

Mythology and Folklore Portrayed By Girish Karnad**Dr Naveen Kumar Singh****Associate Professor and Head****Dept of English, R C S College, Manjhaul**

Historically, theatre in India was an important medium of communication, wherein many important messages were conveyed to the masses. There were numerous dramatists in ancient India like Kalidasa and Bhasa who wrote many dramas, which are popular still today. Moreover, they wrote many dramas which made them immortal in the mind of Indian audience. For example, Richard Salomon while discussing his typological analysis of inscriptions in Indian Epigraphy has clearly mentioned that in the literary inscriptions one can find the reference of drama, which corroborates that notion that dramatic performance was popular in ancient India. Thus, it is evident from the available literature and inscriptions that drama was an important medium of mass-communication.

However, the contemporary Indian drama, deviating from classical and European models, is experimental and innovative in terms of thematic and technical qualities. It is not an offspring of any specific tradition and it has laid the foundation of a distinctive tradition in the history world drama by reinvestigating history, legend, myth, religion and fold love with context of socio-political issues. A cumulative theatrical tradition evolved by Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sirkar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad, prepared the background of contemporary Indian English theatre.

In view of the noteworthy works of Girish Karnad, an attempt has been made in this study to critically assess the treatment of folklore and mythology in his plays. Girish Karnad is one of the most respected dramatist in the contemporary world of drama. Besides, his dramas have been received tremendously in both academic studies and theoretical performance. He has written the following plays, which incidentally forms this study as well.

- Yayati
- Tughlaq
- Nagmandalam
- The Fire and the Rain.

‘ **Yayati** ’ is based on myths borrowed from Mahabaratha. Yayati is cursed as blind who tries to convince other to share his responsibility so that he can regain the lost glory of youth. His son, to fulfill his responsibility towards his father, partakes the responsibility and goes blind.

In ‘ **Tughlaq**’ history is recreated. It brings back the rule of an anarchic ruler which assumes the significance of myth and symbol. Tughlaq kills his father. He loved prayers in his early life but latter bans all kinds of prayers in his kingdom. He is a symbol of corruption, a primitive force, that cuts human mind into division and consume the consciousness.

In ‘ **Nagamandala**’ a cobra appears simple but is loaded with myths, folk belief, magic and romance. It is based upon a tale from the Tamil folk story collection ‘ Matankamarajan Katal’ . In the original Tamil folk story the tale is called The adventure of the Princes Standing Lamp. The first story – teller is the grandmother, of the folk variety. The non-human things can articulate, even a Cobra can speak and father a human child. The flames have female voice; flame is gossip-prone. The folk belief narrates that flames put out in one place gather in some other place and gossip.

The royal characters in the original version have been transformed into ordinary folk. The former is in line with folk tradition and the latter change is in keeping with the time. Rani, in the original folk story, is the princes and in the play her name is Rani without status. Appanna is any man for that matter. The play consists of a myth-Naga coming disguised as Appanna, Indra visiting Ahalya disguised as her husband, Gautama. The play thus moves on the mythical background soiled in the folktale.

‘ **The Fire and the Rain**’ is symbolic and consists of psychological interpretation of the myth of the Mahabharatha. To give new turn to the original story Karnad brings into bearing the characters of Brahma, Rakshasa and Nittilai, a hunter girl for bearing upon the colonial and post colonial perspectives in the play. Yavakri, the son of sage Bhardwaja, burns continuously through the fire of jealousy inside his body and mind.

Myths grant continuity and stability to a culture. They foster a shared set of perspectives, values, history -- and literature, in the stories themselves. Through these communal tales, we are connected to one another, to our ancestors, to the natural world surrounding us, and to society; and, in the myths which have universal (i.e., archetypal) themes, we are connected to other cultures. Besides, Myths present guidelines for living as well as behaving in the society. When myths tell about the activities and attitudes of deities, the moral tone implies society's expectations for our own behaviors and standards. In myths, we see archetypal situations and some of the options which can be selected in those situations; we also perceive the rewards and other consequences which resulted from those selections.

One of the most important aspects of the Myths is that it can explain the unexplainable. They reveal our fate after death, and the reasons for crises or miracles, and other puzzles -- and yet they retain and even encourage an aura of mystery. Myths also satisfy our need to understand the natural world; for example, they might state that a drought is caused by an angry deity. Myths offer role models. In particular, people pattern themselves after heroes presented in the books and novels.

The contemporary relevance have been variable discovered in Karnad' s plays. Besides the motifs that have put forward in the chapter II, other features of the plays also become known. Tughalaq is a political allegory and is received as a representative play of Nehru Era. Karnad says, " I think if one gets involved with one' s characters or one' s play, then it should develop into some kind of a true statement about oneself. I think a play can be only as contemporary as the play writer is. If the writer does not have contemporary convictions or is not committed to the play, will not be contemporary... If you are involved; the issues will be come if one is not involved, don' t emerge." Despite his own stand his plays are considered as most representatives of the age.

In Karnad' s plays though the themes are taken from myth violence is the integral part of his plays. In Hayavadana also violence is found but this violence is based more on sacrifice. In Indian mythology violence is at the base because the civilizations have to struggle for their own existence. For overpowering the other civilizations, the war took place. A lot of bloodshed takes place in myths like the Ramayan and the *Mahabharata*.

Aims and Objectives

This research was aimed to study different folklore and mythologies the dramatist has exploited to develop the thematic and psychological concerns in the plays. It is known in the academic field that Karnad' s plays deliver moral values and present human psyche and their significance in the study of human beings and society. However, so far, a systematic study of folklore and mythology (that appears in various forms in Karnad' s plays) has not been conducted. The basic purpose of the study was to investigate elaborately their origin and significance with special reference to its relevance to the contemporary world.

Methodology

In this study both inductive and deductive reasoning approaches were used for critical examination of the published literature (mentioned above) vis-à-vis folklore and mythology. It is a well-known fact that Girish Karnad is a historical play write by nature. As his plays show he first works on the resources from which he takes out his material and then shapes his plays. Hence,

careful analysis of the view expressed by other authors about the works of Girish Karnad (secondary data) was also carried out.

His journey as a writer is marvelous blend of originally, craftsmanship and different influences. Girish Karnad does not follow the traditional patterns of theatre and play writing by coordinating the inherited culture with other cultural plethora, he redefines the tradition. He continues his search for a suitable theatre which could be suitable for expression of the themes he explores in the plays. Thus, in this chapter of the thesis, the writer's personal life, progress of his professional career, and influences by others are presented as well as explained in terms of the making of the dramatist, Girish Karnad.

Conclusion

Girish Karnad is a one of the great living dramatist of India; both historical and realistic in outlook Mythology and folk-tale are resources through which he attempts to portray universal features that recur through human psyche and the psyche of the society. The new phase of Indian theatrical development i.e. post independence happily coincides with the personal development of Girish Karnad as a dramatist. His contribution goes beyond theatre: he has directed feature films, documentaries, and television serials indicating his multifaceted personality as well as the ability to perform with different skills in the domain of art and culture effortlessly. He often represented India in foreign lands as an able emissary of art & culture. His work reflects his experimentation with the fusion of the traditional and modern dramatic forms and content. The purpose of using traditional forms appears to achieve a rare insight into the contemporary reality because Karnad believes that complexities of post colonialism are inherited from that the colonial and precolonial times. According to him, precolonial, colonial and post colonial experiences in literature cannot be compartmentalised in true sense as they are not divorced from each other. His play ' Tughlaq' was a reflection of the changing times- the narrowing of the great divide between the rulers and ruled.

Karnad in his writings uses myths and folklores in his plays not to re-enact the stories and historical events on the stage. He has a special design in his mind. He borrows the myths and mythical characters and events, colours them, in their characters and natures and through these changes he introduces contemporary life, reveals human psyche and behaviour and exposes the social settings. All his plays are embodiment of contemporary relevance which could not have been possible to present on the stage without counterparts in history.

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