

The Silenced Voice: Marginalized Characters in Mahesh Dattani's Plays

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Abstract: *The article examines how Mahesh Dattani, an English-language playwright who won the Sahitya Akademi Award, portrays marginalized identities and the "invisible" person through his theatrical performances. The research demonstrates that Dattani uses domestic spaces to create both his Indian middle-class characters' oppressive environment and their secret acts of resistance. The research uses a comparative study of three important plays, Tara (1990) and Bravely Fought the Queen (1991) and Seven Steps Around the Fire (1998), to examine how gender discrimination and disability interact with the marginalization of LGBTQ+ and Hijra communities.*

Dattani establishes his primary analytical framework through his creative implementation of spatial boundaries. The article examines how he employs multi-level sets and "invisible" stagecraft to symbolize the psychological isolation of characters who are physically present but socially erased. The study further investigates how Dattani dismantles the "mask" of urban sophistication to reveal the deep-seated prejudices that continue to govern the contemporary Indian household. The article demonstrates that Dattani's theatrical work serves as an essential demonstration of "vocal reclamation" which requires audiences to engage in active discomfort while recognizing their role in silencing those who belong to the "other" group. Dattani's work ensures that "invisible issues" receive public attention which demonstrates the ongoing fight for human dignity in modern India's divided territories..

Keywords: Mahesh Dattani, Marginalization, LGBTQ+ Drama, Disability Studies, Gender Politics, Hijra Community