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**Communal Disharmony in Mahesh Dattani's Final Solution**

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### ABSTRACT

Mahesh Dattani is the most influential and impressive dramatist in the contemporary Indian English dramatic arena. The scenario of Indian drama has transformed with his skills and innovative technique. He has penned several dramas which point out diverse social controversies. *Final Solutions* is the fifth play of Mahesh Dattani. It was staged after the Mumbai riot. The play draws to light the communal riot between the Hindus and Muslims. Religion is used as bait by the politicians to which the mob becomes scapegoats. This paper titled **Communal Harmony in Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions*** highlights on the communal disharmony that prevails in a country like India where different community people live. He portrays the oppression of community over the other.

**Key words:** Religion, communal disharmony, Hindu & Muslim, riot.

India, a multi-religious, multilingual and multi-racial country, always enjoys the essential unity of culture amidst diversities that kept her people united. After independence, narrow religious, regional, and communal feelings attract the country. The apparently mindless communal tensions and bloody riots that take place occasionally create a sense of mistrust among the two principal religious communities involved in clashes. The country pays a heavy price for such disturbances through loss of life and property.

Religion is one of the fundamental organizations of any general public. Religion serves as base for Indian's culture and in-turn is reflected on its politics and society. All religion teaches the world love and peace. Prophet Mohammad teaches universal brotherhood. Hinduism teaches "Sarvejanah Sukhino Bhavantu". In the book, *America: Religions and Religion*, Catherina L. Albanese says, "Religion is a system of symbol (creed, code, culture) by means of which people (a community) orient themselves in the world with reference to both ordinary and extraordinary powers, meaning and value" (433).

The majority of the population of India belong to Hinduism where as the majority in Pakistan are Muslims. Hindu and Muslim tension extend beyond Kashmir. Since the time of Independence India has been affected with unrestrained communalism. People are torn apart by communal hatred and ravage in the pretext of religious adherence.

Mahesh Dattani has impudently portrayed the scenario of religious intolerance in *Final Solutions*. Mahesh Dattani was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August in 1958 in Bangalore, Karnataka. He is considered as one of the best Indian playwrights. Mahesh Dattani began to concentrate on his writing and wrote plays like *Where There is a Will*, *Final Solutions*, *Night Queen*, *Dance Like a Man*, *Tara*, and *Thirty days*. All his plays depict social issues like gender identity, gender discrimination, and communal tensions. *Final Solutions* underscores the dark unruly pathos in India and the communal disharmony between Hindus and Muslim in India and how the cradle of riot swings in a distraught manner.

The play unfolds itself with Daksha, a fifteen year old young bride reading her diary. Daksha transforms to Hardika in her old age. It is through her consciousness the major dramatic event is exposed. Daksha/ Hardika may be considered as the representative of Hindu who suffers

at the hands of Muslim majority. She is the grandmother of the Gandhis. Daksha is hostile towards Muslims because her father was killed in a communal riot and because of her overtures of friendship with Zarine, a young muslim girl. Her family comprises of Ramnik Gandhi, her son, a liberal; Aruna, her daughter-in-law, a devout Hindu, who is highly superstitious and her granddaughter, Smita is tolerant and represents the dynamic of new generation.

Mahesh Dattani's communalism springs out with economy as a background as well. Ramnik is haunted with the guilt of his father's deeds. Ramnik's father had burnt Zarine's father's shop so that they could buy the shop for half its value. Ramnik Gandhi offers Javed a job in his shop not with the desire to help him but because of his sense of guilt. To quote Ramnik: "And we burnt it. Your husband. My father. And his father. They had it burnt in the name of communal hatred. Because we wanted a shop. Also they learnt that . . . those people were planning to start a mill like our own. I can't take it any longer. I don't think I can step into the shop again. . . "(75).

Javed and Bobby represent the Muslim who suffer in the set up of major Hindu Community. The seed of hatred was sown in Javed when he was a small innocent boy playing cricket with his friends, insulted by a Hindu priest who believed that the very touch of the boy on his letter made it contaminated.

Javed took the letter . . . and opened the gate. Immediately a voice boomed, 'What do you want?' I can still remember Javed holding out the letter and mumbling something, his usual firmness vanishing in a second. 'Leave it on the wall,' the voice ordered. Javed backed away, really frightened. We all watched as the man came out with a cloth in his hand. He wiped the letter before picking it up, he then wiped the spot on the wall the letter was lying on and he wiped the gate! (45)

Javed who has already been ill at ease with the Hindus is being exploited by selfish politicians and becomes a terrorist. He plays a major role in the Rath Yatra riot. The pleading of the Pujari changes his mind and so he throws away the knife. From this act he shows that he too has a wonderful heart that cares for other human beings. Someone else in the Yatra kills the Pujari and the sacred idol is fragmented. In spite of being a Muslim Bobby had respect for life,

dignity of humanity, love for truth and justice, fellow-feeling, and brotherhood and did not want folks to be mercilessly butchered in the riot. Bobby tried to stop Javed from involving in the riot but in vain. Even Javed's parents, who believed Javed to be a terrorist, neglected him and he was sent away. No matter whatever religion one belongs to, religion never teaches to destroy others. Every human being is taught to understand the feelings of others, but in the name of religion, riots are taking place and people are massacred everywhere. If each and every one could stop and think for a moment they would understand what humanity is.

Many are proud to be religious; Aruna too is such a character in *Final Solutions*. She is proud of Hindu practices and is hesitant to give Javed and Bobby a glass of water to quench their thirst. Aruna resents Ramnik's idea to offer them shelter and food since they were exhausted to save their life from the mob who tried to attack them. Despite Aruna's wish, Ramnik provides shelter to Javed and Bobby in order to find relief for the guilt he possessed for a long time. But he was not totally tolerant, whenever he got an opportunity he fought with Javed and it was Bobby who tried to stop them. When they were about to leave the house Bobby picked up the image of Krishna, which was tiny, and seated it in his palm with the intention to ridicule Aruna's faith and break her pride. He sarcastically says,

Booby: !See! I am touching God!

CHORUS ALL (pounds thrice): We are not idol breakers!

Bobby: Your God! My flesh is holding Him! Look, Javed! And He doesnot mind!

Bobby: He does not burn me to ashes! He does not cry out from heaven saying He has been contaminated! (73)

Through these words Mahesh Dattani tries to educate the population that the mere touch of a person does not contaminate the so called Gods. He has also introduces The chorus which plays a significant role in demonstrating the communal disharmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. The chorus assumes Hindu masks and sometimes Muslim ones to put forth their respective integrity. Through *Final Solutions* he tries to propagate communal harmony and tries to put and end to the communal riots in the name of Gods. Man is a social animal. Hence



Communal Harmony is essential as people belong to different religions having their own faith and belief; different religious groups are living together in other words, it means that a person cannot live alone in today's world. Man has to live in a society with people of different religions, castes, sex, and different backgrounds. He has to maintain love and peace between one another.

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