

# Girish Karnad and Indian Theatre

**Yogisha T S,**  
Research scholar,  
Kalinga University,  
New Raipur.

## Abstract

Girish Karnad's talent transcends all boundaries. He is known for his work as a dramatist in Kannada, a well-known theater specialist, film actor, director, teacher, president of Sangeet Natak Academies, and other roles at the state, national, and international levels. Although he rarely wrote stories, reviews. His autobiography is "Adadata Ayushya". Girish Karnad worked as an actor, director, and cultural spokesperson while creating drama in Kannada and connecting with other Indian languages. He is known as a dramatist in Kannada literature.

## Key Words

Girish Karnad, Indian theatre, autobiography, versatile, dramatic technique, confrontation, violence, patriarchal, sensitization, ideology, craftsman, nationalism, Optimism, Receptivity, Re—inventing.

## Introduction

Girish Karnad was an Indian actor, film director, Kannada writer and a playwright. He is predominately worked in Indian film industry for 5 decades. He is one of the finest playwrights of Modern age of India. Girish Karnad is an outstanding Indian English playwright. He is a man of versatile genius. His plays are universal in their appeal. He is a champion against all those evils that are prevalent in the society. All his plays are based on history, myth and folktales of India. Karnad's plays are known for stage ability too. The dramatic technique evolved by him is appreciated in the entire world of theatre.

Yayati is Girish Karnad's first play is based on myth (Adiparva) from Mahabharath. The play brings how the modern man (yayati) has extreme fascination for material and sensual pleasures. The plot of *Hayavadana* is based on *Kathasaritsagar*, Which is literally means "Horse face". The characters Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini dramatize the conflict between the mind and the body (logic and lust). The Bali, *the Sacrifice* is based on *the Yashodhara Charite*. It consists of four characters- the King, the Queen, the Queen's mother and the Mahout. The confrontation between the two traditional cultural ideologies, violence and non-violence, associated with the two religions namely Hinduism and Jainism are presented

through the play. *Naga-Mandala* is a folk play. It is based on the oral tales from Karnataka. The play exposes patriotism, the oppression of the women, the great injustice done to woman by men and the patriarchal culture and also stealthily deflates the concept of chastity. The theses is an attempt to examine and analyze the issues of Gender sensitization, Social and cultural ideologies which are introduced in the plays of Girish Karnad in an effective manner.

## Literature Review

Girish Karnad was born on May 19, 1938 in Matheran near Bombay. He had his early education in a small village of Karnataka named Sirsi. He completed his graduation from Karnataka University, Dharwad in 1958. After that he completed his post graduation from Magdalen College, Oxford. He came back to India in 1963. Later, He joined Oxford University Press, Chennai. For his memorable contribution to drama he had received several prestigious awards like Padm Sri, Padm Bhushan, Sahitya Academy Award and Gyanpith Award.

Basically Karnad belongs to the Kannad theatre. As a great playwright he has written many plays like *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Bali*, *the Sacrifice*, *Naga-Mandala*, *The Fire and the Rain* and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*. Girish Karnad was a gifted dramatic craftsman. He was well versed with Indian stage techniques. All the plays by Karnad are actable. Karnad had used various theatrical devices for developing the plot and for creating the desired dramatic effect. In short, Karnad's dramatic technique is superb. Thus Girish Karnad is a distinguished playwright. His plot, characters, setting, style and language contribute a lot to the creation of unity of effect in his plays.

The modern Indian theatre draws influence from three different traditions i.e. the Sanskrit theatre tradition, folk theatre tradition and the tradition of western theatres. It is actually the third tradition which can be said to form the basis of the modern Indian theatre. Modern Indian theatre started after the advent of the British in India. The British developed Calcutta in the east, Bombay and Surat in the west and Madras in the south as important centers of trade and administration. Levdef, a gentleman of Russian origin, established a theatre by the name of Bengali Theatre. Combining nationalism with contemporary social reality was another trend in modern plays. The first famous play of this kind was written by Dinabandhu Mitra (Neel Darpan) in Bengali. The post independence period witnessed changes in both the style and content of the Indian plays. The Second World War and the partition of the sub-continent had a profound impact on Indian society. The widely shared optimism of a better tomorrow turned out to be an illusion after the attainment of independence. The rapid changes brought about by science and industrialization in the society, affected the value systems of the people. These changes were bound to show up in the world of Indian plays in a variety of ways.

An important change was the increased access, to India, of plays written in foreign languages other than English. Indians were now getting introduced to the plays of Brecht from Germany, Gogol and Chekhov from Russia and Sartre from France. This influenced both the writing and staging of the new plays. The new trend is most visible in the plays of Badal Sarker in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi and Girish Karnad in Kannada. The new plays displayed receptivity towards new experiments being made in the field.

## **Conclusion**

To study Girish Karnad is a difficult task, since he has been a prolific in various fields. He is well-known as playwright, director, and actor as well as for the numerous important positions he has held in the field of Indian culture in general and for the performing arts in particular. The Research paper is proposed to present and understand the versatility of person, area of his interest, his contribution to the field of art and literature. This is an attempt to analyse the condition of Indian theatre during his time and his contribution to the various field which he belongs. The work brings the light on Re-Inventing tradition in the plays of Karnad.

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