



Potryal of Gender Issues in Mahesh Dattani's Tara

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Abstract: Mahesh Dattani examines the prevalent subject of discrimination and injustice towards women in his 1990 play Tara. This article will analyse and discuss the marginalisation of women in the play. The ongoing survival of patriarchal attitudes is largely attributable to the significant role women play in patriarchy. In an Indian family, a boy named Chandan is preferred over a girl named Tara. Despite being Tara's mother, Bharati utterly wrecks her daughter's life and suffers the consequences. Despite his scientific and technophilic qualifications, Dr. Thakkar commits an error here. When he declined to murder Tara, Bharati and her father gave him a parcel of land as compensation.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, patriarchy, Indian middle class family, customs

I. INTRODUCTION

Tara by Mahesh Dattani depicts how vulnerable women are in our culture. It has garnered positive feedback from audiences all across the globe. When the subject of whether men or women would make better parents comes up, males are usually favored. Mahesh Dattani's purpose is to attract attention to the idea that a male is more valuable than a girl. Dattani's play, as should be evident by now, has remarkable relevance to the world today. In this context, the issue of whether theatre should be used to deliver forceful and urgent messages becomes more relevant.

The plays operate as "freak mirrors at a carnival, showing horrible images of everything that passes for normal in our world," rather than just "reflecting society's dysfunction." ("Khobragade Grishma Manikrao," "Gender Discrimination and Social Awareness") (3). Tara also emphasises the unusual truth that women are still expected to play second fiddle to males. In the first scene, Chandan transforms into Dan in order to forget about killing his sister. Despite the fact that the poor guy had no influence over his sister's untimely death, he is forced to bear the brunt of his abusive grandfather and mother. He decides to conduct good actions to atone for his involvement in his sister's unfortunate death. As a result, he flees his birthplace in India for London, where he renames himself Dan and lives a life of regret and humiliation. The boy, who was very close to his sister Tara, dies as a consequence of the abuse committed by his abusive grandfather and mother.

There was no way to give the boy the limb that had destroyed Tara's health and finally led to her death, since it would have been useless to him after just a few days. It would have been a great success if Tara's body had received the limb. It would have saved her life, but more significantly, it would have turned her into the complete person she desired, even more than Chandan. Tara desired a full and normal life at every chance she got, while Chandan appeared resigned to his infirmity. The realisation that she was incapacitated, combined with the humiliation she'd suffered at the hands of Roopa and her friends when she was forced to show them her wounded leg, was like a knife in the heart. Dattani is well-known for his ability to identify widespread and visible social challenges such as this one. The dreadful culmination of women's rejection in our society is shown by the preference for the beneficence of male progeny while endangering the life of the female infant. Patel and Bharathi's acts, as the offspring of educated parents, are heinous. The disaster is also blamed on Bharathi's father's inventiveness. Why didn't Patel stand firm and oppose them, if Bharathi had been deceived by her father's rash decision? Isn't dad strong enough to conquer any challenge, no matter how large, if it means a better life for the kids? In general, society should express its strong opposition to such parents. Because of the incompatibility that develops between Patel and Bharathi as a result of this procedure's futility, their later lives are full of arguing and showdowns.



Bharathi strives to exorcise her guilt after realising she made a terrible judgement on the fateful leg by behaving like a doting mother to her daughter and humiliating her husband for his moral deficit. She also tries in vain to donate a kidney to her daughter. Patel's lack of regret for participating in the wrong activity is due to gender patriarchy. He plans for his son Chandan's specific needs and prepares for his future. When Tara and her brother Chandan both show a desire to avoid filling out college applications and enrolling in school, Patel recommends that Tara do so for the sake of her brother.

Patel seems to have neatly transferred whatever sorrow he may have felt for his involvement in Tara's misfortune onto Bharathi and her father. Bharathi spends her life attempting to right the wrongs that have been done to her. Patel took Tara for granted because she was a woman, basing all of his hopes and aspirations on Chandan despite the fact that Chandan had been exposed to a guy with a different worldview. When he hears of his parents' and grandparents' wrongdoings towards his sister Tara, he is overcome with regret and flees to London, pretending to be Dan. Even today, girls are more likely to be the centre of parental spending than sons, since it is often assumed that the latter will stay in the family after marriage, while the former will likely move in with their husband's family. As a result, investing in women would be a waste of money. In our society, which has been defined as patriarchal, men have historically maintained positions of authority.

Dattani has skillfully exploited a fault in our society that lingers like a scar. Tara had more energy and passion than most people. While the youngster had accepted and learned to live with his impairment, she had big ambitions that she would never be able to reach. The healthy limb would have continued to work if it had been attached to Tara's body, so why didn't she get to use it? Tara's amputation not only made her unable to work but also placed her life in danger, resulting in her early death. That's why she was female. Equality of opportunity entails providing women with the same opportunities for advancement as men (1,2). Dattani has attempted to highlight this by inserting a social component, Dr. Thakar, in the play. As a consequence, people often see physicians as heavenly messengers. They are lifesavers in the real world. When ordinary people fall, it is frequently medical experts who offer the essential assistance.

Female infanticide has lately become common in the United States. Humans have descended to such depths that they kill the female embryo while it is still growing inside the mother's womb. In the play, Dr. Thakkar was deceived by Bharati's father into assisting him with the unusual amputation because he felt his profession was a divine calling. Instead of performing his job and speaking out against the scheme from the start, he severed Tara's leg and basically terminated her life. His wise decision cost Tara her pleasure and gave her nothing but pain and suffering.

She hoped she was dead rather than wasting money on herself, indicating her desperation. She, like Chandan and Patel, came to loathe all men. His mother was the object of her affection. She disliked him because of how he treated their mother, and she even complained to Chandan that he wouldn't let her visit her mother. Tara's anguish at discovering that her father and grandfather were complicit in the plot to hinder her from enjoying a happy life is equaled only by Chandan's own emotions of guilt. He feels bad about how his parents and grandparents treated Tara. At the end of the play, both characters clutch to one another for comfort and support. The drama concentrates on women's oppression, but it also contains male characters, such as Chandan, who face comparable treatment. It's not his fault that he has to carry this shame with him all the time. He despised himself for what he had done to his sister and could not forgive himself. He blames himself for his sister's death, which compelled him to seek sanctuary in London. Furthermore, he had no plans to return to India after learning of his mother's death from his father. People nowadays struggle to establish their own identities.

Tara has no hope of a better future than her brother, so she is sacrificed. Because the idea of a full girl and a damaged boy is so upsetting, sacrificing a healthy female child is better than maintaining a crippled boy child. Finally, when it is evident that the decision was fruitless, there is no sorrow for the evil done to the female child. Chandan, not Tara, was intended to inherit Bharathi's father's political power and money. He bribed the doctor by offering him a piece of real estate in Bangalore. Dr. Thakkar lost his position of power and, without hesitation, sold out his conscience for the sake of his aspirations and the temptation of those who chose Tara's leg based on gender rather than medical considerations. When Bharathi's grandpa died, he gave everything to his grandson Chandan and nothing to Tara, displaying his preference for boys.



In terms of men, he has always stood up for what is right. Patel has also shown a pessimistic attitude. He simply stood there, passively watching everything happen. He blames his wife and father-in-law for the scam, but his own complicity is evident. Patel's intentions for Chandan's education and future career show the continuous prejudice in favour of providing males with greater possibilities. Bharathi began fawning over Tara as a result of her regret, but Patel didn't seem to bother.

II. CONCLUSION

Mahesh Dattani emphasises the play's attention on gender patriarchy in the last phrase, in which Dan apologizes to Tara. Please don't take it personally because I made it my sorrow. Following transgression, efforts are made with love to heal a loss of affection. As we can see, love is a means to a goal rather than an end in itself. Love is one of the few emotional weapons available to men. Men are more rational, strong, and emotional. Bharathi's desire to make amends with Tara is shown by her use of her love for her as a weapon against Patel. In general, females at the same age are more emotionally susceptible than boys. They are much stronger and more formidable than humans. Tara is equally attracted by her mother's loving care and pampering of her, oblivious to the fact that her mother is assisting in the crushing of her goals and ambitions. Bharathi's nasty and demeaning efforts to get Roopa to spend more time with Tara by making her friends and paying her money are utterly unnecessary. Acts like these do nothing to better the lives of impaired children and possibly harm their development.

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