



The Influence Of Existentialism In The Plays Of Indian English Dramatists: Badal Sircar Or Sarkar And Vijay Tendulkar

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Abstract:

Existentialism is a modern twentieth-century philosophical movement that thrived after the horrific World War II. Existentialism chiefly addressed the problem of individual human existence, which searches for our identity and meaning and purpose of life through our actions, deeds, and also a personal responsibility to choose our destiny. The exponents of existentialism philosophers are Jean-Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, and many more who have outlined the writing of existentialism in their works. However, as time passes, the influence of western philosophy's writing on existentialism and the appearance of existential dilemmas in Modern Indian society also encourages the writing of the present situation. As a result, there are a lot of Indian Dramatists who started emerging and taking out the theme of existentialism in writing and their works, so here in this present research paper, the aim is to explore the impression of existential elements in the plays of Indian English dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar and likewise briefly highlight their works. This research finally points out these themes of existentialism by studying two Indian dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar who have examined existentialism themes in their plays, likewise, Badal Sircar's 'Evam Indrajit' and Vijay Tendulkar's 'The Cyclist'. Moreover, the play "Evam Indrajit" also showed the character Evam Indrajit faced an identity crisis in his existence likewise, the modern man faced man's state of an identity crisis. Similarly, Vijay Tendulkar used existential elements in his "The Cyclist". The play suppressed deep in the question of Existentialism through this Cyclist's trip and also portrayed the individual who is sad, frustrated, and faced complexities in life.

Keywords: Existentialism, Indian Drama, Indian dramatists, western Philosophy, Human Existence

Introduction:

“Existentialism is not concerned with points of school doctrine but with the recall of philosophy to the existing individual striving to line in the light of reflection” (Pandey kumar Vipin)

Existentialism, in Indian English writing, has its roots in western philosophy that were initiated in the mid-19th and 20th centuries, and also became influential after the horrific World War II. As a result, many philosophers started writing on existentialism, as an influence writing of western philosophy. Indian writers implemented the writing style of existentialism because Indian drama is also truly imitated in Indian modern society where modern man's struggle for day-to-day life, desire, and isolation of individual and deep sense of frustration, dissatisfaction appeared Indian society that is why Indian writers started pouring and take out the themes of existentialism in their writing. Existentialism is not a new term, it existed in ancient times. Indian philosopher, prof. Radhakrishnan, comments that “Existentialism, is nothing but a new name for our ancient philosophical vision which can concentrate on Buddhism and the Upanishad-‘Knowledge of the self or ‘*Atmanam Vidhi*’ (Bisma) But existentialism also appeared in the writing of ancient western philosophers like Socratics, who were started with the dictum “Know thyself” which first raised the question of human existence that means it gives more stress on self-knowledge. The man knows about himself, which means Socratic pays attention to self-knowledge of himself. But at the time it's not become the philosophical movement of existentialism, it flourished after world war-II. Existentialism is a school of thought in human existence that highlights individual existence, man finds self and meaning and purpose in life per our free will, choice, and personal responsibility. “Existentialism isn't the study of all that exists; it's the study of existence itself” (Panza and Gale) which means it focuses on the question of human existence and believes that individuals are free to take personal accountability for their actions and their deeds. The idea of existentialism, arose from a period in civilization when there was a strong sense of belonging to despair; hopelessness, and futility in life. Even two world wars created a situation of horrific and destructive. People began to live their life with the fear of death and insecurity about the future. As a result, the man was alienated from society and destroyed feelings of brotherhood. All of these horrific situations were created by war which was articulated by many existentialist thinkers who stressed on problems of human existence. Though existentialist thought has its roots deep in the past, it thrived after World War II and was made popular mainly by existentialist thinkers. Therefore, Indian drama has been deepened by various thematic concerns which result in India having a long and fruitful history of drama which was started with the Classical Sanskrit plays of Vedic time. “The classical Sanskrit drama gave us a few renowned playwrights like *Asvaghosa, Bhasa, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Sudraka, Visakhadatta, and Harsha*. The period in which these playwrights produced their plays was regarded as the rich and the wonderful age of Sanskrit drama” (Shailaja) Thus, Indian English dramatists have a great rich glorious tradition of writing drama in India during and after independence. The pre-independence Indian English drama started with the writing of Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T.P. *Kailasam, Harindranath*

Chattopadhyaya, and Bharati Sarabhai who gave valuable contributions to the development of Indian drama. Moreover, the Post-independence drama started with the writing of Indian dramatists like Nissim Ezekiel, Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar or Sarkar, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, G.P. Deshpande, Mahesh Elkunchwar, who conversed the problems of Indian society through their drama, thus, Indian drama reflected the mirror of Indian society. In Indian society, the changing values of life have shaped many existential problems and this was replicated in Indian drama. Moreover, many Indian English dramatists are victims of existential suffering in their life which appear to be captivated with feelings of loneliness, frustration, and futility. So, several sharp and skillful writers choose existentialism as a dramatic form for the expression of their feelings and thoughts. Existentialist ideas are dealt with in the drama of Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar who are pioneers in adapting western techniques of existentialism in their works and mainly focused on the common man and his confrontation with life. Modern drama can boast a host of great playwrights like Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar. Badal Sarkar tried to illustrate existential concern through their play like *Evam Indrajit* which touches on the insignificance of human existence and externalized modern life's existential attitudes in their plays. Satyadev Dubey says, "Evam Indrajit is in some ways about the residue of the middle class, "who failed to adjust, align and ceased to aspire and also those who are enmeshed in the day-to-day struggle for survival" (Shailaji) so sircar's play tried to display a true picture of modern society as mainly replicating the boredom of meaninglessness of modern life. Likewise, Vijay Tendulkar's plays present his existence and social existence throughout their works. "A serious subject has seriously been handled by Tendulkar to draw serious conclusions about the triviality of human existence" (Reddy K. Janardhan). so, these Indian dramatists' plays tried to show the concern for modern man's problem of existence in the world which revealed the same problem of existence of human identity and the meaning of life of modern man in their writing. Therefore, the popularity and growth of Indian drama, because their plays portrayed a truthful picture of contemporary life in Indian society.

Origin and Development of Indian Drama:

India is a very ancient country with diverse cultures, customs, languages, and literature. India is a wealthy and glorious tradition of dramatic concern. Drama is the mirror of society and Indian drama is also reflected as a revolution in the society at that time. However, it is very difficult to determine the origin of drama in India but some indicated that it starts in classical Sanskrit plays. Therefore, there are two great epics like ' *Ramayana* ' and ' *Mahabharata* ' which show the Hindu religious and philosophical tradition in India in ancient times, " The Sanskrit plays like *Abhijnana- Sakuntalam*, *Vikramorvasiyam of Kalidasa*; *Swapanavasavadattam of Bhasa*; *Uttararamacharita of Bhavabhuti* and *Venisamhara* and *Mudrarakshasa of Visakhadatta* are some of the worth-noting plays" (Shailaji) so India has various regional languages and drama also performed in the theatre so Sanskrit plays also translated in the various regional language. Indian drama is classified into two-phase of dramas and dramatists: The pre-independence Indian English drama and The Post-independence Indian English drama.

The pre-independence Indian English drama: The pre-independence drama starts with the writing of Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Bharati Sarabhai, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, and T.S. Kalisam who discussed the problem in the society in his drama and give the valuable contribution to the growth of the Indian drama. The Indian plays twitch with the writing of the original English play with the writing of Krishna Mohan Banerjee's play 'The Persecuted (1831). He portrayed the problem of modern society in his play. Sri Aurobindo also wrote plays in English and depicted the theme of the suffering of Indian freedom fighters and also showed problems in modern society through his plays. He wrote, Perseus, The Viziers of Bassora. His plays depicted a variety of themes in the writing of plays. T.P. Kailasam is also one significant writer in India who wrote several plays that portrayed a variety of themes: Completion, The Persistence, Knarna, and Keechaka. Another important prominent Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore wrote several plays in the regional language Bengali and translated them into English. His plays are The Post Office and The King of the Dark Chamber.

The Post-independence Indian English drama: After independence, Indian drama enriched the development of drama with various themes which were written by several writers like Nissim Ezekiel, Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad, M. Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, G.P. Deshpande, Mahesh Elkunchwar, who gives valuable contributions to the growth of Indian drama. Asif Currimbhoy wrote the plays like The Tourist Mecca, The Doldrummers, and The Miracle Seed that depicted various themes in his plays. Another prolific dramatist like Mahesh Dattani also wrote several plays to make society for the modern burning problems in the society. His plays: On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Seven Steps Around the fire Final solutions, Tara, Dance like a man, and many more. Indian dramatists like Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, G.P. Deshpande, and Mahesh Elkunchwar wrote several plays to give the valuable contribution to the development of Indian drama. So Indian dramatists are highly influenced by the dramatic style of western writers. Therefore, several Indian dramatists used this thematic concern of existentialism in their writing to show modern Indian human beings suffering for their existence in society.

Significance of the Study:

Existentialism is a school of thought which applied to several writers in their works the European thinker but this philosophy is not limited only to the writing of European writers. It also appeared as a philosophical term in the writing of Indian English dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar. So, this study tried to explore the impression of existentialism in the plays of Indian English dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar by studying existential aspects through their dramas. so, these Indian dramatists' plays tried to show the concern for modern man's problem of existence in the world which revealed the same problem of existence of human identity and the meaning and purpose of life of the modern man in their writing. Therefore, the popularity and growth of Indian drama, because their plays portrayed a truthful picture of contemporary life in Indian society. Here discussed the plays Badal sircar's 'Evam Indrajit' and Vijay Tendulkar's 'The cyclist'.

Research Methodology:

This is an analytical and explorative qualitative research on the impression of existential elements in the plays of Indian English dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar. These dramatists had been selected for having being written on existential concern, Indian English dramatists are victims of existential suffering and appear as lonely feeling and Futility in their life and that are included in their works which were influences in the writing of Indian English dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar, etc. wrote works which depicted Existential concern in their writing. The data had been composed by concentrated reading, prominence of the text while reading, and coding the text rendering to the themes of existentialism. After that, the designated and highlighted texts had been analyzed according to the existential concern.

Existentialism in the plays of Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar:

Badal Sircar

Badal Sircar (15 July 1925- 13 May 2011) is a significant Indian dramatist and a popular Bengali dramatist who also is an actor, and director but the most important thing is that he started writing plays with comedies: Solution X (1956), The Elder Aunt (1959), Saturday (1959), Tom, Dick, Harry (1961). Sircar also started to explore the serious issue in modern society and wrote Baki Itihas (That Other History 1965), Evam Indrajit (1963), and Trisha Shatabdi (The Thirtieth century (1966). Today, He grows as a well-known playwright got as the coming age of modern Indian playwriting in Bengali. He wrote his landmark play Evam Indrajit as an existential play in which the play Sircar displays a true picture of modern society as it mainly bounded on the meaninglessness of modern life. Sircar was also awarded many prestigious awards for his dramas. “ Writing about Badal Sircar's Evam Indrajit is like going on a sentimental journey; a nostalgic foray into the recent past of the Indian theatre; an encounter with the bittersweet memories of a struggling sensibility trying to strike roots in a barren land; because, after all, it is only concerning Indian theatre history that Evam Indrajit makes its presence felt” (Shailaj) The plays Badal Sircar’s ‘Evam Indrajit’ and ‘Baki Itihas’ allocated with the theme of the meaninglessness of our existence that led man to depression, frustration, futility in life, and his plays show truthfulness picture of middle-class people and their struggle for their existence. The play Evam Indrajit is a significant modern drama. The main character in the play, Indrajit, is facing an identity crisis but the theme in the play, Sircar, is described in terms of society, not in terms of his existence.it exposes the problems of middle-class society and their day-to-day struggle for survival in this world. Likewise, the modern man also faced hopelessness and futility in his life that produced frustration, anger, and depression, as a result, modern man was trapped in the situation of alienation from society. so, this play shows passion, ambition, and frustration when he struggles a lot to pen a play but he can’t write meaningful something, he gets frustrated and it also shows Evam Indrajit faced identity crisis of his existence similarly, the modern man faced man’s state of identity crisis which shows in a sentence,

Manasi: Indrajit...

Indrajit: No, Manasi don't call me Indrajit, please don't I am Nirmal, Amal, Vimal, Kamal, and Nirmal.

Writer: Indrajit...

Indrajit: You must be mistaken. I am Nirmal Kumar Roy.

Writer: But you are not looking for promotion or building a house or developing a business scheme. How can you be Nirmal?

Indrajit: But I am just an ordinary man" (Sircar Badal)

Indrajit shows adjustment and compromises with his life when married to another Manasi. His earlier friend Manasi is still a friend. Indrajit narrates his married life which is similar to middle-class people's life. It is quoted in... "Indrajit discovers himself at parallel railway tracks on either side-track with an illusory meeting point...the train does not come on these tracks anymore...He does not believe in his dreams anymore, but he has now come to the bitter awareness that they were just dreams dreamt by a person who thought that he had the potential but is a very ordinary person-he is Nirmal." (W. Shailaja) Indrajit loves Manasi and desires to wed her but not become their life companion and that started his humdrum existence and dullness in his life. The play shows Jean-Paul Sartre's important theme of existentialism is "Existence Precede Essence" the central doctrine of existentialism philosophy. So, the central character in the play Indrajit signifies a modern man who this frustrated with this modern dull life and faced an identity crisis and can't do anything about its triviality. Another play by Badal Sircar also revealed the existentialism theme in his play 'Baki Itihas' (That other history 1964). It is one of the post-independence literary dramas and plays that reveal the central character of the play 'Sharad' who is trapped in a situation of existential crisis. Also described the history of mankind, Moreover, it revolved around the aspects of everyday life of human beings who struggled for their existence in society. Hence, the play 'Evam Indrajit' replicated the existential concern of modern people in the world.

Vijay Tendulkar:

Vijay Tendulkar is the most noteworthy dramatist in India. He penned plays in Marathi but some of his plays were interpreted into English. He is also identified as a novelist, literary essayist, journalist, television and screenplay writer, and social activist. Moreover, Vijay Tendulkar is the leading influential Indian dramatist who has explored the various themes of writing drama like violence, sensation, and existentialism that formed a storm in the society. He wrote several plays: The Vulture (1971), Ghashiram Kotwal (1972), Sakhram Binder (1972), and The Cyclist (2004). The play the cyclist was written under the Marathi title 'Safar', and later translated into English. Moreover, He portrayed in his plays some individual conflicts with society and His plays also explore the contemporary problems of Indian society. Arundhati Banerjee points out that "Tendulkar represents the

modern man in entirely his complexities. He represents life as it is from different angles, without trying to moralize or philosophize in any way. All the works comprise a latent critique of contemporary Indian society, mostly middle class and lower middle class, though from different angles' ' (Arundhati). The play 'The cyclist' was intended to be Tendulkar's last play and this play articulates some existential elements in their writing. The play is a revolt around the main character in the play 'The Cyclist'. He is determined to go on a world tour by his cycle, his journey starts with three road junctions, he has designated the adventure of life revealed through the cyclist's journey. The cyclist's journey is a set of three types of journeys: the geographical, historic expedition of the bicycle, and psychological exploration through their play. It is an outstanding play on the individual who is sad, frustrated, and faced with complexities in life. Through this play, Tendulkar portrayed the true picture of middle-class people in modern Indian society. The play is suppressed deep in the question of Existentialism through this Cyclist's trip is a philosophical journey, an expedition of the mind. "Where I came from, where I am going" ... Life's journey in search of elusive truth. (Bhaneja) Through this play, Tendulkar positively indicated existentialism, it stated that. Each of his plays of Tendulkar shaped personal experience. The main character in the play observes onward beyond the dream and prospects of his parents and wants to search for his own identity. But his parents are overprotective of him and he wants to examine the mystery of the world. "The cyclist appears to be the fantasy of a youth who nurtures the dream of encountering the world and each turn of journey as a mode of obstacle gives an insight into the horrifying realism of the world" (Shyamal). There are other characters in the play like Ma, Pa, Johehtey uncle, Bandit, Lion, Ghostly figure, and Mermaid. Through his journey, he meets different people and visits different places. He experienced throughout his journey that his journey is not geographical but becomes psychological. It represents the contemporary struggle of the rootless metropolitan generation age groups of modern society. Thus, the play also reveals existential dilemmas regarding the character of 'cyclists'.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that existentialism existed in the writing of western philosophers but it is also replicated in the writing of Indian English dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar, Vijay Tendulkar, and many more, their dramas presented the modern man who always searched for identity and finds himself lonely and isolated and also man alienated from the society. Indian Man and his dilemma which makes a man frustrated and forced him to search for his identity and meaning of life so the modern Indian dramatists in English have noticed the mode of Indian life coming under the pressure of the western one likewise, Indian drama has portrayed the picture of Indian society which also reflected existential crisis but this kind of existential crisis have already present in Indian society which was started in the writing of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, but its influences in the writing of certain Indian dramatists: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar. The play of Badal Sircar 'Evam Indrajit' is an existential play in which the play Sircar displays

a true picture of modern society as it mainly bounded on the meaninglessness of modern life and their day-to-day struggle for creating his identity in the society. The play by Vijay Tendulkar, 'The Cyclist' portrayed the true picture of middle-class people in modern Indian society. The play suppressed deep in the question of Existentialism through this Cyclist's trip is principally a philosophical journey, a journey of the mind Indian dramatists has articulated existentialism through their plays and try to make Indian society aware of the philosophy of existentialism. Thus, existentialist philosophy makes man aware of his responsibility and leads him toward a new moral consciousness.

Future Recommendations:

For future recommendations, the above-conducted study can further be enhanced by conducting a detailed play analysis of the above-mentioned dramatists. A relative study of the above-mentioned dramatists can be conducted to examine their life backgrounds and their use of existential philosophy in their works. Here discussed only two writers: Badal Sircar or Sarkar and Vijay Tendulkar who used the existential theme in their writing, but other writers also indicated the theme of existentialism in their writing dramas.

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