

Communal Commotion in Mahesh Dattani's "Final Solution"

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Abstract

Mahesh Dattani explores the cause of communalism in Southeastern countries. He signals that the communalism of the present time aroused in British India, where British divided Indians based on caste and religion. Final Solution is a play about communal hatred. There is a long standing rancour in the minds of orthodox and conservative. The playwright has tried to bring sanity to the communal-persons. Bobby and Javed offer to bring water from the tap outside, but Aruna, who is rooted in old beliefs, does not allow them to touch the drinking water, saying that she has her ways and customs which she will observe in spite of knowing that 'All religions are one. Only the ways to God are many'. She believes that the water brought by Bobby and Javed will not be pure enough to bathe her gods. She tells Sunita frankly, 'we bathe our gods with it. It has to be pure. It must not be contaminated'. Such misbeliefs and bad customs cause communal hatred. Some of his characters have spoken against the tendency of berating other religions. Ramnik and even Arunahave said that all the religions are based on the same fundamental values. Daksha has sympathy with Tarine and wants her father-in-law to give job to Zariné's father. Mahesh Dattani has tried to create an atmosphere of communal harmony through such characters.

Keywords: Communalism, Orthodox, Conservative Harmony, Atmosphere, Fundamental, Sympathy, Misbeliefs, Religions, Customs.

Introduction

The main problem that the dramatist wants to tackle is of the widening gulf between Hindus and Muslims. He presents this problem, technically known as Exposition. The dramatist goes back to the days when India was partitioned as India and Pakistan. The Britishers managed to divide the two communities with the insinuation that Muslim minority would not be safe in undivided India, though both the communities fought unitedly for freedom of India. Muslims however caught the bait and insisted on having a Muslim state. Partition of India was done in slovenly manner. When Independence to the two separate countries was declared, nothing was done to maintain law and order. Riots broke out and complete mayhem occurred. There was genocide all over. A large number of people migrated from India to Pakistan and vice versa.

Hindus and Muslims Riots

Mahesh Dattani tries to find solution of the nagging problem of the acrimony between Hindus and Muslims. He is of the view that the problem initially began in the aftermath of the partition of the country. So it is a legacy of the past. Daksha was then a small child but she cannot forget that the house in Hussainabad was attacked by the Muslims hoodlums who were freely on the rampage. Partition of the country was done in a slovenly manner. Anti-social elements were free to loot and kill. Daksha's father was happy because the country was rid of the Britishers but he said that the dogs were let loose. Daksha recollects that the hoodlums were pelting stones at the glass planes. The glass pieces had spread all over. Her frightened mother was at the end of her wits and did not know how she should save herself and her small daughter. She went to the puja-room, with her daughter, praying like a Hindu wife for the safety of her husband who was not at home. She tightly clutched at the Krishna idol, the last hope of a sinking ship. She could do nothing else. The incident had left a deep scar on the memory of Daksha. The frightened Daksha believed that the Muslims were murderers and marauders by nature.

Having said about the necessity of creating goodwill between the two communities, Dattani shows the necessity of fighting with the superstitious which have engrossed the women's mind since long. The dramatist presents this superstitious rite first through the observation of Daksha.

Kanta has to fill sixteen buckets of water before Laxmi puja or n Krishna Janmastami. And God help Kanta if anyone touches Gajanand after her bathe, she will go through the whole bathing routine again. This ridiculous concept of purity and sacredness easily separates Hindus from others. This finicky or squeamish attitude has come down to Aruna also. When the mob has gone and curfew is relaxed, she proposes to bring water from the tap outside, but she will not allow the water bucket to be touched by a Muslim who wants to do the service of bringing of water for the family. This issue causes unpleasantness between mother and daughter. Aruna has no reason Justify this fastidious attitude except that "We have our ways and customs" which are being followed blindly, without reason or rhyme. Aruna's daughter is obliged to speak to her mother in a harsh language – "What if I did what you do? Praying and fastingpurifying myself all day: would you have listened to me if I told you were wrong?" Smita is happy that the arrival of the two boys has given her opportunity to speak out her mind plainly to her mother. Smita says arrogantly, "I didn't mean to hurt you. But I can't help it if you are. I am not sorry I said it". Thus Smita defies her mother and her outdated notions of purity, gives the bucket to Javed to bring water from the tap.

Finally, Bobby goes in the puja room, pick-ups Krishna's idol to proclaim to the world that Krishna does not "burn me to ashes; does not cry out to heaven that "He has been contaminated by evil ideas. Thus Dattani gives the message that one must be dynamic, challenge with the time. Muslims have fear, so do have Hindus. Modernism is attacking the old superstitions with great force. Smita has told her mother in strong terms that she cannot believe in anything which 'stifles' her and she can see clearly hoe wrong she is. She ridiculous her mother's 'Praying and fasting' the whole day. The dramatist wants to say that many Hindus who follow old customs like Aruna feel that their religion is threatened. We cannot be complacent about our glorious part seeing us safely through. "The orthodox people believe that the life of our culture depends upon observance of the old customs.

Mahesh Dattani has used chorus to convey the ideas of Hindus and Muslims. Chorus not only speaks out the common men's mind but it makes physical gestures also to let people see the absurdity of the old customs. The Hindu mind is horrified to see that a Muslim has desecrated the puja- room, but the Muslim element indicates that a new concept of sacredness is emerging. When Bobby holds Krishna's idol aloft, Chorus speaks "We are not idol breakers".to remove the fear of Hindus that Bobby might break the idol. When the chorus echoes the Hindu view "Don't break our

pride!”. But continues the harangue- “Look how He rests in my hand!” He knows I cannot harm him. He knows his strength! I don’t believe in him but he believes in me. Bobby has spoken the bare truth that neither he nor anybody can downy harm to God because God is too powerful to be harmed by any human being. The dramatist wants to say that there is no animus us between the communities but a few perverted persons exploit the youths to serve their own interests, to keep their hegemony unchallenged.

Yet the title “Final Solutions” is based on religious identity that the world has seen in the past hundred years. The title aroused the question, “Are there solutions to religious communalism?”

The dramatist says there are no easy final solutions, as explained in the play itself, issues of religious scuffle cannot be solved in a overnight. However, while characters like Javed, Aruna, and Hardika may not overcome their prejudices within the course of the play, by the dramatist point of view, the audience can see that these characters have clearly started on the way of tolerance and understanding. By being forced to spend the night together, Javed, Hardika, Aruna, Ramnik, Bobby, and Smita, have taken the first step towards religious pluralism.

Summing Up

Practicing domestic Secularism can help combat communal riots prevalent in the society. The roots of democracy can build up when combined and caste point of view is getting the better of by secularist and humanistic values. The dominance of secularism can ensure equality and consonance among all religious groups. Mahesh Dattani says there are no easy final solutions, as demonstrated in the play itself, issues of religious riots cannot be solved in a overnight. By the dramatist point of view, the audience can see that these characters have clearly stated on the way of tolerance and understanding. By being forced to spend the night together, Javed, Hardika, Aruna, Ramnik, Bobby, and Smita, have taken the first step towards religious pluralism.

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