedy. The play presents three people whose lives were affected by the earthquake. An English journalist
Jeffrey who has come to write about suffering humanity finds no buildings as he moves miles after miles. The buildings are reduced to heaps of rubble and the people are seen lining up outside relief camps, waiting for some paper work to be done before they can have access to meager shelter and food packets. Amidst the tragedy of humanity, Jeffrey is specially struck by the sufferings of Salim that revealed the cruelty or merciless treatment of the government: “It is not enough that my mother tells them: ‘I had three children, I lost them all.’ It is not enough that our neighbours tell them: ‘Yes I knew her children, they did exist! We did live!’ That is not enough.” (CP Vol. 2, 82)

*Mango Souffle*, a screenplay based on the play, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, produced by Sanjeev Shah, is the voice of Dattani on the prohibited issue of homosexuality and alternate sexuality. The concern for the ‘gays’ is a radical issue and to bring it to the stage in the value oriented society of India, came as a challenge both to the director and the producer. The play is targeted at urban audience since it is all about urban life (gay/lesbian relationship) which is considered nowadays as the luxury of higher society of metropolitans. Dattani admits that he has no avert agenda/message in the movie–only an exploration of relationships.

I am not sure whether audience acceptance of movie should be a form of censorship on creativity. In any case, being gay or lesbian is not right or wrong, it is reality and we have learnt to accept alternate relationship and live with them.27

*Mango Souffle* is the first celebrated Indian film to address homosexuality, addressing gay issues within the territorially distinct identity of its subject. Dattani proceeds with the faith that in changing social conditions, same sex love and bonding need not necessarily be sexual alone. “There are grey areas in people’s relationship with others too, and through my film, I have brought them to notice.”28 In such a view of radical relationship lies the relevance of the film *Mango Souffle*.

*The Swami and Winston* was first broadcast on 3 June 2000 on BBC Radio 4. This is also a play based on investigations by a woman protagonist Uma much like an earlier play, *Seven Steps around the Fire* which is based on the investigation of the murder of a
‘hijra.’ This time Uma is the daughter-in-law of Bangalore’s Deputy Commissioner of Police, and wife of the Superintendent. The play is about the investigation of the death of an English man, Mr. Winston. The Burkeberry Raincoat and mischievous dog provide a clue to the identity of the murderer.

_Uma and the Fairy Queen_ is a detective play in nature. _Seven Steps around the Fire, The Swami and Winston_ and _Uma and the Fairy Queen_ together forms the trilogy which have the same female protagonist named Uma Rao, a researcher who unravels the three murder mysteries, one in each play. The play depicts a very complicated problem and involves the nationals of three countries namely, India, Pakistan and England in the course of actions.

_Morning Raga_ is a screen play and it has been transcribed as a film script. It was released in India on 29th October 2004. The play is centred round the life of a Carnatic singer Swarnlatha. Regarding the purpose of screen play, Dattani admits, “It is about a meeting of two worlds that brings together the modern and the traditional, unites the past with the present, carnatic music with western music, fate and coincidence with individual choices.”(CP 161) Abhinay is enchanted by Swarnlatha’s art of singing and he has taken it as a challenge to unite the two. His father does not favour Swarnlatha’s singing. He also prevents his son from the company of Swarnlatha because it would take him no where. Swarnalatha could not tolerate this insult of music and only admits, “I will sing for you” and here lies the mystery of interpersonal relationship between characters. The existence of past is sustained with the image of violin at the centre. It also gives an insight into Swarnlatha’s mind that she holds herself responsible for the death of Abhinay’s mother. The obsession of Swarnlatha for the violin and music provide a very strong dramatic situation with an exceptional touch of sentimentalism.

_Ek Alag Mausam_ was released in India on 4 February 2005. It is about those helpless persons who suffer from HIV positive and are forced to count their days in a hell of terrifying seclusion. Most of the sufferers have no fault of their own and the presence of HIV positive in their blood is a shocking revelation to them, as it was to Aparna who was expecting a baby and was advised by her gynaecologist to abort because she was affected by the virus of HIV positive. Deserted by her husband from whom she got the germ in her
blood, Aparna rushed to her mother for mental support. She came in contact with an organization that was taking care of the patients suffering from HIV virus. There she met a young man George, an HIV patient, and an orphan girl Paro who changed her life. George taught her how to live for the present, not bothering about future. George said, “Forget for a moment that we are HIV. Forget that we have five, seven, ten, twelve years to live. Forget that and then think of our life together…….You have branded yourself Aids, Aids, Aids! You have put a big red stamp on yourself. I thought only an uncaring, unfeeling society would do that to us. But no. We don’t have to worry about society. We are doing it to ourselves” (CP V.II, 533). The play ends with a prospect of happiness for Aparna and George who may die soon, but who are expected to live their short lives as human beings.

_The Tale of a Mother Feeding Her Child_ was first broadcast on 29 October 2000 on BBC Radio 3. The play was commissioned as part of 2000 _Tales_, a landmark drama series marking the six-hundredth anniversary of the death of Geoffrey Chaucer, poet and author of _The Canterbury Tales_. Dattani created the character of an English woman, Anna Gosweb who tells the story of her journey back to a village in India where, twenty years earlier, she had had an affair with a local farmer, Jaman Gopalia. She revisits India after twenty years, following a letter of help during drought from Jaman and saves the starving wife and daughter of Jaman from sure death and then comes back. Along with the main issues of human sensibility and social stigma, Dattani also weaves into the fabric of the plot some other issues like racial discrimination, the poverty, negligence on the part of government administration setup and the impact of drought in this play.

Mahesh Dattani has established himself as a serious playwright for his sixteen plays which extend into the two Penguin Books, entitled _Collected Plays_ and _Collected Plays Volume – 2_. Out of these four stage plays and three screen plays are taken up for critical study. They are as follows:

- **The Stage Plays:**
  1. _Where There’s a Will_, 1988
  2. _Dance Like a Man_, 1989
  3. _Bravely Fought the Queen_, 1991
  4. _On a Muggy Night in Mumbai_, 1998
• **The Screen Plays:**
  2. *Morning Raga*, 2004
  3. *Ek Alag Mausam*, 2005

  Since the study is about a comparison of themes, it would be essential to throw some light on the idea of Comparative Thematology.

1.8 **Comparative Thematology:**

A Comparative Thematology is a comparative study of literary works as they relate to other literary works beyond their national borders as far as the themes are concerned. Say for example, the present research is a comparative study of two great playwrights, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani. Tendulkar is a Marathi playwright whereas Dattani is an internationally acclaimed author. Although their roots are in different regions, both have showed marked similarities in their plays by introducing marginalized issues like, gender discrimination, homosexual relationships, woman’s subjugation, eunuch’s problems, patriarchal pressure etc. A literary text has two main components, i.e. form and content. The form is about the language and the structure. It is how the content is presented. A specific form may help putting a specific content into value. For example, Tendulkar’s and Dattani’s works are about oppressed and marginalized issues which are more likely to be present in drama form.

The content is what the literary text is about. The content is either derived from reality or inspired from a given reality. It may reflect the reality of a specific time and a specific place as it may reflect a more universal reality that is related to human nature and existence. Also, it may derived from the folklore, the oral tradition and the collective imagination of a specific group. Say for instance, Tendulkar and Dattani have chosen their subjects from the real life conditions and the livid experiences in their plays. For example, *Kamala* was inspired by a real-life incident. Ashwin Sarin, a press reporter brought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented her at a press conference for his promotion. *Dance Like a Man* was also taken from Dattani’s one of his experiences during his Bharatnatyam days.
The Comparative study of themes has been termed differently by different theoreticians- ‘thematics,’ ‘thematology,’ ‘stoffgeschichte’ etc. Prawer identifies five prototypal subjects of investigation in this field, viz. (i) natural phenomena and man's reaction to them (ii) recurring motifs (iii) recurrent situations (iv) the literary representation of types and (v) the literary representation of named personages. Prawer’s remarks about the benefits of Comparative thematology are of special significance with regards to the present research. First of all, the comparative study of themes enables us to see what type of writer chooses what type of material, and how the material is dealt with at various times. Say for instance, Tendulkar has chosen radical issues for his plays in the period of 70’s and created controversy. The conservative Marathi people could not tolerate such realities on the stage, so they greatly criticized Tendulkar’s plays. However, Dattani, the playwright of 90’s, chooses the same radical issues for his plays, but he is well appreciated by modern people.

1.9 A Thematic Comparative Framework of Vijay Tendulkar’s and Mahesh Dattani’s Select Plays:

The Comparative study focuses on both the playwrights’ passion for marginalized issues, which are revealed as the favourite themes in most of their plays. The study has taken the following plays respectively for a comparative study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIJAY TENDULKAR</th>
<th>MAHESH DATTANI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Silence! The Court is in Session</td>
<td>1. Bravely Fought the Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sakharam Binder</td>
<td>2. Where There is a Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kamala</td>
<td>3. Dance Like a Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A Friend’s Story</td>
<td>4. On a Muggy Night in Mumbai</td>
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An effort is made to study comparatively both the playwright’s works in thematic context in the following way:

1. **Woman’s Subjugation**: Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Dattani’s *Bravely Fought the Queen* depict the theme of woman’s subjugation. Say for example, Benare, Dolly and Alka become the victims of gender discrimination.
II. **Patriarchal Autocracy:** Patriarchal Pressure is well depicted in *Sakharam Binder* and *Where There is a Will* in which Sakharam and Hasmukh Mehta portrayed as autocrats.

III. **The Clash between Tradition and Modernity:** The comparative study of *Kamala* and *Dance Like a Man* discusses a theme of clash between tradition and modernity. Say for example, Jaisingh, for his materialistic achievement and Jairaj, for his self-identity, struggle a lot. They become victims of the clash between tradition and modernity.

IV. **Homosexual Relation:** The theme of Homosexual Relations and their sufferings is well depicted in *A Friend’s Story* and *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*. Say for example, Mitra and Kamlesh greatly suffer for their homosexual relations. Both become victims of the heterosexual society.

Like Stage Plays, the researcher has also taken Tendulkar’s and Dattani’s screen plays for the comparative study. The following are the screen plays selected for detailed study.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIJAY TENDULKAR</th>
<th>MAHESH DATTANI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nishant</td>
<td>1. Mango Souffle</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Aakrosh</td>
<td>2. Morning Raga</td>
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<td>3. Ardh Satya</td>
<td>3. Ek Alag Mausam</td>
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The above plays primarily discuss the following themes:

I. **The Concept of a New Woman:** Tendulkar and Dattani have not accepted the traditional set up and aspired to find and project something challenging and new in their screen plays. Say for example, Tendulkar introduces the concept of a New Woman in his screen movie, *Nishant*. He presents the image of a woman, stretching from silent and submissive to aggressive and violent, struggling to register her protest against oppression and injustice. Sushila, the protagonist in the movie, *Nishant*, is an example of a New Woman.
II. **The Suppressed voice against Inhumanity**: Tendulkar presents the existing reality of human predicament, as he perceives it with his own naked eyes. With the treatment of the details of actual life, his works become more and more realistic. His screenplay, *Aakrosh* is based on a real incident. It is a scathing satire on the corruption in the judicial system and victimization of the underprivileged. It is a trend setter movie that hits out at the Indian judicial system and mocks at people for not doing anything to change it.

III. **Power Politics**: Tendulkar exposes the cruelty of power or power politics in his works. Say for instance, *Ardh Satya*, the cruelty is exhibited through the corrupt system. It is a movie about a man of principles who is struggling with the evils around him and with his own frailties.

Similarly, Dattani has also presented the most relevant issues in his screen plays. The following are the themes that introduced by Dattani in his screen plays.

I. **Homosexual Relations**: *Mango Souffle* is a metrosexual love story. The film aroused a lot of debate and agitation as it is based on homosexual relationship.

II. **The clash between Individual Choices and Social Commitment**: His next film, *Morning Raga*, is an original screenplay based on a life of a classical music singer. The movie deals with the emotional crises of an artist. It is about a passion for music and a question for the artist’s existential crisis.

III. **The Existential Crisis**: Dattani’s third select screenplay is *Ek Alag Mausam* in which he articulates the inarticulate to express the ‘silence’ of those who are the victims of HIV positives. The movie presents an existential crisis of protagonists. It is not a question of an individual but the question of the entire community of HIV positives. The movie celebrates the joy of life rather than mourning of death.

Thus, both playwrights have chosen the marginalized issues as themes for their works. This chapter gives a brief idea about the Comparative study, the Origin and Development of Drama and the history of Indian English Drama. It also records the
contribution of Pre-Independence as well as Post-Independence Indian English Playwrights. The chapter that follows, deals in detail with Tendulkar’s and Dattani’s select Stage Plays. The researcher has made an effort to critically examine the themes in this chapter. The third chapter focuses on both playwrights’ contribution to the field of cinematography. However, the central idea of the dissertation, i.e. a comparative study of Tendulkar’s and Dattani’s plays is discussed in detail in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter is about the findings of the study. The following are the areas of comparison and contrast that are discussed in detail in the concluding chapter:

1. Choice of Subaltern issues.
2. Difference in approach to present PATHOS.
5. Use of Expressionistic technique.
6. Exploration to integrate human sensibility with topical issues.
7. Both playwrights, with their innovative approach, have offered a new dawn to Indian drama with Indian Identity.

The study, thus, examines two prominent dramatists who have made contemporary Indian English Drama an effective tool to promote the relevant issues of the society. This dissertation attempts to study both playwrights’ contribution to Indian drama in English by comparing their works.
CHAPTER-1

References

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