Need of the Research Work

So far scholars and critics in India have been discussing themes and quite rarely, their technical experiments of these playwrights. One needs to analyze these plays for applied study of Indian socio-political issues. Most of the scholars have neglected these dramatists and have overworked on Rabindranath Tagore, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, and Girish Karnad and recently on Mahesh Dattani. Most studies evolve around the themes in the plays of these playwrights. The significant frame work of marriage and family and their portrayal in these plays hardly received any critical attention of the scholars.

Importance of the Research Work

Marriage is the most covetous and turning moment in the life of the individuals. It is also an important rite in the Indian culture. It initiates youths to domestic spheres of the life. From societal points of view, it accords a collective social sanction to act of reproduction. It introduces the marrying couple to another equally important social institution called family.

Traditionally, family is a distribution and trying the members of the society into groups of the same caste and belief. It also works as a primary centre of imparting samskars on the family members and governs the behavior of its members. Family has always remained as the backdrop of the action in the Indian literature both in print and media (cinema and TV). It has reflected and borne the changes taking place around. Education, socio-political movements, and economic changes have influenced the family as a social institution in India. But there hardly seems any research undertaken on this aspect of Indian drama.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it will bring into focus the portrayals of family in the plays of playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad Mohan Rakesh, and Manjula Padmanabhan, and. It will be the first ever study of this sort to discuss the portrayal of family in Indian drama. It will emerge as a socio-literary document as well. It will be a showcase to the world of how Indian drama traps the gradual changes taking place around.

Limitations of the Research Work (Choice of the Plays)

Since a very large corpus of dramatic works of these dramatists is available in English, the number of plays for study is confined to four plays only. Again, only those plays are selected where marriage and family are discussed and are at the backdrop of the action. The dramatists
belong to different backgrounds and their plays also portray different approaches to marriage and family institutions.

The plays under study are:

**Vijay Tendulkar’s Sakharam Binder**

**Girish Karnad’s Wedding Album**

**Mohan Rakesh’s Half Way House**

**Manjula Padmanabhan’s Harvest**

Profile of the Playwrights understudy

(Late) **Vijay Tendulkar** is an acknowledged eminent dramatist in Marathi Theater. Many of his plays have been translated into English and other Indian languages by the noted figures like Priya Adarkar, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and others. Noted actors like Dr Shriram Lagoo and Rohini Hatangadi have acted in his plays. His plays have been produced by the theatre thespians like Dr Jabbar Patel and Satish Alekar. His major translated plays are *A Friend’s Story, Ghashiram Kotwal, Sakharam Binder, The Vultures, Encounter in Umbugland, Silence! The Court is in Session! Kamala* and *Kanyadaan*. He wrote articles, reviews of the plays and film scripts and appreciation of dramatic monologues in prose (Natya Chatha). He also talked about journalism; short story-writing, play-writing, film-script writing, ghost writing and copy writing.

Jnanpith awardee (1999) **Girish Karnad’s** contribution is not confined to his playwriting only. His greatness lies in the fact that he has given new directions to the post-Independence Indian drama. In fact, his roles outside theater- as an actor, a screenplay writer, and as a filmmaker have very little to do with the Jnanpith winner dramatist. Of his manifold contributions, his achievement as a dramatist has made his best mark in the world.

Karnad’s first play- *Yayati* came in 1961 in Kannada. He used the myth of King Yayati from the Mahabharata to escape from his stressful situation when he was planning his first tour to England as a Rhodes Scholar. His scholar-critic friend Kirthinath Kurtkoti had a complaint against the Indian playwrights that no one tried to deal with the Indian history as Shakespeare did with the English history. All attempts in this regard ended up into the costume plays. Karnad took it as a challenge and the result...
was the brilliant play *Tughlaq* that came in 1964. His third play *Hayavadana* (1971) was based on Thomas Mann’s short story *The Transposed Heads*. Actually, Karnad wanted to make a movie on it but his friend B. V. Karanth advised him that it would make better a play than a movie. Karnad wrote a beautiful play making use of the Yakshagana, a folk theatre form of Karnataka. *Anjumallinge* came in 1977 and *Hittana Hunja* came in 1980. His association with the great Kannada figure A.K. Ramanujan proved fruitful and inspired by the two folk-tales retold by Ramanujan, Karnad wrote *Naga-Mandala* in 1988.


Along with these, Karnad has authored several articles, delivered lectures and given interviews, which enrich the critical literature on Indian drama and theatre. His introductions to his own plays reflect his approach and depth in this field. Karnad is a skillful translator also. Karnad’s plays are originally written in Kannada. His plays have been translated in several languages in India and abroad. He has translated *Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, Tale Danda, Agni Mattu Malle, and Hittina Hunja* in English and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* from English to Kannada. These are his rich contributions to Indian drama in English.

The most dominating figure of the contemporary Hindi theatre is late **Mohan Rakesh** who ushered new drama in Hindi. His dramatic output is very less. There are three complete plays – *Ashadh ka Ek Din (One Day in Ashadha), Lehron ke Rajhans (Swan of the Waves)* and *Adhe Adhure (Half-Way House)*. He broke ties with the mainstream Hindi drama and brought beautiful experimentation. Though he had not been prolific like his contemporaries, his contribution to Indian theatre is significant. His full length plays *Ashad ka Ek Din, Laheron ke Rajhans and Adhe Adhure* gave new direction to the Hindi drama. English translations of these
plays have been published by Enact. Rakesh is one of those personalities who never accept the traditional set up but always aspire to find and project something which is challenging and new. He changed the framework of the Hindi drama in more than one way. Under the influence of Dharmveer Bharati’s *Andha Yug* (*The Blind Age*), he took support of the historical incidents to throw light on the realities of life.

**Manjula Padmanabhan** (b. 1953) Born in Delhi to a diplomat family, she went to boarding school in her teenage years. She is a playwright, journalist, comic strip artist, and children's book author responsible for the play *Harvest*. She has also written plays such as *Lights Out* (1986), *Hidden Fires* (solo by Rashi Bunny) *The Artist’s Model* (1995) and *Sextet* (1996). Her dramatic genius lies in her efforts to recreate theatre as an open-ended process than a finished product. The corpus of Padmanabhan is specific for a perfect illustration of contemporary urban life. She explores the different aspects of the present life and interrogates a way out for the problems confronted by men and women.

Before 1997 (the year in which her play *Harvest* was staged) Manjula Padmanabhan was better known as cartoonist and had a daily cartoon strip in *The Pioneer*, a daily. Padmanabhan’s play *Harvest* won the 1997 Onassis Prize as the best new international play.