Tara

Mahesh Dattani

About Author

Mahesh Dattani is an Indian playwright and writer, born on August, 1958. With his originality of vision, he has enriched Indian English theatrical tradition. Mahesh Dattani became the first Indian playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection Final Solutions and Other Plays. Alyque Padamsee calls him –

One of the most serious contemporary playwrights.

Introduction

Mahesh Dattani’s Tara was written by Mahesh Dattani in the year of 1990. It was first performed as Twinkle Tara in Bangalore in 1990 by Playpen Performing Arts Group. Later, it was subsequently performed as Tara. It is the story about India’s social problem of gender discrimination through the central character of Tara. Mahesh Dattani was awarded Sahitya Kala Award for Tara in 2000.

Theme of The Play

One of the most important themes in the play is that of gender discrimination in the modern society in Indian life. America’s famous politician Hillary Clinton said that –

Gender equality is the unfinished business of the 21st century.
The play explores female infanticide. Though people nowadays are very aware of women's importance, we still find some societies to kill baby girls. Females have subservient roles throughout their life. In some of the societies of India, girls and women are expected to listen to men and it was reflected in the play through the character of Tara.

**Characters of The Play**

- **Tara**
  Tara is the central character of the play who is the victim of Indian social problem of Gender Discrimination.

- **Mr. Patel**
  Mr. Patel is the father of Tara who always shows unnecessary intervention in all decision-making.

- **Bharti**
  Bharti is the wife of Mr. Patel and the mother of Tara who cares Tara a lot.

- **Chandan**
  Chandan is a conjoined boy child of Mr. Patel and Bharti who has given importance in a surgery.

- **Dr. Thakkar**
  Doctor Thakkar who suggests Tara’s parents a surgery in temptation of getting plot from them.

- **Roopa**
  Roopa is the neighbor of Tara who gave accompany Tara but till she receive lipsticks and magazines from Tara.

**Short Summary**
Tara is a story of a girl who wants to twinkle and shine, just like her name. Dattani used the themes like gender identity, discrimination, middle-class life and etc. Through these themes, he has shown the agony of a girl in typical Indian society.

The play is the story of two conjoined twins – a boy (Chandan) and a girl (Tara) who is surgically separated in unequal manner intended to favor the boy. The surgery was in favor of a boy child – Chandan. However, Tara is unable to survive the disadvantagements in every way of her life while growing up and eventually passes away. Racked with guilt over Tara’s death, Chandan moved to London and changed his name to Dan. At London, he attempts to start a new life, repressing the memories of her sister and his guilt.

**Story of Every Girl – Child Born in India**

The Governor of New York Andrew Cuomo rightly said that –

I believe discrimination still exists in society and we must fight it in every form.

The play Tara is not just the story of the protagonist of the play, but it is the story of every girl child born in the Indian family whether urban or rural. Tara is a bitter example of child abuse presented in the Indian societies. Every girl child born in Indian family does suffer from some kind of exploitation and if there is a boy child in the family, then the exploitation is very much visible as the privileges are consciously or unconsciously provided to the son. We should not forget what America’s famous politician Hillary Clinton said –

**Human rights are women’s rights, and women’s rights are human rights.**

**Conclusion**

In the end, the characters are no different from the rest of us; making choices all the time between right and wrong, good people who sometimes make bad choices which then haunt them for the rest of their lives. Tara is an interesting window into our own life.
Nowadays, women are given secondary place in households, offices, social and some other places. Women are exploited in Indian society and in many other parts of the world. Therefore, Nelson Mandela’s remark seems right that –

**Freedom cannot really be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppressions.**

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