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Evaluating Patriarchy in Select Works of Mahesh Dattani, Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar

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Abstract: ***This research paper critically evaluates the theme of patriarchy in select works of three renowned Indian playwrights: Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar, and Girish Karnad. Patriarchy, as a pervasive social system, influences power dynamics, gender roles, and relationships within societies. The objective of this study is to analyze how these playwrights explore the manifestations and consequences of patriarchy through their dramatic works. Through a comparative analysis of these playwrights' works, this study aims to highlight the diversity of approaches and perspectives in portraying patriarchy within Indian theatre. By evaluating patriarchy through the lens of these eminent playwrights, this research provides a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and political factors that shape gender dynamics in contemporary Indian society.***
Keywords: Patriarchy in Indian Society, Comparative analysis, Woman as an object, Inequality and biasness

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Meaning & Definition of Patriarchy

Men hold a dominant position of control in patriarchal societal structures, which systematically treat and denigrate women. It is an enduring framework that has an impact on the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of society. Gender inequality, violence against women, unequal access to resources, and unequal opportunity for men and women are only a few of the numerous manifestations of patriarchy's negative repercussions. Fundamentally, patriarchy is a power and privilege structure based on gender. It operates on the basis of a complex network of social customs, laws, and traditions that perpetuate male dominance and female subordination. Gender roles and expectations are imposed by patriarchal norms, which limit the agency and autonomy of women while elevating men's social status. In these gender roles, men are generally expected to be the provider and the decision-maker, whilst women are typically expected to be the caretakers, submissive, and dependent. Furthermore, patriarchy promotes the idea that men are superior to women, which develops bias towards women. Various situations, such as the workplace, politics, education, and religion, can all be shown to exhibit this. Women are underrepresented in leadership positions and typically face discrimination in terms of employment, promotion, and pay. Additionally, individuals encounter discrimination when trying to acquire housing, healthcare, and education. Furthermore, gender-based violence, which disproportionately targets women and maintains their subordination, is supported by patriarchal standards. Domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment are all examples of this violence. Research on patriarchy in the Indian context has shed light on several key aspects: Gender-based discrimination: Patriarchy in India perpetuates discriminatory practices against women and people of other genders. This includes practices such as female infanticide, dowry system, child marriage, gender-based violence, and honour killings, which are rooted in patriarchal beliefs and reinforce gender-based discrimination, Patriarchy in India prescribes rigid gender roles and responsibilities, where men are expected to be the breadwinners and women are expected to be homemakers. These gender roles are deeply embedded in societal norms and are reinforced by cultural, religious, and social practices, limiting opportunities for women and people of other genders to access education, employment, and leadership positions, Patriarchy in India perpetuates gender-based inequalities in access to resources and opportunities. Women and people of other genders often face discrimination in areas such as education, healthcare, property ownership, inheritance, and employment. This limits their economic empowerment and perpetuates their dependence on men. Patriarchy in India contributes to widespread violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, and trafficking. These forms of violence are often tolerated, justified, or ignored by society, and survivors of violence often face stigma, discrimination, and lack of support. Research on patriarchy in the Indian context has highlighted how patriarchal oppression intersects with other forms of oppression, such as caste, class, religion, and sexuality. Indian English literature often sheds light on the role of women in patriarchal structures, depicting how they grapple with societal expectations, cultural norms, and discrimination that restrict their agency and freedom. These female characters face gender-based discrimination, violence, and unequal access to resources and opportunities.

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Moreover, Indian English literature explores how patriarchy intersects with other forms of oppression, such as caste, class, religion, and sexuality. It highlights how patriarchal norms intersect with these systems of oppression, resulting in multiple layers of discrimination for women and other marginalized genders. In addition to portraying the challenges of patriarchy, Indian English literature also portrays the resilience, resistance, and agency of women in challenging and navigating patriarchal norms. Patriarchy, regardless of its varying degrees of dominance, remains the foremost barrier to the progress and empowerment of women. This system upholds male authority and power, and it is imperative to recognize and expose the methods through which women are kept subjugated and under control. Within a male-dominated household, patriarchy refers to the "rule of the father," a societal and cultural construct that places men (the patriarchs) above women in terms of value and status. The concept of Patriarchy did not originate from feminist theories alone, as many social scientists in the 19th century wrote about it as a more advanced form of societal organization compared to primitive matriarchies. Engels even referred to it as the earliest system of domination, viewing Patriarchy as a historical defeat for women. The Royal Academy of the Spanish Language Dictionary defines Patriarchy as a primitive social organization where authority is held by a male head of the family, extending this power to distant relatives of the same lineage. However, feminist theories in the latter half of the 20th century updated and expanded the understanding of Patriarchy. It was no longer limited to ancient civilizations, but viewed as a present-day unjust social system that subordinates, discriminates, and oppresses women. According to feminist perspectives, Patriarchy encompasses socio-political mechanisms, which the author refers to as Patriarchal Institutions that reproduce and enforce male dominance over women. Feminist theory sees Patriarchy as a social construct that can be challenged and overcome through critical analysis of its manifestations and institutions.

II. VIJAY TENDULKAR

As a Playwright: Vijay Tendulkar, born in 1928 into a Marathi Brahmin family, initially pursued a career as a journalist in 'Marathi Weekly' for several years. In 1948, he became the assistant editor of Navbharat Times, while also starting to write short stories. He later transitioned to writing one-act plays, and it was a natural progression for him to eventually write full-length plays, spanning from his first play Grihastha in 1957 to Safar in 1992. Tendulkar's works were driven by his desire to reform society, and he often chose to depict the lives of middle-class individuals, exploring their social conditions, behaviours, and attitudes towards society, particularly focusing on issues related to men and women. In many of his plays, Tendulkar aimed to highlight the problems faced by both genders in society, exposing issues that he found to be illegal, improper, imbalanced, or deformed, using a satirical approach to address these burning problems and contribute to their resolution. His plays are valuable for both reading and stage performances, showcasing his skill in shaping and achieving dramatic excellence.

Vijay Tendulkar has made a significant impact on post-independence drama by portraying the harsh realities of life, relationships, and existence. He presents modern society in its true form, with all its challenges, difficulties, and complexities, without moralizing his characters. Tendulkar's plays are written in a naturalistic style, rejecting idealistic portrayals of life in favour of realistic depictions. He touches upon every aspect of human life and can be seen as a silent social activist, aiming to change people's ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. His plays raise questions rather than providing solutions, leaving possibilities open for change. Tendulkar's works reflect the predicaments, challenges, and complexities faced by modern humans, while also shedding light on the tendencies of male dominance and feminine frailty in Indian society. Tendulkar's plays offer a unique perspective on human character and the complexities of human relationships. Through works like Kamala, Canadian, Ghashiram Kotwal, and Gidhade, he delves into the intricacies of blood relationships on various levels. In The Vultures, for instance, Tendulkar portrays how greed for money can drive family members to madness. Kamala depicts the emptiness in husband-wife relationships, while Ghashiram Kotwal exposes a father who bargains his own daughter's chastity for personal ambition. One of Tendulkar's notable works, Silence! The Court is in Session (1967), originally written in Marathi and later translated into English by Priya Adarkar, showcases his artistic ingenuity and resourcefulness. The play combines social criticism with the tragedy of an individual victimized by society, as it is based on a real-life incident Tendulkar overheard of a group staging a mock-trial in his Mumbai suburb of Vile Parle, where he lived. The play takes the form of a "play within a play" or a "rehearsal." In Silence! The Court is in Session, Tendulkar depicts the struggles of a young woman who is a victim of a male-dominated society, critiquing the flaws that exist in such a society. The play captures the realities of contemporary life, focusing on the human mind and revealing its ugliness. Tendulkar's plays are the result of his keen observation of life, society, and his own experiences, addressing issues such as unmarried motherhood. Tendulkar, a skilled writer with a keen sense of perception, delves into the theme of alienation of modern individuals in contemporary politics. He also sheds light on issues of gender inequality, depicting the overt and covert violence experienced by human beings, and the vulnerable position of women in the Indian social hierarchy.

Tendulkar's plays revolve around the relationship between the individual and society, showcasing the latent violence and lust that exist in middle-class life, resulting in devastation and profound loneliness. His plays are grounded in reality, portraying the omnipresent yet invisible violence in people's lives. Tendulkar's works often highlight the conflicts between the individual and society, with a prismatic quality that reflects a myriad of potentials and colours in his creativity.

Controversy often surrounded Tendulkar's works due to their taboo nature in Indian society. For instance, "Ghashiram Kotwal" scrutinized abuse of power and corruption, "Sakharam Binder" challenged traditional gender roles and sexuality, and "Canadian" addressed the social evil of dowry. Tendulkar's frank and bold approach to these topics sparked controversy but also initiated crucial conversations and raised awareness about pressing social issues. Despite the controversy, Tendulkar's impact on Indian theatre was significant. His groundbreaking plays redefined the landscape of Indian theatre by breaking away from conventional forms and pushing the boundaries of storytelling. Tendulkar's plays received critical acclaim for their powerful narratives, compelling characters, and thought-provoking themes, inspiring a new generation of playwrights and theatre practitioners to explore socially relevant and politically charged subjects in their works, leaving a lasting impression on Indian theatre.

III. +KANYADAAN

The play Kanyadaan, published in 1983, is a complex portrayal of cultural and emotional upheavals and the dynamics of man-woman relationships within a family. It delves into a sensitive conflict between the upper class and Dalit caste that still persists in some parts of the country, despite 70 years of Independence. Vijay Tendulkar, a genuine dramatist, sheds light on a social problem that lacks easy solutions. The title itself, Kanyadaan, revolves around the theme of marriage. The play depicts the story of a girl from a politically progressive family who chooses to marry a Dalit man due to her attraction towards his poetry. Raised with lofty ideals by her father, she has a spirit that seeks goodness in people. However, after marrying the Dalit man, she realizes that the poet-lover and the devil within him are one and the same.

He cannot be separated from the vices of drinking and wife-beating that is part of him. In fact, he harbours a malicious desire to punish her for the suffering his ancestors have endured over the ages.

The play features five characters, including Nath Devlalikar, an MLA, and his wife Seva, a social worker. Jayprakash, a M.Sc. student, and his intelligent sister Jyoti, who decides to marry Arun Athavale, a poor but talented Dalit youth from a village she has known for only two months. Nath and Seva, being socialists and advocates for Dalit rights, initially appear pleased with Jyoti's decision. However, Nath expresses his concerns about her marrying into a high caste, considering the boy's background and occupation irrelevant. In the second scene of Act 1, Arun visits Jyoti's house. Despite her grief, Arun continues to express his discontent, even mentioning the idea of marrying Jyoti, dismissing the notion of a socialist service-oriented life together. He sees life as a hellish existence filled with suffering, causing Jyoti to shed tears. Arun realizes his harsh words have hurt Jyoti deeply and apologizes for his callousness, acknowledging his own feelings of injustice, anger, and helplessness. At this point, Jyoti takes on the role of a savior, while Arun becomes the victim. Eventually, Arun leaves without even touching the tea that Jyoti has made for him, lost in thought. Seva and Jayaprakash criticize Arun's behavior, but Nath defends him, ignoring their accusations and protecting him. Nath humbly requests for understanding and compassion, as he grapples with the complex and inconsistent behaviour of Arun. Despite Arun's questionable actions, Nath tries to see it from the perspective of social justice. Nath, like Jyoti, attempts to play the role of a savior and bring about a change in Arun's behaviour by intervening and rescuing him. However, the final decision on Arun's actions is left to Jyoti, who is influenced by her father's liberal principles and marries Arun, expecting a union of cultures rather than individuals. But soon after the marriage, Arun and Jyoti's relationship takes a dark turn, with Jyoti returning home subdued and battered.

When Seva questions Arun about his violence towards Jyoti, Arun responds with a shocking revelation about his upbringing as the son of scavengers, where violence against wives is considered normal. Nath, who had hoped for his daughter's happy married life with Arun, is now plagued by confusion and uncertainty the behaviour towards his pregnant wife described in these pages is appalling. Despite his ability to write a sensitive autobiography and beautiful poems, this Dalit son-in-law wants to remain idle and have his wife work to support him while he indulges in alcohol and revelry with his friends. In the final scene, Jyoti, who initially felt helpless, realizes she can handle the situation by accepting Arun in her life, setting aside her preconceived liberalistic opinions. She acknowledges how Arun is better than Nath, and despite his flaws, she has to accept him as he is because she cannot reject him. As a married daughter, Jyoti asserts her independence and disassociates herself from her family, forbidding them from visiting her through aid organizations. This is Jyoti's affirmation of her rights as a woman and a wife, smashing the barriers of nonconformity and establishing Arun's individuality amidst the deceitfulness of caste discrimination.

A. Patriarchy in the Context

"Kanyadaan," originally written in Marathi by Vijay Tendulkar, is a powerful depiction of patriarchy that has been translated into English for a wider audience. The play, first performed in 1983, delves into the complexities of gender roles and societal expectations in Indian culture. The theme of patriarchy is evident in various aspects of the play, including its characters, plot, and dialogue. The female characters, in particular, struggle with societal norms that dictate their behaviour and choices, exemplified by Jyoti, the female protagonist, who faces conflict between her desire for independence and her duty towards her family and society. The play also addresses the issue of control and ownership of women's bodies by men. Jyoti's father-in-law treats her as a commodity to be exchanged through marriage, and her husband tries to assert control over her decisions. Patriarchal traditions and rituals, such as dowry and the concept of "kanyadaan," where women are considered as property, are also portrayed. The play sheds light on the double standards and hypocrisy in a patriarchal society, where men have more freedom and choices than women. It also explores societal attitudes towards women's sexuality and the importance of female empowerment and resistance in challenging oppressive norms. Despite the prevalent patriarchy, "Kanyadaan" also portrays female empowerment and resistance. The female characters, especially Jyoti, challenge societal expectations and assert their agency. The play emphasizes the need for female solidarity in the face of patriarchal oppression. Overall, the theme of patriarchy in the English translated play "Kanyadaan" critically examines gender roles, societal expectations, and oppressive traditions that limit women's agency in Indian society. It raises important questions about gender inequality, control over women's bodies, and the necessity for empowerment and resistance against patriarchal norms.

IV. GIRISH KARNAD

Girish Raghunath Karnad, born on May 19, 1938, is a prominent contemporary writer, playwright, screenwriter, actor, and movie director in the Kannada language. His emergence as a playwright in the 1960s marked a significant milestone in modern Indian playwriting in Kannada, akin to the contributions of Badal Sarkar in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Mohan Rakesh in Hindi. Karnad has been recognized with the prestigious Jnanpith Award in 1998, which is the highest literary honor in India. Over the span of four decades, Karnad has crafted plays that often draw upon history and mythology to address contemporary issues. He has also translated his plays into English, receiving acclaim for his work. His plays have been translated into various Indian languages and have been directed by renowned directors in the theater world. In addition to his accomplishments in theater, Karnad has also made significant contributions to Indian cinema as an actor, director, and screenwriter in both Hindi and Kannada films, earning awards for his work Influenced by the renaissance in Western literature, Karnad was deeply impacted by C. Rajagopalachari's version of the Mahabharata, which led to a rush of dialogues spoken by characters from the epic in Kannada. His first play, Yayati, based on the story of King Yayati from the Mahabharata, was published in 1961 when he was 23 years old Karnad was also recognized for his cultural activism, actively advocating for the use of regional languages in literature and theater, promoting communal harmony, and raising awareness about environmental issues. He received numerous awards and honors during his career, including the prestigious Jnanpith Award in 1998 and the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan, among the highest civilian awards in India, for his contributions to arts, literature, and cinema.

Overall, Girish Karnad's contributions to Indian literature, theatre, and cinema were profound and continue to inspire and influence artists and audiences in India and beyond with his thought-provoking plays, impactful performances, and cultural activism.

V. NAGAMANDALA

Rani, whose name means "queen" to her parents, marries a wealthy villager named Appanna, who is known by a common name. However, Appanna is a male-chauvinist who ignores Rani's desires and feelings, keeping her hidden and spending his nights with a concubine. Rani, desperate for Appanna's love, receives a love potion from a blind woman named Kurudavva. She plans to mix it with Appanna's food, but fearing its red color, she pours it on an anthill instead. Unexpectedly, a Cobra (Naga) drinks the potion and falls in love with Rani. The Cobra disguises itself as Appanna and sleeps with Rani at night, while Appanna remains unaware. Rani is unable to distinguish between Appanna's rude behavior during the day and the Cobra's caressing at night. Rani becomes pregnant, and Appanna is furious. He takes Rani to the village elders, who remain silent and do not protest Appanna's extramarital affair. The elders force Rani to prove her innocence by catching a hot red iron bar or a cobra from the anthill. Following the advice of the Cobra, Rani chooses to catch the cobra as her trial. To everyone's surprise, the cobra slides over Rani's shoulders and spreads its hood like an umbrella over her head. The village elders declare Rani a goddess, and Appanna is filled with emotion, realizing he has never slept with Rani. He begins to doubt his own sanity, feeling as though the whole world is conspiring against him. The story has three endings, and the author narrator considers the first ending, where Appanna begins to love Rani and forgets his concubine, to be a loose or unresolved conclusion.

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In Girish Karnad's play "Nagamandala," a plethora of profound themes are intricately explored, creating a rich and multi-layered storyline. One prominent theme that stands out is the examination of rigid gender roles and societal norms that prevail in rural Indian society. The play depicts how women are often confined and oppressed by traditional expectations and limitations imposed upon them by societal norms, shedding light on the struggles faced by women in a patriarchal society where their desires and ambitions are stifled, and they are expected to conform to societal expectations. Another significant theme that runs throughout the play is the complexities of love and desire. It vividly portrays the fulfillment and consequences of pursuing forbidden love, and the profound impact it can have on individuals and their surroundings. The play also delves into the consequences of unrequited love, jealousy, and greed, vividly showcasing the multifaceted nature of human emotions and the complexities of human relationships. Supernatural and magical elements are interwoven into the play, adding an air of mysticism and fantasy to the narrative.

In "Nagamandala," the concept of patriarchy refers to a societal system where men dominate and control the lives of women, which is depicted through the experiences of female characters in the play. Rani, a central female character, is portrayed as a victim of patriarchal oppression. As a young woman married to an older man, Appanna, Rani is confined to household duties and lacks personal freedom or agency. She is expected to conform to societal expectations of being a submissive wife, and her desires and aspirations are suppressed. The play also illustrates how patriarchy influences Rani's mother-in-law, Gowri, who upholds patriarchal norms and perpetuates the male-dominated system. Gowri, being an older woman, has internalized patriarchal values and enforces them upon Rani, further perpetuating the cycle of oppression. Additionally, the play explores how patriarchal beliefs impact the character of Appanna, who values societal norms and conventions over individual freedoms. Appanna's actions and decisions are guided by societal expectations of masculinity, and he exercises control over Rani in accordance with patriarchal norms. Through the interactions of these characters, "Nagamandala" portrays how patriarchal beliefs, practices, and power dynamics limit women's agency and autonomy, perpetuate gender inequality, and restrict their personal freedoms and choices. The play sheds light on the harmful effects of patriarchy on women's lives, relationships, and overall well-being.

VI. MAHESH DATTANI

Mahesh Dattani, a renowned playwright and filmmaker from India, is celebrated for his influential contributions to contemporary Indian theatre. Born on August 7, 1958, in Bangalore, Dattani's plays delve into social issues such as gender, sexuality, class, and religious intolerance, offering incisive explorations of human relationships and societal norms. Dattani's plays are characterized by nuanced characterizations, realistic dialogues, and compelling narratives. He fearlessly challenges societal norms and prejudices through his thought-provoking and socially relevant themes, often delving into the complexities of human emotions. His works are known for their boldness in addressing taboo topics and presenting diverse perspectives. Among Dattani's notable plays is "Final Solutions," first performed in 1993, which explores the themes of communalism and religious intolerance in India. It is considered a landmark in Indian theatre for its unflinching portrayal of the aftermath of the 1992-93 Bombay riots. "Tara," another notable play by Dattani, deals with homosexuality and societal prejudice. He has also written other prominent works such as "Dance like a Man," "Bravely Fought the Queen," "On a Muggy Night in Mumbai," and "Thirty Days in September."

Dattani's plays have been widely performed in India and internationally, earning him numerous awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for English Drama, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, and the Dina Nath Nadim Award. His work has been translated into multiple languages and has been lauded for its powerful portrayal of human emotions and societal issues. In addition to his work in theatre, Dattani has made a name for himself as a filmmaker. His films, such as "Mango Soufflé" and "Morning Raga," have been critically acclaimed for their unique storytelling and portrayal of complex human relationships. In summary, Mahesh Dattani is a highly acclaimed playwright and filmmaker known for his impactful contributions to Indian theatre. His plays are recognized for their exploration of social issues, bold themes, and realistic characterizations, and he has received widespread recognition for his significant contributions to contemporary Indian theatre. In summary, Mahesh Dattani is a highly acclaimed playwright and filmmaker who have made notable contributions to the field of contemporary Indian theatre. His plays are recognized for their incisive exploration of social issues, realistic portrayal of characters, and courageous themes, earning him numerous awards. Dattani's plays have been performed both in India and abroad, and his films have been praised for their distinctive storytelling. His work continues to leave a profound impact on the world of Indian theatre and cinema. Mahesh Dattani, a renowned Indian playwright, is known for his socially relevant plays that address sensitive topics like gender, sexuality, caste, religion, and social norms. Major themes found in Dattani's plays include identity and self-discovery, social injustice and oppression, family and relationships, sexuality and gender, tradition vs. modernity, communication and miscommunication, and human rights and freedom. Dattani's works often depict characters who struggle with questions of self-identity and societal expectations, challenging traditional notions of identity such as gender roles and sexual orientation.

His plays shed light on social injustice and oppression, critiquing oppressive societal structures and advocating for equality and justice, particularly for marginalized groups. Family and relationships are recurring themes in Dattani's plays, exploring the complexities of familial dynamics and the conflicts between personal desires and societal norms. Sexuality and gender are important themes in Dattani's works, addressing issues like homosexuality, gender identity, and the challenges faced by individuals who don't conform to traditional gender roles. He also delves into the tension between tradition and modernity, questioning and challenging traditional beliefs and practices, and advocating for individuals to reconcile their cultural heritage with their personal values. Communication and miscommunication are prominent themes in Dattani's plays, depicting how misunderstandings can lead to conflicts and complications in relationships. Human rights and freedom are also significant themes in Dattani's works, portraying characters that fight for their rights and challenge oppressive systems or societal norms. His plays emphasize the need for individuals to assert their rights and freedom, and to stand up against injustice and oppression. Overall, Mahesh Dattani's plays are known for their thought-provoking and socially relevant content, challenging traditional beliefs and societal norms, and urging readers and audiences to critically examine and question the world around them.

VII. DANCE LIKE A MEN

Throughout history, men have sought to exert their dominance over women, children, and other family members. This gender inequality persists today, as seen in Mahesh Dattani's play "Dance like a Man." In the play, Amritlal Parekh, the head of an Indian family, holds unquestionable power over his son Jairaj and daughter Ratna. He declares himself responsible for making important decisions for the family and upholds traditional gender roles, where men are the breadwinners and women are inferior. He forbids Jairaj from pursuing his passion for Bharatnatyam dance, equating it to prostitution and reinforcing the notion that femininity is synonymous with grace and beauty. Meanwhile, he allows Ratna to dance, perpetuating the idea that women are only good for certain roles. This demonstrates the unequal power and status of men and women in Indian society. The play also explores the consequences of gender conflict, as Jairaj is left feeling empty, spineless, and worthless due to societal expectations and his father's rigid beliefs. He blames his wife for taking away his self-esteem, revealing how gender inequality affects not just women but men as well. In "Tara," another play by Dattani, the discrimination against girl children is depicted, highlighting how the patriarchal mindset prioritizes male children over female children. This discrimination starts even before birth, with incidents of female feticide being common in society.

Dattani highlights the irony in how Amritlal Parekh equates dance with prostitution and prohibits Jairaj from dancing, while allowing Ratna to dance in his play. This suggests that men and women do not have equal power and status in Indian society. The play "Dance like a Man" portrays the perpetual clash between an individual's personal motives and the expectations of family, societal prejudice, and cultural norms. It successfully highlights the plight of marginalized women and depicts how discrimination against women starts even before birth, with incidents of female foeticide being common in society. Amritlal also manipulates Ratna into believing that Jairaj could never be as good at dancing as she is, reinforcing the idea that femininity is associated with grace and beauty while masculinity is associated with strength and dominance. This unequal power dynamic between men and women is highlighted in the play, as Jairaj blames Ratna for his lack of self-esteem and confidence, further emphasizing gender inequality. Dattani also explores the marginalization of women in society in his play "Tara," which depicts discrimination against girl children.

Overall, "Dance Like a Man" sheds light on the harsh reality of gender conflict and how societal expectations, cultural norms, and familial pressures can prevent individuals from pursuing their passions and achieving success. The play challenges the notion that men who are passionate about dance are considered inferior and emphasizes the importance of changing societal support for gender inequality. Through its portrayal of the struggles of the family members, the play highlights the importance of individuality and self-expression, and it encourages audiences to challenge patriarchal norms and support gender equality.

VIII. THE CONCLUSION

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property. The plays Naagmandala, Dance Like a Man, and Kanyadaan explore the theme of patriarchy in different ways. Naagmandala, written by Girish Karnad, is a play set in rural Karnataka, India. The play portrays the subjugation of women in a patriarchal society, where they are expected to fulfill their duties as wives and mothers, and are denied the freedom to make choices about their own lives. The protagonist Rani is forced to marry a man she does not love, and is later abandoned by her husband. She finds solace in a serpent, which transforms into a man and becomes her lover.

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The play highlights the oppression faced by women in a society that values male dominance and denies women the right to make choices about their own lives.

Dance Like a Man, written by Mahesh Dattani, is a play that explores the theme of patriarchy through the lens of the performing arts. The play tells the story of a family of Bharatanatyam dancers, where the father, Jairaj, is a traditionalist who believes that women should not perform in public. He forces his daughter Lata to give up her dreams of becoming a professional dancer, and instead marries her off to a man who is not supportive of her passion. The play highlights the struggle faced by women who are denied the opportunity to pursue their passions and dreams, and the role that patriarchy plays in perpetuating these inequalities.

Kanyadaan, written by Vijay Tendulkar, is a play that explores the theme of patriarchy through the institution of marriage. The play tells the story of a father who is determined to get his daughter married. The father in the play sees his daughter as a commodity that can be traded for a higher social status.

In conclusion, "Naagmandala," "Dance Like a Man," and "Kanyadaan" all explore the themes of patriarchy, tradition, and gender roles in Indian society. These plays portray patriarchy as a force that controls women's lives and denies them agency, often leading to violence and oppression. Through their depictions of these themes, these plays offer a powerful critique of patriarchy and its impact on women's lives.

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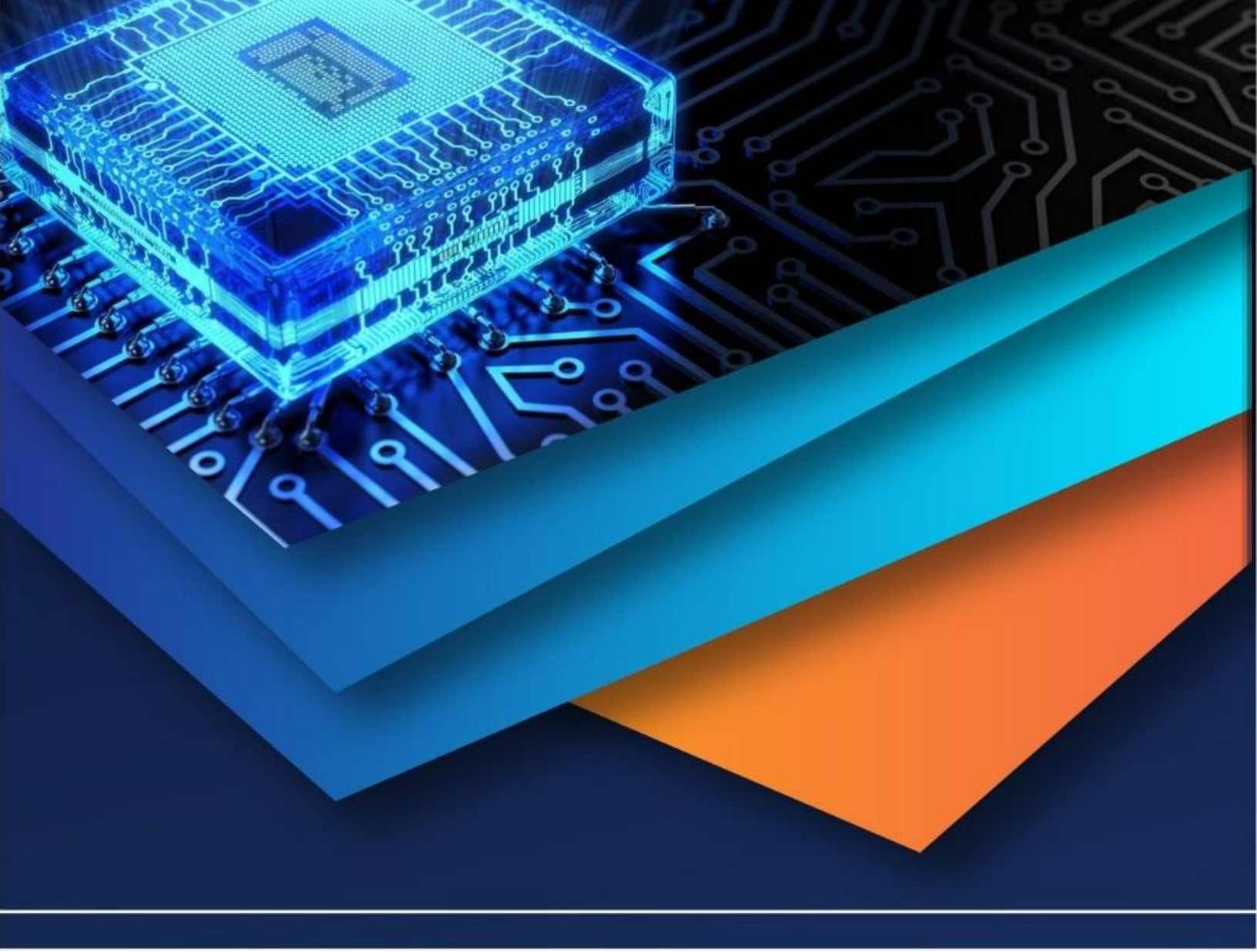

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