

***Smt. Jyoti Annarao**

Assistant Professor of English

Department of English

SSA (Autonomous)Govt. First Grade College

Ballari, Karnataka.

****Dr.V.R. Badiger**

Prof. Department of English

Gulbarga University Kalaburgi.

Indian Drama in English During the Post-Independence Period

Abstract

The present paper discusses the meaning, origin and development of drama in India. The main focus lies on important Indian playwrights in English. Drama is a composite art. Which involves playwright, the actors audience etc, on the stage. Hence it has its own problem where as other forms like prose, poetry are free. Indian English playwrights could solve these problems and enacted their play abroad.

Introduction:-

The word drama comes from Greek word drao or dran means “to do” or “to act”. A play is a story acted out. It shows people going through some eventful period in their lives, seriously or humorously. The speech and action recreate the flow of human life. A play comes fully to life only on the stage. On the stage it combines many arts those of the author, director, actor, designer and others. Dialogue occupies an important place in drama. A playwright may instruct or entertain or do both. His attitude towards his subject may be serious or light or a combination of the two.

A dramatist starts with characters and characters must be full, rich, interesting, and different enough from each other so that in one way or another they conflict. From this conflict comes the play. The conflict may or may not be resolved, but conflict must exist. Applied to the theatre, it embraces all work composed for performance and finds its most elementary expression in mime. The mimetic instinct is inherent in man; but it only becomes dramatic when he invokes it to represent a spiritual or physical conflict, in short when imitation extends to action. Since the instinct itself is essentially a combination of the desires for self expression and self exploration, its fulfillment enables the imagination of actors and audience jointly to explore in terms of imitations which the actors persuade the audience to accept as real, the mysterious sources of human behavior.

The word drama, therefore, as used of the theatre implies a cooperative act of make-believe, by which it becomes possible for an imitator to present and for a spectator to receive an explanatory image of those physical and spiritual conflicts which govern the human conduct.

Indian literature has a special quality, which has been contributing to world literature which involves variety of culture and languages. Indian drama is an old custom, which made its presence felt from the vedic period. Indian culture, custom and mood is presented in Indian theatre through — natya, lasya, mudra, etc.

Indian drama and Indian theatre had the base of Sanskrit literature. Indian drama got the longest and the richest tradition. The origin of Sanskrit drama dates back to 1000 B.C. Indian drama became the means of exploring and communicating the truth of things and was popularly known as “fifth veda.”¹

Earlier drama was performed in a simple way of daily activities. Later some episodes from the *Ramayana*, *the Mahabharata* and *the Bahgavad Gita* were acted in front of people. Such type of performance is still very popular in India during the time of Drussehera. According to legend when the world passed from golden age to silver age, people started getting addicted to sensual pleasure and jealous, anger, and desire. Then Lord Indra requested God Brahma as -

“Please give us something which would not only teach us but be pleasing both to eyes and ears.”²

God Brahma gave the pious idea of Natya Veda after mediation. He combined the essence of Natya Veda out the four Vedas, dance from the Rig Veda, Song from the Sama Veda, mimicry from Yajur Veda and passion from Athar Veda. Bharata's *Natyashastra* is a detailed treatise that deals with all aspects of the diverse arts and that are embodied in the classical Indian concept of drama including dance, music poetics and general aesthetics. Bharata describes drama as mimicry of the actions and conduct of the people. It follows that only drama uses the eight basic emotions of love, joy, anger, sadness, pride, fear, aversion and wonder. It depicts different situations relating to men good, bad and indifferent, and gives courage, amusement, happiness and advice to all of them. Bharata's *Natyashastra in Sanskrit* is the most pioneering work on Indian dance and drama. It displays consciousness of all major aspects of drama, namely stage – setting, music, plot construction, characterization, dialogue and acting.

Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai were three important place to develop the Indian English theatre as these places were the centers of British East India Company. The activists were encouraged by patrons that they got. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, many of the intellectuals went abroad to study. Hence they got exposure to different places and different literature. The Indian English playwrights got encouragement to write dramas. Important dramatists like Madhusudhan Dutt and Rabindranath Tagor wrote dramas in Bengali and English language and enacted theme before audience. Many other dramatists tried to write scripts and enacted in theatre.

Drama is a composite art. Which involves playwright, the actors audience etc, on the stage. Hence it has its own problem where as other forms like prose, poetry are free. After the Independence of India dramatists like Asif Currimbhoy, Partap Sharma and Gurucharan Das were successfully staged in Europe and the United States of America. In spite of performance in abroad drama did not establish a regular school of Indian English drama at home. It was because drama was monopolized by the theatre in the Indian regional languages.

After independence of India, Indian English Drama showed good achievement. Though the National School of Drama and Sangit Natak Academic were founded but these gave support to the advancement of regional language dramas.

T. Shashikanth Reddy says – “Post – Independence writing in English has stood the test of the moment and the test of time. It has found readers at home as well s abroad. It has

got plenty of critical acclaim and quite a happy share of critical denunciation. Post – Independence Indian English written by Indians has almost all the qualities that a standard written language possess. It has freshness, glamour, humour, satire, hybridization, slangs and new coinages in plenty. The recognition of a national identity after 1947 proved a great gain for the Indian English writer. It gave him greater self – confidence, widened his vision and sharpened his faculty of self – writing”.³

The Indian English theatre, the rich chronicle of Indian drama, the colossal history of Indian natya then witnessed a marked change with the advent of the eminent theatre personalities like Habib Tanvir, K.N.Pannikar, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnard, Vijay Tendulkar and many other who further carried English drama in India to the further step of maturity. Some Indian dramatists tried to highlight Indian tradition, folklore, custom, rituals, conventions, and rites amidst the innovativeness of English drama. Other dramatists with substantial output includes the poet Nissim Ezekiel, Dina Mehta and Manjula Padmanabhan. The saga of English theatre, which began long back during the British Imperialism, continued further and is still an eminent part of various forms of theatre in India. Continuous study, deep understanding and above all the tuneful blend of the West and East have helped English drama in India as a distinct art form whilst aiding it to stand apart with pride and dignity. K.R.S. Iyengar rightly observes as

" 'Indo — Anglian drama' : isn't it like talking about 'snakes in iceland' ? Not quite, — but the problem is there, for while poetry, novels and non-fiction prose can be read in the silence of one's study, Drama can come to life only in the theatre."⁴

Notwithstanding the above said problem prominent playwrights of this age wrote several dramas. Arif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, Gurucharn Das, Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad have used new methods and techniques to enrich Indian English Drama.

G. V. Desani is an important dramatist, his famous play *Hali(1950)* is a complex and singular piece of dramatic art. It has been highly admired both by European and Indian critics for its originality, symbolism, vividness of imagery and sheer apocalyptic quality. It is conspicuous for stage ability. It was staged at the Watergate Theatre in London in 1950 and was also produced in India. *Hali* is an allegorical play in poetic prose. It is a presentation of everyone's quest for fulfillment. The protagonist, Hali, is named after a Muslim saint and

stands for humanity at large. Other characters too are symbolical. It is a superb passion play which projects the story of Hali's confrontation with the powers of creation and destruction, life and death, his surrender to the phenomenal world, his realization of the supremacy of love transcending time and space. The entire action of the play is symbolical.

Asif Currimbhoy is one of the most prolific and versatile playwrights in Indian English Literature. His plays are not only the expression of thought but thoughts are meant for action on the stage. He is the only Indian English playwright who put great effort to enact his plays on the stage in India. Thus Asif Currimbhoy is successful in producingactable plays. His plays cover various facts of society and written social, political, historical and religious plays.

Asif Currimbhoy had produced 29 plays in 17 years (1959-1975). Out of 29 plays only 22 plays have been published by Writers Workshop, Calcutta. Rest of the 7 plays are short and have not been published till date. Plays of Asif Currimbhoy can be divided into two phases, the early phase covers the period from 1959 to 1968 and the later phase covers from 1969 to 1975. Important plays of the early phase are - *The Tourist Mecca* (1959), *The Clock* (1959), *The Doldrummer* (1960), *The Restaurant* (1960), *The Dumb Dancer* (1961), *Om* (1961), *The Thorns on a Canvas* (1962), *The Captives* (1963), *Goa* (1964), *And the Never Twain Shall Meet* (1964), *The Kaleidoscope* (1964), *Mansoon* (1965), *The Hungry Ones* (1965), *Valley Of the Assassin* (1966), *The Temple Dancer* (1967), *The Lotus Eater* (1967), *Abbe Feria* (1968), and *The Mercenary* (1968).

Important nine plays of Asif currimbhoy in later phase are - *An Experiment With Truth* (1969), *Inquilab* (1970), *The Refugee* (1970), *Sonar Bangla* (1972), *The Darjeeling Tea* (1971), *Om Mane Pudme Hum !* (1972), *The Miracle Seed* (1973), *The Dissident MLA* (1974), and *This Alien ... Native Land* (1975).

Asif Currimbhoy is well known for using new technique in his plays like -documentary elements in political and historical plays, cinematographic technique, picturesque background and episodic technique . His dramas cover wide variety of subjects like history and politics, social and economic problems, psychological problems, art , religion and east west encounter etc. The major contemporary problems are focused. It is very interesting to note that majority of his dramas end with ray of hope, that life gives chance to be optimistic.

Lakhan Deb's *Tiger's Claw*(1967) and *Murder At The Prayer Meeting*(1976) are remarkable contribution to historical play. Deb skillfully uses blank verse in these plays. *Tiger's Claw* is a verse play in three acts, which dramatizes vividly the killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji. Deb's *Murder At the Prayer Meeting* deals with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi and is full of the echoes of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. It is modeled on the technique of Greek tragedy. The playwright deftly uses the unities of time, place and action, and employs the devices of Prologue and Chorus. The plot of this play covers Mahatma Gandhi's dominant role in politics, the sad events that followed the country's partition, the two way exodus of refugees and the consequent communal clashes and bloodshed. Lakhan Deb is a talented playwright and he has widened the scope of historical drama in Indian English literature. *Tiger's Claw* is a successful historical play on Shiva and in *The Murder at The Prayer Meeting* Deb has adroitly written a fine historical tragedy on Indian history.

Gurucharan Das is well known for his successful historical play *Larins Sahib* (1970) which deals with Henry Lawrence of Punjab. The action of the play is based on event in the Punjab in 1846-47, deals with the nineteenth century colonial India. Henry Lawrence was appointed in East India Company's resident in the Punjab court of Ranjit Singh's twelve year old son, Dalip Singh. The play is successful in presenting the colonial atmosphere and the characters are convincing and realistically presented and captured the essential historical traits of his historical personae. His other two plays are — *Mira*(1971)deals with Mira's immaculate God-love for Lord Krishna with all the superiority of contemporary theatre and *Jakhoo Villa* presents theme of the decadence in a Hindu family in Simla.

Pratap Sharma's two plays are *The Professor Has A Warcry* (1970)and *A Touch of Brightness*(1973). There is much sensational melodrama in *The Professor Has A Warcry* but it is noticeable for a keen sense of situation and effective dialogue. Sharma's second play *A Touch of Brightness*, a Commonwealth Festival play, presents a vivid realistic picture of the Redlight district in Bombay. The playwright successfully recaptures the dark side of the sophisticated city life that perpetuates the existence of brothels. His plays were staged abroad successfully, but failed in find proper stage in India. Sense of situation and dialogues are effective. The plays of Pratap Sharma were successfully staged in Europe and the United States of America.

Nissim Ezekiel, who is a well known poet, has five plays to his credit. *Three Plays*(1969) includes *Nalini. A Comedy, Marriage poem, A tragic-comedy, and The Sleep Walkers: An Indo American Farce*. His other two plays are *Don't Call It suicide*, and *Song of*

Deprivation. Some of his famous themes are institution of marriage, the uselessness of social codes and the void in the urban middle class. He is not bothered about the plot construction but the characters hold his complete attention. In spite of strong sense of dramatic concept but the poetic talent of Nissim Ezekiel cannot be transformed into drama . His plays are appreciated for symmetrical construction with abundance of irony, focus on oddities of human life and behavior and his plays make a pleasant reading.

The development of Indian English drama is actually a collective attempt of all the regional writers producing plays in their respective languages and sometimes translating their works into English for wider use and publicity. Like Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote plays originally in Bengali and translated into English by himself and others translated his works, some regional writers have been writing plays in their respective languages and translating their works into English. Great regional playwrights who added a new dimension to Indian drama are Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Girish Karnad in Kannada, Badal Sircar in Bengali, and Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi. These writers have left the Elizabethan rules and regulations far behind and have evolved new technique combining both classical and modern ideologies.

Mohan Rakesh's *One Day in Ashadha*, *Great Swans of the Waves*, *Half— Way House* show his love for new and challenging themes and a constant desire to leave behind the traditional set up. His major concern has been the irony and tragedy of the relationship of man and woman. People admired at his talent to show the complexity of human thought and their helplessness. *One Day in Ashad* moves around the character Kalidasa , who fail to cope with surrounding and fails to maintain the good human relationship. The feeling of uprooted and fear of leaving the native land but Mallika force him to accept the royal proposal, Mallika and Kalidas love each other ,her mother expects them to get married. Then he goes to city, failed to adjust with the city life and returns to village . Kalidas is a symbol of a man who fails to take a timely decision and lead a contented relation. The play *Half- Way House (Adhe- Adhure)* deals with elder daughter who cannot find fulfillment in her husband , she fails to get complete satisfaction in other man also. The play is concerned about the broken house forms the background of the play, it also moves around the unmanly and unemployed husband who fails to fulfill the needs of his wife. *Great Swans of the Waves* deals with dilemma of Nand who loves his wife and strongly attracted to the cal of Lord Bhudha. The irony lies in his inability to take decision even when limited alternatives are left before him. All the character are alienated ,isolated and dissatisfied with the situation , they are conscious of their inability in

their personality to be complete, normal and adequate. The plays present precarious nature of man's existence in the universe.

Badal Sircar is a great Bengali writer who uses the contemporary situation and social problems to present the life-in-death situation in modern society. Badal Sircar started his career as a dramatist with the play *Evam Indrajit*. The unique structure and social utility attracted the popularity. The play moves around the theme of middle class people who have failed to adjust and struggle for survival of the life. *Evam Indrajit* is a play of a dramatist who fails to write a play, as a honest and conscious writer he fails to present the mechanical and chaotic life. There is no value for emotions and external world and materialism are proved to be unreal and have weightless existence, the dramatist does not offer any hope in the play. The dramatist negated all the conventions of the traditional drama by this play. Badal Sircar used situations and social problems of his time to depict the atrocities of modern life. His themes depicted an anguish caused due to the meaninglessness in one's existence. His plays, *Evam Indrajit*(1962), *The Other Side of History*(1964), and *There is No End deal*(1971) with psychological and social themes. All these plays deal with political, social, psychological and existential problems. *Procession* is about search for real home a new society based on equality. The ideal concept where man works according to one's ability, and gets according to need where no one is being exploited. *Bhoma* is the another play which focus on the life of the innocent farmers, the society is full of exploiters and opportunists, make use of the innocent people to achieve their goal. *Bhoma* is an aboriginal barbarian woodcutter, can't cope with these people, symbolically sharpens the axe to cut the poisonous tree which grow around him. The author has written comedies, and given a unique meaning to comedy, comedy does not rank low, it does not discuss the social problem, laughter is a means to face the realities of their existence, sometimes the highest sorrow is expressed through laughter. *Some Day Later* deals with various questions relating to history. the play moves around the character Shankara, who feels that some later day the horror of his experience may repeat, Man is a puppet to possess materials like-property, career, and marriage. *Poet's Story* deals with the story of election campaign, Manibhushan is the central character who wants to win the seat in Assembly. The dramatist presents the comedy through the mistaken identity theme.

Badal Sircar has worked in the direction of highlighting the ideal and presenting the gap between the ideal and real. The subjects of his plays are poverty, corruption, greed, industrial and agricultural exploitation, terrorism, police brutality, caste system, dowry system

and the plays also dwell deep into the problems of middle class society. Thus the dramatist is conscious of the contemporary problems of the society and he has given a fresh air to Indian English Drama technically and thematically.

Vijay Tendulkar is a leading contemporary Indian playwright. Thirty full length and twenty three one act plays are his contribution to modern Indian theatre. Some of his subjects for play are fight against injustice, gender role, class system, social consciousness, cultural freedom and so on. For his contribution Vijay Tendulkar got many awards like - Padmabhushan(1984), The Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar(1990), The Kalidas Sanman(1992) The Pandit Mahadev Shastri Joshi Award (1999) The Dinanath Mangeshkar Award(1998), he also got Nehru Fellowship (1973) and Life Time Fellowship from the National Academy of the Performing Art, New Delhi(1998). Vijay Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*(1972), *Vultures*, and *Silence ! The Court is In Session*(1968) are his four successful experiments on the Marathi theatre. Themes of his plays are human violence, oppression of the individual, many layers of exploitation. He concentrated on man's existential anguish and his confrontation with his surroundings. He presents a fictional reality of life acquires a sharp focused character having rare dramatic power.

The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* was performed at Bharat Natya Mandir, Pune, became very popular. The play explores the life of morally decadent Peshwa ruler Nana Phadnavis and the corrupt Brahmins of Pune, the play has the element of Dashavatara form with music and dance which sharpen the irony of the situation. *Vultures* is based on negative aspect of human life as man aspires for sex, which leads to violence, and evil. The hideous nature of the vultures family and suffocating pressure upon two innocent is effectively and evocatively expressed in the play. This play is ore out of personal experience, in his life. It shows the degeneration a family with compassion and cruelty. *Sakharam Binder* is a naturalistic play which focus on complication of human nature formation of physical lust and violence in human being. The brutal objectivity and is presented through triangular relationship between Sakharam and two mistress Laxmi and Champa. The another play *Kanydan* a dalitwriter as a drunkard, wife beater, manipulator and blackmailer. The play focus on trouble area of public.

Silence! The Court is in Session deals with patriarchal value on woman, the character Leela Benar performs mock trial in a village, but the trial of her private life who is accused of infanticide, immorality and unwed motherhood. Her defense is expressed through monologue which express the hypocrisy and double standards of the society, and attitude of man who used

her body as a commodity. She has been exploited since her childhood, when she was fourteen her uncle enjoyed her body, second time a professor again enjoyed her and made her pregnant but refused her to marry. Then she requests her male friends to marry her, but every one rejects but laughs at her, here an exploited woman stands as a respectless, shameless and lost the dignity. . the condition of Bener is of Draupadi in *Mahabharata*, Lord Krishna has rescued her but now none is there to help her. When she stands in witness box, her plight is very critical. The play ends with the doubt that whether she will abort the child or not and upliftment of woman is possible with the changed attitude of men.

Vijay Tendulkar is known for stage craft by presenting the pictures of various problems of Maharashtra, the deep rooted taboos and cultural rituals. The plays include music, theatre, religion and philosophy. The dramatist goes deep into the human psychology and existence and expresses through the drama. The theatrical craft is so systematic that production is assured by following his stage direction. The characters of his plays are from middle class who struggle for achievement in the outer world, the woman characters are memorable and presents the woman position in the contemporary society. The complexity of human nature has attracted the dramatist, the characters are mixture of evil and good.

Playwrights and directors turned to their roots in Indigenous classical rituals and folk performance to create a modern Indian theatre in search of Indigenous aesthetic and dramaturgy. Girish Karnad and Kavalam Narayan Panikkar belong to the root movement. Panikkar is an eminent poet theatre director. He has written over 26 Malayalam plays. His famous plays are *Sakshi*, and *Aramba Chekkan and The Right to Live*. These plays have influence of poetry. He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for Direction in 1983. Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship 2002 and Padma Bhushan in the field of Arts in 2007.

Girish Karnad is a leading playwright. His plays secured him permanent place in Indian drama in English. He is an actor, director, art critic, translator, writer, mingled in one. He has represented our country in foreign lands as an emissary of Indian art and culture. Thus he has national and international recognition. He has played leading roles in films directed by eminent directors like Sham Benegal, Basu Chatterjee and Subhas Ghai. His roles in 'Mahatma' and 'Swamiji' in hindi films brought popularity. He has directed Kannada films - 'Kadu' and 'Ondanondu Kaladalli'. For his contribution to art and literature, he got several awards like Padmashri (1974) Padmabhushan (1992) and Gnanapitha award in 1999.

Plays written by Karnad which carved permanent place in Indian drama in English are *Yayati* (1961) *Tughlaq* (1972), *Hayavadana* (1975), *Naga Mandala : Play with a Cobra* (1990), *Tale — Danda* (1993), *The Dream of Tipu Sultan* (1997), *The Fire and the Rain* (1998), *Broken Images* (2004) and *Flowers* (2004). His themes are borrowed from Indian myth, legends, folk tales and history but his approach and techniques are modern. He has used history, myth and legend with imagination and creativity. He built a bridge between the elite and the folk.

Yayati is an important play written in Kannada language ,later translated into English by Karnard , the theme is borrowed from The *Mahabharata* . The Indian mythology is turned into existential drama. Yayati is the king of Hastinapur, lead the life of sensual pleasure. He shuns his responsibility as a ruler and exchanges his old age with his young son ti live the life of sensual pleasure., yearns for eternal youth. Through this play Karnard portrays the life of modern man who is engrossed with sensual mundane pleasures.

Hayavadana is an adaptation of a Sanskrit tale from *Kathasaritsagara*, expresses the problem of search of identity in a world of tangled relationship. The play has the atmosphere of absurdity and contradiction , all the characters are fractured personalities; none is whole, thus the play is an interminable quest for perfection. *Naga Mandala* exposes the male chauvinism, the oppression and injustice of woman in patriarchal culture. The play moves around the character Rani , who is ill treated by her husband Appanna. She goes into maturity because of love of Naga , a snake disguise himself as Appanna and had relation with Rani. Later Rani has to undergo a test to prove her chastity . Karnard suggests that if the society wants to change , it will have to revert to matriarchy. *The Fire and the Rain* draws the story from The *Mahabharata* Karnard gives a contemporary meaning to an old legend which stresses the danger of Knowledge without wisdom, and power without integrity. All the characters in the play are learned man but does not save one from unethical conduct. Yavakrita falls a prey to lust, Raibhya and Bharadwaja to anger and Paravasu to dishonesty. The 'Fire ' in the title is the indication of lust ,anger, vengeance,envy, treachery, violence, and death. The 'rain' indicates the self sacrifice, compassion, divine grace, forgiveness and life. *Tughlaq* is a historical play , centers around the character Muhammad - bin - Tughlaq. the play is considered as his most famous play and would have been established Karnard as a noted dramatist. *Tughalq* deals with the fourteen century north Indian history , especially with Muhammad - Bin- Tughalaq's last five years rule from 1327 to1332. The dramatist flouted the dramatic unities because he concentrates on the five years of the Mughal period when Tughlaq shifted

the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. *Tale -Danda* (1993) the play starts in the year 1168 which comprises three acts and sixteen scenes. The play is based on a historical incident that took place in the twelfth century and deals with last years of Basavanna 's life who is a great social reformer and founder of the lingayath faith. The play awakens the sensibilities of audience to think about caste system in present day and find some solution for it.

Mahesh Dattani is director and writer, one of few dramatists who writes play in English who does not follow western dramatic canon. The dramatist intends to develop theatre which can be understood and enjoyed multi lingual community of India and abroad. Thus the playwright has used English as a means of communication. Mahesh Dattani is aptly considered as a successor of Girish Karnad. A close analysis of his plays reveal that plays are rooted in urban milieu of India, and reflection on concerns and constraints of the commoner. The plays present common man's efforts to have space and respect in society. Plays are faithful expression of socio- cultural environment. Famous dramas of Dattani are *Final Solutions and other plays* which includes four full length plays, and *Collected plays* comprises six full length plays and two radio plays. His *Final Solutions(1992-93)* deals with communal tension which bags Sahitya Academy Award in 1998. *Where There's a will(1988)*, *Bravely Fought the Queen(1991)* , *Dance Like a Man(1989)* , *Tara(1990)* are the plays deal with painful tales of various families have gone into the fabric and texture of the plays. The playwright depicts the battles being fought among the members of same family at home. the Play *Tara* deals with the major problem of female feticide , parents favor the boy and rejects the girl, there is a tensed argument regarding parents' preference for male child at the cost of girl child. The purpose of the play is to create awareness among the people to protect girl child . *Dance Like a Man* deals with conflict between tradition and modern, The play *Seven Step Around the Fire* deals with life of Kamala , a eunuch, is killed , the police investigates the case , the play reveals the attitude and brutality of society towards eunuch. *Ek Alag Mausam* is an interesting play, presents the voice of the marginalized being HIV positive . Through this play the dramatist seeks for creation of awareness against HIV and love and understanding for the HIV afflicted. Mahesh Dattani is known for use of symbols , devices, technique and props to suit the theme of the play. Other two important plays are- *On A Muggy Night in Mumbai(1998)* *Thirty Days in September(2001)* Dattani has written various radio plays and the screen plays such as- *Do The Needful (1997)*, *Seven Steps Around The Fire(1998)* , *The Swami and Winston(2000)*, *A Tale of A Mother Feeding Her Child(2000)*, *Clearing The Rubble(2000)*, *Uma and The Fairy*

Queen(2003)Screen Play are - Mango Souffle(2002), Morning Raga(2004), Ek Alag Mausam(2005)

The main focus of Dattani's plays is social and political realities. Themes of his plays are-Indian joint family, plight of woman in Indian society, homosexuality marriage and career, patriarchal social system , conflict between tradition and modernity, identity crisis, workings of personal and moral choices and familial relationship. Dattani is well known for complete use of theatre space in order to yield the maximum effect. He uses special device like double dialogue.

To conclude, besides these playwrights, many other dramatists endeavored to widen the scope of Indian English drama by writing plays on historical, political, social, realistic and religious themes. It is a matter of satisfaction that some of the Indian English Plays have been staged in European and American countries. On the whole, the prospect of Indian English drama is not bleak. Playwrights like Dattani, Karnad, Tendulkar , Sircar and many others are willing to experiment, with a strong sense of a living theatre, have opened up a new horizon of dramatic achievement

Reference

- Venkata Reddy. K, Dhavan R.K. Ed. *Flowering of Indian Drama*. New Delhi; Prestige
2004 p.7.
- Rangacharya Adya, *The Natyashastra* Eng. Trans: with critical Notes. New Delhi;
Munshiram Manoharlal. 1996.p.1.
- Amur, G.S. “Kailasam’s Quest for Greatness”. *Critical Essay on Indian Writing in
English Madras*; Macmillan, 1977.p.186.
- Kumar, Satish. *A Survey of Indian English Drama* Barielly; Prakash Book Depot,
1993.p.7.