

INDIANNES IN THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD

Shweta Pandey¹ & Gulshan Das, Archana Pandey²

¹Senior Assistant Professor, Department of English, Pandit Sundarlal Sharma (Open) University,
Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur, India

²Senior Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bilasa Gilrs' P.G. College, Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur, India

Received: 24 Jan 2018

Accepted: 07 Feb 2018

Published: 13 Feb 2018

ABSTRACT

India is a country of social and cultural diversity. The term Indianness means to know India in a manner through which it can be defined as socially, culturally and spiritually. Girish Karnad's works are perfect examples of the Indian imagination. Karnad is one of the most prominent writers who has not only study India socially, culturally, historically and spiritually, but also represent the reader to know and realize that they are the part of this beautiful country and a country in which 'unity in diversity' is to be found.

This paper is an attempt to study Karnad's concept of Indianness. How Karnad has chosen the subject-matter, dramatic form, setting, myths, legends, history, karma, rebirth, caste and language to make his works more useful in contemporary scenario.

KEYWORDS: Karnad, Indianness, Indian Imagination, Society and Culture

INTRODUCTION

Karnad's name needs not to be recognition. Karnad's pen always dipped in Indianness. To define the term Indianness means to accept India as a vast multicultural sub-continent and to accept India through compile acceptance with psychologically, sociologically and anthropologically [1]. Gokak in his book India and the World culture in which one of its chapters "Indian Literature as an expression of Indian culture", he first uses the phrase "Indian Imagination" in which he incorporates Indian setting of extensive the philosophical and religious beliefs, the historical developments and the political, social and scientific transformations[2].

"An Indian, then, is a person who owns up the entire Indian heritage and not

Merely awareness is an indispensable feature of Indianness."

In these lines, Gokak has said the person who have accepted Indian heritage entirely and have cultural awareness is only having the quality to be a true Indian writer and all the features of Indianness[3].

Girish Karnad's works truly exemplified the concept of Indianness. Indianness is a creative process, in which the thought provoking system has Indian soil all shades and shapes [4], geographically, racially, linguistically, stylistically, thematically, and cognitively and behaviouristically. Karnad's Indianness includes not only Indian features simply, but also includes subject matter, dramatic form, setting, myth and legends, literary allusions, habits and beliefs, Karma and rebirth,

caste and Language[5].

Karnad has drawn the subject matter for his plays from Indian culture and society myth, histories, legends and folk tales. *Yayati* and *The Fire and the Rain* are based on the stories of the Mahabharata [6]. *Tughlaq*, *Tale-Danda* and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* are from Indian historical figure. *Naga-Mandala* and *Hayavadana* are mythical and folkloristic. *Bali: the Sacrifice* the story is taken from *Yashodharacharit* [7].

In *Yayati*, though the issue is concerned with Indian society. The gender issue in which is to be found in Indian Hindu family [8]. In most of Karnad's plays, "the worst sufferers are women, who are caught up in a whirlpool of Hindu patriarchy and are sucked down helplessly." (Ramchandran 28) *Chitrlekha* a newly-wed female is a perfect example of gender-bias society [9]. The desire of woman has no meaning for her family in patriarchal order; there is no difference that she belongs to the high class / caste or lower class or caste [10]. *Chitrlekha* in *Yayati* is an Aryan princess, the protagonist in *Bali:the Sacrifice* is a queen and *Vishakaha* in *The Fire and the Rain* is a brahmin; all these women belong to the upper caste / class but all are victim of patriarchal order[11]. In *Yayati* *Chitrlekha* commits suicide because she realized that there is no hope that she will get her married life again. She realizes that there is no use of life now and said [12].

"Neither will you return *Puru's* youth nor will you accept me! ... of what use am I to your garland of victories? All of you have achieved your objectives. Who needs me now? You have your youth; *Pururaj* has his self-sacrifice, but what am I to do?"

She is true victim of women in Indian society who finds themselves completely out of place in a world ruled by men. *Chitrlekha's* suicide due to society like *Padmini* in *Hayavadana* to performed *Sati*; *Nittilai* in *The Fire and the Rain* to be murdered and the queen in *Bali: the Sacrifice* to sacrifice herself [13].

Another Indian habits and beliefs which are reflected in Karnad's play are, in *Naga-Mandala*, *Appanna* marries to *Rani* but he left and locked her and went to some other woman. When he knows about her wife's pregnancy he claims her and to tells her that to prove her chastity [14]. This is the attitude of man in many parts of country. In *Tughlag*, *Aziz* the reprobate he disguise and become a state officer who is allowed with the law and cheating the crown. Through the character of *Aziz* Karnad's aim to show this kind of false person whose aims to fulfill his desire in any terms and conditions, which are found in contemporary political and social scenario [15]. In *Hayavadana*, the Hindu custom of taking vows to please god and goddess through offering something has shown. The tendency of Indian people is they thought the way to please the God is sacrifice [16]. When *Devadatta* wants to marry with *Padmini* he offers goddess *Kali*. Karnad has compared this offering with hair offering in *Balaji* temple at *Tirupati*. In *Bali: the Sacrifice* Karnad uses the *Rigvedic* practice to animal sacrifice. The victim queen is *Jain* and to please her God queen-mother has decided to sacrifice [17].

The concept of *Karma*, the timeless chain of cause and effect relationship is another most important characteristic of Indian belief [18]. In *Yayati*, King *Yayati* is cursed to become old due to his relation with *Shramistha*. *Naga-Mandala*, *Kurudeva* due to her fate, she is born blind. In *Tale-Danda* it is fate of *Sharana* movement of *Basavanna* come to an end[19]. Similarly *Karma* and rebirth are closely inter-related terms; it means the cycle of birth and rebirth are related with past, present and future. *Hayavadana* had a horse head and human body [20]. *Bhagavata* explains *Hayavadana* in your past life you did something wrong, your horse head may be the punishment of your past life act [21].

Karnad has portrayed some most important historical figures through his dramas. According to Karnad's perception regarding history and those persons or historical figures, he has used in his plays are quite important [22]. Tughlaq, Tale-Danda and The Dreams of Tipu Sultan all these three plays shows Karnad's historic genius. Tughlaq is known for his idealistic efforts to India politically and socially; Basavanna in Tale-Danda is known as his passion to form a castles society of *Sharanas* in the twelfth century of Karnataka, Tipu Sultan in The Dreams of Tipu Sultan is known for patriotic zeal to win his empire for British resign [23].

The most important strength of Karnad's plays are that he has chosen his childhood form of drama which he saw in his village where he grew up. Sirisi is a small town of Maharashtra where he used to spend his time while watching plays [24]. The two important forms of drama were 'Company Natak theatre' and 'Yakshagana'. When he went to Bombay for post graduation, he came into contact of Western Theatre, Specially Stinberg's *Miss Julie* as produced by Ebrahim Alkazi. Later, when he was in England for his further studies, he first experienced the world Theatre. But the theatre which was most influenced him throughout his literary journey is, his childhood memory 'Company Natak theatre' and 'Yakshagana'.

Company Natak technique is used in Tughlaq and Tale-Danda. In Tughlaq characters Aziz and Aazam through which they are comically represented, and this technique is also used in some deep and swallow scene, in description of Bramhin's quarter, the inner chamber, the god's room and courtesean's quarter. Yayati, Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, The Fire and the Rain and Bali: the Sacrifice are examples of Yakshagana technique. Hayavadana is the perfect example of the Yakshagana technique [25]. The worship of Lord Ganesh, Bhagvata, the traditional stage manager as a narrator of Yakshagana play multiple roles, and most importantly female chorus, music and use of mask. In Naga-Mandala the flames, at midnight several flames entered to the temple; giggling, talking to each other, in female voice. In Indian drama Karnad has invented this great metaphor in a form of flames to represent the woman of the village and through which he beautifully gives a voice of his protagonist inner feeling and thoughts [26].

The most important thing which compiles Karnad's Indianness is his linguistic approach regarding words, phrases and idioms. The English which he has used in his translation is nothing but a format of 'Standard English' it means a form of language and words in which are so familiar with readers. The way through which Karnad represent his play the content, subject-matter, dramatic form, setting of plot, use of myth, legends, habits, beliefs and social representation, all of these things gives the impact of the readers that they are enjoying and feel it at home.

The title of his plays is Indian words which Karnad has used, those words are Sanskrit in origine. In Hayavadana Sanskrit is used in so many quotations, the song which Devdatta and Kapila sung for Padmini. The name Bhagavata, rishi, punyasthana, pativrata, puja, purans, gandharava, mangalarati, alapans, arati and sati; the use of National Anthem sung by Hayavadana is a true example of Karnad's use of Sanskrit words which shows his knowledge to ancient Indian scripture and language. Naga-Mandala, Yayati, Bali: the Sacrifice, The Fire and the Rain all are not having Indians name but also having mythological interpretations of Karnad's thought which make him a true representative of Indianness.

CONCLUSIONS

The term Indianness which Karnad has used in his plays is truly exemplified India. The subject matter,

dramatic form and setting of his plays, the use of myths and history, the use of karma and rebirth, caste and language put his plays into a prestigious position not only in Indian English drama but also gives a universal appeal. All of his plays are a perfect blend of Indianness because the source which inspired him most is the great Indian epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana taking content from them he is giving a lesson to our society. Karnad's plays, teaches a great lesson to every part of life, i.e. religious, political, family, education, career, friendship, motherhood, urban and rural life, man's eternal quest and many more. The Karnad's works give a lesson for contemporary India to think, psychologically, religiously, spiritually, socially, politically, literary and culturally through which India can acquire the concept of Indianness.

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