

DR PREM PRAKASH:

PIONEER OF EXPERIMENTAL AND ABSURD DRAMA

By Prof. Sandhya Chander Kundnani

Abstract:

Dr Prem Prakash is known for his absurd drama in general and Sindhi Natak ji Avsar in particular. The paper seeks to explore the elements of absurdity in the theatrical writings of Dr Prem Prakash. In his plays he addresses the basic problems of existence, survival, living and meaning of life. The main objective of this paper is to study Dr Prem Prakash's place in Indian literature and the existentialist view expressed in his writing.

In Sindhi the culture of new play (Drama) & Absurd play was started by Dr. Prem Prakash. He has written so many new (experimental) and Absurd plays. His new plays are based on the new experiences, ways & present situations so that it deeply attracts Sindhi audience. This kind of new change is spread not only in Ahmedabad but each & every corner of India. Many great persons praised Dr. Prem Prakash very heartily. In his welcome address at one "Drama workshop Prof. Mangaram Malkani said which is published in "Sangeeta" (January – February volume):

Now I am fed up with these joking dramas & looking for the serious dramas. Thanks that my wish seems to be fulfilled. Just now in Ahmedabad under the leadership of one enthusiast young man Prem Prakash. One Sindhi Drama workshop has been established. He is showing his experimental dramas in very big cities of India. I have seen his Dramas in Calcutta and I liked those main goal

of this workshop is that I feel happy to show you the serious Dramas. He is success in showing the small & big pictures of society.

Dr. Prem Prakash has written and converted many stories into dramas. Among these stories some of are the story of Mohan Kalpana “Farishtau Ji Duniya”, story of Mohan Kalpana “Oham ain mathine” story of Hareesh Waswani “Gunti”, story at Lakshmi Khelani “Paara Khan Dharya” story of Ishwar Chandra “Sakt Chie waro Marron”. All these Plays try to portray the absurdity of human life using illogical, meaningless and deliberately confusing action and dialogue.

Dr. Prem Prakash worked for his Ph.D on “Natak gi Avsar”, which is considered as an important contribution to Sindhi drama. His thesis has been immensely helpful for research scholars working on Sindhi theatre. In really this work is very mind blowing.

In the foreward of his thesis Lakhi Khilani wrote, 100 years history of Sindhi Drama is shown in just 544 pages of Dr. Prem Prakash’s *Granth and compare it with Prof. Mangaram Malkhani’s Sindhi Nasar Ji Twarikh.*

Sri Lakhmi Khilani writes about Dr Prem Prakash:

He is short, small and looks like a poor person. But his inner skill and his new art is shocking to us. In west only one the revolution in the minds of people for the interest of art. In sindhi this title Prem + Pakaso + Prakash could given after partition and after Malkani & Mali there present days can be called as “Prem Prakash Days”.... Yes love for art is what he drink, he always wakes ups, bits, eats, drinks, sleeps he lives for drama. Drama is first and last love in his life. He feels happy from this kind of hard work. He feels that life is full. He feels that he recognize himself with of this Name, fame property is zero.

Dr. Prem Praksh has written experimental dramas, various stories and has published in different books and magazines. A collection of fifteen different comic plays are anthologized in a book entitled *Peria Jo Ishiq* that became his foundation.

Among these dramas “Peria Jo Ishiq”, “Khahi”, “Faslo” & “Umar jo Panjon Dahao” all four dramas has brought something new and different. His comic play points out the struggle of life, new change and innovations. These plays reflects rudeness, fatigue as well as strictness of today’s life. It reveals the hypocrisy that exists in the individual as well as society. All his plays are intended for performance by actors on stage. Most of his plays have been performed with astonishing success. At the first sight these plays confront their public with a bewildering experience which confront all accepted standard of stage convention.

“Khahi” is the story of a teacher who scarifies his life. It shows his struggle for survival in the workplace. He had to bear like a slaves in front of different principals, mayors, leaders, officers, inspector etc. He is always under the pressure of job. He lives the life of pressure and at last he becomes fatigue and in anger he behaves in wrong manner & he speaks bad words and is harsh to these people and trust members and he also abuses people on platform, waiting room as he seems to be waiting for the train. He goes again and again to the washroom. In the eyes of writer of this drama, “Khahi” in which a honest person, real person always fell down. He lost his privacy & personality and he lost his life and fell down in this “Khahi” because he wastes his time on these unnecessary things. Dr Prem Prakash has beautifully brought into the forefront the existential dimensions of human being.

In “Peria Jo Ishiq” old age is shown in a very serious and systematic way. Dr. Prem Prakash’s role is totally different in this play. Life’s struggle and rough conditions are shown in very different way and in different manner. Dr. Prem Prakash has shown this drama by keeping in

mind today's atmosphere, changes and has shown these through beautiful performances and made the drama meaningful.

“Faslo” is centred around a child where the child exposes the school trustee. The school trustees are seen to be very royal in the eyes of people but inside they are nothing, they are different in inside and different in outside world.

In “Umar jo Panjou Dahako” deals with communication gap between husband wife as they grow old, and explore reasons behind such misunderstandings and in their minds It explores why do the feelings, love, trust, belongingness, and attractions diminishes. It is the main objective of this drama though it is very difficult and the remaining dramas of these publications are in normal ways i.e. in absurd ways. His dramas are highly philosophical. He has used the modes / ways of living a life in different manner in different dramas. This play stresses the irrational or illogical aspects of life to show that modern life is meaningless.

Another comic play is Morchabandhi. In this comic play plot and composition is around the audience, around the artists, morchabandis is shown inside the farm and inside that farm morchabandhi same conditions are today's people everywhere there is morcha bandhi. All these things are shown in this drama in a clear and big picture. This is only first and different drama in Sindhi in which plot, actor, actress, events etc are not related with each other. Regarding this drama a famous writer Harsh Waswani's view are:

“Morchabandhi” is a Sindhi Drama which is totally different in the history. It is the new search of history which we can call a “Morcha of new plays”. One truth is that Prem Prakash is really dramatic. He can do everything with the art of play.

While writing the summary of this drama Prem Abhichandani's views are:

After so much time in the field of Sindhi drama one new different drama i.e. “morchabandhi” is the first drama in which any plot, actor, actress happening etc

is not there. This is the drama we can call it as “Symbol of post modern era”. This is one of the new and success drama in the respect of Sindhi Dramas.

Before I write something as “Mukti” composition I want to write about Dr. Prem Prakash after reading the four dramas from “Mukti” I cannot stop my writing. Lakhmi Khilnani’s views are that Prem Prakash’s “Picnic” “Morchabandhi”, “Bah”, “Mukti”, “Farishtau ji Duniya”, “Scrap” and “Pukaroon” are big challenge for the actors & fans. Not only that, this is the big challenge for the writers I also agree with Lakhmi Khilnani and without any hesitation, without any partiality, honestly and truly this is my personal view that Dr. Prem Prakash’s Dramas are more ahead as compare to the Mangaram Malkani’s. I know some drama writers may not agree with my views because no one likes to agree with truth. Only those people may agree with this truth. But my views are clear and clear like mirror whether one agreeS or not with me but I will not change my statement.

In Dr. Prem Prakash’s composition “Mukti”, four small dramas are involved, “Baah”, “Seerap”, “Mukti” & “Pukaroon”.

In “Baah” a very modern new society is shown which is near to the courtyard and is in a very lonely place. In this society so many bungalows are shown in which only four rooms are full. One home of “massi”, one of “Didi”, one home of “Adi” and one home is of one young girl of 20 years “Shoba” and one home of new for alone. One day fire takes off in one home for alone and all these women from the neighbourhood, ,massi, Adi, Didi and young girl Shobha are talking about the fire. While talking about fire they come to their personal life topic. They come to know that fire, inside fire, heart fire, mind fire, spiritual fire, fire of ford, fire of relations, fire of trust, everywhere fire and fire and each person is around the fire in which everyone is burning. Fire is there everywhere , Someone knows, someone doesn’t know. Someone is in the punch of fire inside home, someone is in the punch of fire outside. You are under the fire punch, myself is in the punch of fire, he is in fire and she is in fire. In this drama no one could be saved animals like cat are also under the punch of fire. Actually whole world is on fire in this drama Shri Lakshmi

Khilnani summarized that fire takes off everything of human's life. It spoils the whole life of man.

In "Scrap" it is shown that as the money increases, humanity decreases. In this drama one person "Uncle" is shown who is the owner of one factory. As his wealth increases, his humanity decreases. Uncle has a keen interest to develop his business. Uncle has a keen interest to develop his business so that he feels all the family members are like contribution for him. Though he is a father, before that he is a businessman. To develop his business he does not hesitates to use his daughter in the business and the one who is not of his wife and daughter in the business. It could be his nephew and niece? His nephew Sunil is like a puppet for the uncle Sunil is very hesitant, pressurized and like a live dead body. His sister Deepika comes from America specially for her brother. His wife and aunty they are trying a lot to recover Sunil but in vain. The only one thing which pains Sunil is that "why I did not commit suicide earlier"? The realization of pain is shown in very realistic manner.

Why I could not ran away earlier? Why I came with my uncle alone? Why I could not refuse him? Why I did not realize myself earlier? Why I did not fight with my uncle? Why I did not commit suicide?

But his sister Deepika, his wife Kavita and his aunty, they are trying to comfort him and make him to become a bold and they challenge him. This challenge is written by the writer in a beautiful and attractive poetic way. His sister Deepika and aunty tried a lot but totally in vain in front of Sunil who became like a dead body and till last he repeated the same sentences why I could not refuse at that time? Why I did not suicide?

"Mukti" starts with "Sachal Sarmst's Soofi Kalam", four employees of one cloth mill, Mr. Nankani, Mr. Ramani, Sadhu and Ram all four board the lift on one sunday a holiday. After completing their office work they board in the lift for leaving their home but suddenly lift gets stucked between the two floors. They feel suffocation and they shouted "Save", "Save", they tried to save their lives from lift. Sadharam a liftman protects them. Shri Lakshmi Khilnani

writes the summary of this drama that this drama is the metaphor of trapped existence in lift to get rid of the human. He tries a lot but at last he tries to run from them i.e. the suicide door.

“Pukaroon”! In this drama the writer has shown a clear scene of the Earth quake that occurred on 26th January, 2001 in Gujrat and spoiled (destroyed) the fertile land & environment totally. The drama is in the memory of human beings those who were calling at that time for help. The drama is the memory of the Gujrat Earthquake. The drama is written in such a way so that from starting till end it is the bone chilling picture, very dangerous, shocking, thrilling story which is full of realization. It feels like that they are our relatives. In the starting the writer has written two lines.

The family which is destroyed that is mine!

The family which is saved that is also mine!

Writer has written the drama in 22 scenes In every scene there are calls and calls (Pukaram & Pukaroon) to save. Children are crying, old people crying, husband – wives crying, crying of each and every character is heard. College town hall, buildings, homes all seem to be falling down to the earth. Some one’s leg, some one’s arm, someones’s hand, only heads, only legs, only arms, only fingers, all these body parts were crying and calling for the help. Few of them were calling their Gods for help. A few of them in a very sad voice singing the Saha’s Kalam. Whole Gujrat was under the Earthquake, Surat, Srinagar, Murbi, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Rajkot and nearby all ethics were harmed and destroyed. But the main centre of this earthquake was “Bhuj”. All around Bhuj it was horrible condition.

Whole Bhuj became mud. All homes, bungalows, etc. became mud that the people were drowned trapped and inside.

In scene no. 20, the writer has shown, how the human beings became animals when they were stealing the money and jewelry from the dead bodies. In the full drama, language, each sentence, every word is spoken in such a manner that out of 22 scenes, 21 scenes are thrilling scenes, shocking scenes at the same time the tears comes in eyes to see this. The one who will see the

drama and read the drama definitely he will stand up and hats off to Dr. Prem Prakash who has made the Drama a real picture.

Shri Lakhmi Khilnani has written about Dr. Prem Prakash as “ Among the presently available Sindhi Commercial dramas it is not possible to bring Prem Prakash’s seriousness. We can say only one word that there is no replacement. He has such strength that he could bring Kishin Khetwani’s “Ashyano” and Lakhmi Khilnani’s drama ‘varia Sandho kol’ to a great success. Sindhi dramas have lots of hopes from Prem Prakash and it is certain tghat he will definitely keep his promise.

To conclude, Prem Prakash’s plays do not suggest any solution to the problems of our existence rather the riddles of our existence remains complex, unfathomable and paradoxical in his writing.

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