



# Reflection Of Existentialism In Girish Karnad's Play 'Tughlaq'

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## **Abstract:**

The present paper aims at tracing the reflection of existential features in Girish Karnad's Play Tughlaq. Girish Karnad was a modern playwright who influence the writing of western philosophical theory that expressed modern Indian society dilemmas. It appeared in his plays. Existentialism is a contemporary twentieth-century philosophical movement that succeeded after the dreadful Second World War. Existentialism chiefly addressed the problem of individual human existence, which searches for our identity and meaning of life through our actions, deeds, and also a personal responsibility to choose our destiny. The promoters of existentialism philosophers are Jean-Paul Sartre, Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, and many more who have outlined the writing of existentialism in their works. However, as time passes, the impact of western philosophy's. As a result, there is an Indian English Dramatist Girish Karnad who started developing and taking out the theme of existentialism in writing their works. So, the present paper will mainly focus on the reflection of writing on existentialism and the appearance of existential dilemmas in Modern Indian society also encourages the writing of the present situation of existentialism in Girish Karnad's play Tughlaq. Finally, in the play, Tughlaq reflected existential elements in the character of Mohamad bin Tughlaq who is alienated from his world.

## **Keywords:**

Existential dilemma, Existentialism, Tughlaq, Human Existence, Indian drama.

## **Introduction:**

Girish Karnad was a versatile person who was an administrator, intellectual, and performer. Financial stability is the reason he gives for being in the versatile profession but he primarily wants to be recognized as a playwright. Moreover, Karnad also contributed and to acting, film-making, publishing, administrating the national and international Drama and Music center. In Indian drama, he is primarily known for removing

mythological and religious allusions. He has reinterpreted myth in his own unique, modern manner. Previously, he is a keen observer of human existential crises, and myth has assisted him in examining these existential challenges. His career was honored with numerous awards and playwright which makes him an outstanding playwright in Indian English literature.

According to Vipin Kumar Pandey,

“Girish Karnad as a playwright constructs the master design of existentialism in his plays. But he is different from the western existentialists as his characters live in another milieu of culture and background. In western countries, existentialism is born out of frustration, despair, and fear of war, materialism, and industrialism. But the Indian setup where his characters are born is full of social injustice. Their sufferings, problems, and predicaments of the western characters of existentialism the crisis of man and that of his state of dilemma.” (Pandey Kumar Vipin) therefore, the impact of the writing of western philosophy Girish Karnad adopted a new technique in his works which is Existentialism.

Existentialism is a contemporary philosophical thought, that succeeded after the dreadful Second World War. Existentialism chiefly addressed the problem of individual human existence, which searches for our identity and meaning of life through our actions, deeds, and also a personal responsibility to choose our destiny. The exponents of existentialism philosophers are Jean-Paul Sartre, Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, and many more who have outlined the writing of existentialism in their works. However, as time passes, the impact 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 Girish Karnad who started developing and taking out the theme of existentialism in writing and their works. This philosophy of existentialism is reflected in the plays of Tughlaq, Yayati, and Hayavadana.

### **Girish Karnad's Play Tughlaq:**

Indian English dramatist Girish Karnad explores the problem of the existence of self, alienated, quest for identity, and frustration. This viewpoint of existentialism is reflected in the play of Tughlaq, Yayati, and Hayavadana. So here in this present paper discourses Girish Karnad's second play Tughlaq published in 1965 which reflects existentialism in the character of Mohamad Bin Tughlaq. Girish Karnad's play Tughlaq tells the tragic story of an ideal, but overambitious king Muhammad Bin Tughlaq who is a complex character. He emphasizes his existence in magnificence and immorality but that leads him to disappointment, frustration, and alienation from society. Tughlaq is seen as alienated from his society, primarily because he is a man of head of his age not understood by the society around him the reason his ideas and his idealism above the understanding of his contemporaries. In an age of religious fanaticism and holistic between Hindus and Muslims, his broadminded religious tolerance seems foolish to the Muslims and cunning to the Hindus who suspect his motives. He takes a lot of foolish decision which makes him alienated and frustrated and force him to think about his existence.

Poonam Pandey says,

“Tughlaq, a visionary and idealist, finds himself in an existentialist situation a situation of confrontation with orthodox and bigoted Muslims who oppose him at every step. He does his best to put his ideas into practice and realizing his responsibility to himself and his countrymen he makes an independent choice. A true existentialist, Tughlaq says that justice works in his kingdom without any consideration of might or weakness religion or Cree and he earnestly wishes to attain greater justice, equality, progress, and place, not just peace but a more purposeful life.” (Pandey Kumar Vipin)

Tughlaq's decision of the capital shifting Delhi to Daulatabad was not taken well by the nobles and the subject alike and the effect of his decision to move the capital a lot of them bewildered. But through this journey, a lot of the people were tortured and suffered on the way from Delhi to Daulatabad. The inevitable moment of bloodshed, torture, and hanging of the subjects on suspicion during Tughlaq's tyrannical mismanagement. No hope for any kind of betterment. Finally, his decision leads him to be alienated and faced loneliness and frustration. Though he is fully conscious of his failure, frustration, and disillusionment. That's why he realized that all his ideal outlines have come to nothing. Through his decision, he tried to get meaningful existence for his countrymen. Thus, he tried to promote the understanding of human existence amidst suffering and uncertainties. That's why King Tughlaq does not sleep at night because his concern is to make others feel the truth about his existence. He tells his stepmother that “I wish I could believe in recurring births like the Hindu but I have only one life, one body, and my hopes, my people, my God are all fighting for it. Tell me, how dare I waste my time by sleeping.” (Girish) Tughlaq finds himself in an existentialist situation which is revealing a feeling of anxiety, despair and alienated which reflected through the following lines,

“God, God in heaven, please help me. Please don't let go of my hand. My skin drips with blood and I don't know how much of it is mine and how much of others. I started in your path, lord, why am I wandering naked in this desert now? I started in search of you. Why am I becoming a pig rolling in this gory mud?” (Girish) so, Tughlaq, all his hopes shattered and he fails to realize the truth of human existentialist truth born of action and experience. A true depiction of existentialism can be seen in his character.

### **Research Methods:**

The existing study will use theoretical, analytical, descriptive, and explorative qualitative methods for the research. This research employs a descriptive method which contains a process of gathering, analyzing, and classifying the data for the construction of adequate and accurate interpretation of collected data. Information relevant to the study will be collected from various reference materials such as books, journals, articles, and online sources related to the topic concerned. The present paper is attentive to the reflection of existentialism in Girish Karnad's play Tughlaq. Finally, in the play, Mohammad Bin Tughlaq reflected on the existential suffering character the play of Tughlaq.

## Conclusion:

Existentialism is a contemporary philosophical thought, that succeeded after the dreadful Second World War. Existentialism chiefly addressed the problem of individual human existence, which searches for our identity and meaning of life through our actions, deeds, and also a personal responsibility to choose our destiny which leads human beings to alienated, frustrated, and lonely. The impact of the writing of western philosophy, Girish Karnad also adopted new techniques of writing in his works existentialism. Modern Indian society also suffers from existential dilemmas. Indian English dramatist Girish Karnad explores the problem of the existence of self, alienated, quest for identity, and frustration in his plays. His play Tughlaq is a great example of existential suffering in the character of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq is an overambitious and complex character. He is a visionary and idealist but finds himself in an existential situation that leads him alienated from society. his decision of shifting capital from Delhi to Daulatabad leads him alienated and faced loneliness and frustration. That's why he realized that all his ideal outlines have come to nothing and reflected Tughlaq is faced with existential suffering in his life and thinks about his existence.

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