

A PERENNIAL QUEST FOR
POWER IN THE PLAYS
OF GIRISH KARNAD

VOLUME - I



Dr. Shibani Basu Dubey



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The eyes had seen some dream years back. Now this dream has been fulfilled in the shape of these two volumes of books. But how has the ethereal become solid? Innumerable is the springs of inspiration, which have given colours to my thoughts. Gratitude is a small word in return. but, this is the only means with which I can express my feelings.

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Dr. Shibani Basu Dubey

P R E F A C E

Literature, as a mirror of society, has always been an attempt to explore human perception. One such perception is that of power. When I sit back and ponder, I often think and recite the lines from "Chandi Stotra" imbibed from *Purannas*.

Ya Devi Sarve Bhooteshu, Shakti RoopenSansthita,

Namastasyaye, Namastasyaye, Namastasyaye

NamoNamah

The word "Shakti" strikes me again and again and I remain fascinated to it. As a student of literature, I am especially inclined towards drama as a genre. Girish Karnad, to me, is the most powerful dramatist who has portrayed various facets of human life, its varied dimension, and its variegated colours in the themes of his drama. That is why I chose his plays and to study them from the point of view of power struggle.

Be it muscle power or knowledge; political power or power in interpersonal relationships, power still remains at the centre stage. Who is more powerful? Often, we think that the most powerful person is the greatest. Under this illusion people struggle to acquire power and then struggle to retain power at any cost. Is power given to dominate and exploit or to liberate and empower people? Is power a master or a servant? Is it from within or outside the human person?

Human beings, at the zenith of its technological and scientific achievements need wisdom to comprehend the mystery of power. As Charle.E.Merriam says, "The new

world into which we are madly rushing, no single factor in life will be more important, than the composition and incidence of political power, and no task more urgent than the understanding and utilization of a force, whose mastery may mean light or darkness of individuals and for civilization". The relevance of the study on the concept of power is significant precisely because of the ambivalent nature of power. Power, is sought after by every leader, therefore it is vital to understand its positive and negative aspects so that we can make the best of the potential of power.

Ambition for power is one of the most important characteristics of mankind. Machiavelli says that this desire to reign is so powerful that it not only dominates the minds of those born with the expectation of the throne, but also that of those who have no such expectation. Hence political power becomes a thing of craving. In the contemporary world, the question of power is very important. All human relations and institutions depend on power.

I proceeded forth with the concept and my own personal belief that power is everywhere. There can be no difference between the personal power and the political power because personal is political. All human words, deeds, and actions are symbolic of a show and exhibition of the psychological quest for power only.

In the first chapter, I have dealt with the various concepts of power- its origin, its periphery of work, its manifestations and its motivations. The outcome is the various ideologies of Aristotle, Machiavelli, Marx, Foucault, Chanakya and Gandhi.

The second chapter deals with the history of power in literature. This chapter is simply an attempt to prove and establish that literature and power go together because every theme whether in poetry, drama, prose or fiction has the angle of 'power' in it.

From the third chapter up to the fifth I have tried to show and prove how the nine plays of Karnad which I have taken for study, depict this need and interest in power.

The sixth chapter is an effort to conclude the two volumes of this book with a maximum amount of satisfaction that the analysis has given and added a new dimension to the study of Karnad's drama. Here's submitting the Volumes for the kind perusal of the readers.

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