



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Drama**

**MODERN INDIAN THEATRE – A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

**KEY WORDS:**

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Before we start to talk about the Modern Indian Theatre, first we should understand the concept of Modern theatre in today's world. Modernism is an art form which comes from western society during the nineteenth and twentieth century. It focuses on a broad perception of looking into the world. It includes the newly emerging artistic world and social tradition which experimenting with different forms. Modernization is a movement or we can say that the artistic revolution where the shape of all art forms changed. In simple words we can say that this Modern art has departed from the traditional art form which it considered outdated or obsolete. Under this new form of art it includes the Abstract art, mixture of different art form etc.

This new art form we can also see in our Modern drama or Modern theatre. This theatre is very wide or inter-mixture or combination of various forms. It also includes advanced science and technology, giving a new way of experience of seeing the theatre. When we talk about Modern "Indian theatre" we see that it started when Britishers came into India and established theatre companies. Their main aim was doing theatre as entertainment. They started these theatre companies at 3 major centers that are Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. At the end of 18 th century one person came from Germany to India and his name was "Gerasim Stepanovich Lebdev" he lived in Calcutta and learn Bengali and first time he translated to English plays into Bengali language and performed in Calcutta and gave the name Bengali theatre. So, from here our Modern Indian theatre was started. Mr. Lebdev was a pioneer of modern Indian theatre. Then journey continuous and many people came with new thought like Mr. Deenbandhu Mitra, Girish Chandr ghose and many other people. Then we came to Marathi theatre which was started by Mr. Vishnu Das Bhave and his Mandali. Then many Marathi theatre activists and theatre artists came to change the different perspective of theatre. Like Bal Gandharve, Govind Balal Devel, etc. After that, Gujrati theatre came, then Parsi theatre and then Hindi theatre started for the first time at Bombay. Bartendu Harischandra was the first Hindi playwright and writer of Hindi literature. Then we see that in 1942 at Bombay Prithivi theatre group was established by Prithiraj Kapoor. And in 1943 one political theatre association was also established that is IPTA (Indian people's theatre association). It was a new movement in modern Indian theatre. Then we see after Independence, theatre was happening all over India. And new Modern Dramatists came out from different parts of India like Mohan rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sarcar, Girish Karnad, Dharamveer Bharati, Habib Tanveer, Bhishm Shahani, Chandrashekher Kambara, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Satish Alekar, Asghar Wajahat, Surendra Verma, Mahesh Dattani, and many more. All plays of these playwrights are contemporary and performed till now. Also, many Modern theatre Directors at that time performed these plays in different styles. Like K.N Phannikar- using Kutiyattam style in his plays, B.V Karanth- experiments with different types of music, Ratan Thyam- experiments with different forms of the plays, Heisnam Kanhailal - experiments with different forms of the plays. And so on...

In the twenty-first century we can see that Modern theatre has totally changed. It is totally virtual or multimedia theatre productions or non verbal productions where there is

extensive use of Technologies, Multimedia, different software, Animations, Video projections, etc. This is a new wave which totally changed the concept of Indian theatre. When we see these types of productions we can only experience it. Many Directors continuously work in these fields like- Roysten Abel plays- the Manganiyar Seduction, Othello in black and white, A hundred snake charmers etc. Deepan Shivaraman plays- Dark things, The legends of khasak, The cabinet of Dr. Caligari, ubu roi, Dream of death, etc. And work of Abhilash Pillai- Talatum, Lorem ipsum, clowns and clouds, etc. Recent work of Feroz Abbas Khan that is Mughal-E-Azam. And many more directors working in these different types of productions. Basically these all productions are based on device theatre in which different devices are used. There are also many Directors who develop the production on the basis of unique thought or any idea or any theme or based on installation and Materiality.

And when we see today in 2021 we are doing all types of productions like- Classical theatre, Folk theatre, Modern poetic drama, Modern dance drama, Multimedia productions, Non verbal productions, Street theatre, Mime theatre, Physical theatre, etc. So, this is the short overview of our Modern Indian drama or theatre. In the above overview of modern Indian theatre which we see today, I give my views or my imagination of how I look at Modern Indian theatre. As we see, a lot of things have been done in the field of modern Indian theatre. So, I write some of the points which I think for the modern Indian theatre should be like this.

(1) New Playwrights- We can see, today there is a lack of new playwright in the Modern period. Due to this everybody is doing the same plays for a long time like Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sarkar etc. New playwright comes from new ideas, thoughts etc. Therefore the new playwrights are very important and new plays are required to be written keeping in view or based on modern situations for our Modern Indian theatre.

(2) Audience oriented Plays- Modern productions are mostly audience oriented. We cannot show anything to our audience. What we see is that, today Multimedia or Digital or Devised productions are mostly played, which are not audience oriented or not understood by the major audience. It is an actor oriented production. It is only for the actor training process not for the productions. I think it is also one of my point that modern production should be like this.

(3) Good way of Experiment- I think it is very important for Modern theatre that there should be a good way of experimental productions. As we see that many theatre experiments are baseless or they did for the sake of experiment. It should not be like a movie or film or cinema that today we see on stage and called a Modern theatre. Good experiments are those experiments in which the content of the play should not die. Experiment should be in a creative way like when we talk about a famous Director Ratan Thiyam plays- When We Dead Awaken or Chakaraview or Macbeth etc. We will see the good way of experiment and creative way of presentation, or we can talk about works of B.V Karant and many more.

(4) Always Contemporary- when we talk about Modern, it

should be always contemporary in my view. Each and every play is contemporary so that every spectator will accept it and experience it. It also should be linked with a common lifestyle.

(5) Understand by Major Audience- Modern Indian theatre should be understood by a large number of audience or major audience. It is one of the important points that any modern production is understood or clearly communicated to our Spectators because we are doing theatre for Audience. Even when we use modern techniques in our plays like different technology, multimedia productions or digital production or any absurd play, it should be understood by our Spectators. Modern theatre should be connected with the audience through Emotionally, Mentally, and Physically.

(6) We (Audience) get something from Modern Productions- From this, I mean to say that the main motive of the production is fulfil and that is we get something from these productions. Every production gives something to us but when we see today's theatre productions, we see that there is much focus on giving experience by using lots of technologies, video projections, animations, ledger lights and different soft-wares etc, rather than emotions. So, the major audience is detached from these types of productions because on stage lots of machines are acting, not an actors.

(7) It should be done Anywhere- The Modern Indian theatre should be done anywhere. It means Modern theatre is like that which we can perform either in urban area or rural area or anywhere in India. There should not be any boundation of structure of the play. It should be flexible so that it can be performed anywhere. Again I say that today we see lots of modern productions have their own structure and these productions cannot perform in small cities or in village areas. Like Firoz Abbas Khan production- Mughal-e-Azam.

### **Conclusion**

We have studied about the origin of Modern theatre and how it came into India. It started from Bengal theatre, then Marathi theatre, then finally Hindi theatre. Then we talked about multimedia productions, digital productions, experimental productions etc and saw how modern Indian theatre is. After that, on the basis of today modern Indian theatre, I gave my own point of view according to my imagination on this modern Indian theatre where we talk about a new playwrights, audience oriented plays, good way of experiments, always contemporary, understand by everyone, plays can be done anywhere, and so on...