

## Gender Discrimination in Mahesh Dattani's *TARA*

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**Abstract:** -Mahesh Dattani writes plays in English. His plays address problems that develop in Indian contexts. He writes about marginalized groups like minorities, women, gay people, and transgender people. In this essay, I will investigate Tara by Mahesh Dattani's female child tragedy. Tara's situation is like that of numerous other sad Indian women. There are several challenges to raising a girl child in this traditional community. On the one hand, they learn how to be empowered by a decent education, monetary success, and individualism in society; on the other hand, our culture is unable to eliminate entrenched prejudices against them.

The third leg of a set of twins who are born with three legs receives blood flow from the newborn girl's torso in the play's scenario. The other twin had to make do with having just one leg. Only one of the twins could have two legs. the unshakable order to finish off the boy child by adding the third leg to his body. This choice was made because of gender inequality and unfairness towards young girls in our Indian society, not because of any medical reasons. Dattani is concerned about inequality and gender bias against young girls. The reason for this awful action is not that the girl is unable to survive in the cruel hands of society, but rather because of social mores, economic norms, and cultural factors. All these factors together make up an ideology in our culture that dictates how and where girls must live and die. This undesirable criterion results from the sacrifice of a girl's potential on the altar of gender, in which a woman's part is likewise remembered and unforgivable.

**Keywords:** - Gender Inequality, Injustice to Girl Child, Social System, Discrimination, Prejudice.

**Introduction:** -Despite having authored multiple plays in English, he comes from a background devoid of literary overtones. Some of these plays have been taken into consideration and are now taught in Indian and other colleges. Although he was educated in English along with his siblings, despite having Gujarati as his native tongue, he was able to acquire English as a second language. He joined his family's firm after working as a copywriter for an advertising agency and earning a master's degree in marketing and advertising management. Dattani creates plays that explore enthralling topics that are pertinent to modern culture. He focuses on topics that some of his forebears have addressed in their plays, such as gender inequality, child sexual abuse, patriarchy, and taboo subjects like same-gender attraction and the plight of eunuchs. Of course, he also writes about communalism, which is a source of tension between different castes, classes, and races.

This paper seeks to shed light on the difficulties faced by girls growing up in a chauvinistic society. Drama Tara by Dattani tackles the problem of gender discrimination in modern Indian society. The stereotypical image of a woman in a patriarchal society is holding a mirror up to her face. A woman's attractiveness and seductive appeal are treasured in a culture where men predominate. She holds up a mirror to remind herself of her youth, beauty, and sexual attractiveness since she is constantly concerned that it would deteriorate with time (Satwana Halder, 62).

Women have struggled with a wide range of issues ever since the beginning of civilization. They have been stereotyped as weak members of society and sex objects. They have been assigned several household chores to complete from sunrise to dusk. And regardless of whether they have a headache or a backache, they must do the work within the allotted time. The notion that "women enjoy their suffering" is "responsible for profound and far-reaching emotional and physical harm to girls," according to Paula Kaplan in her book *The Notion of Woman's Masochism* (1).

Boys have been given more chances to survive than girls. When given the option to pick between boys and females, boys are always preferred over girls. Men have long been considered superior to women in society. In Tara, Dattani masterfully illustrates how social conventions, patriarchal attitudes, and authoritarian behavior governed girls.

Tara has a better chance of living if she has two legs, but the patriarchal society favors a boy (Chandan) over a girl (Tara) in the absence of a property heir. Santwana Halder claims that in this society, a powerful politician struck a dubious agreement with a physician who had abandoned his or her vocation in favor of greater personal comfort. The girl is never genuinely the family's heir, so making any plans for her is useless. This is society again, where girl children are given an equal opportunity: the boy and the girl receive the same education, medical care, etc. (66).

Dattani is an accomplished and skilled dramatist who can help us recognize how deeply ingrained gender inequality is in society and how challenging it is to overcome. It is difficult to break the chains of prejudice against girls based on gender wherever they are born, live, and die since Rome cannot be built in a day. In addition to being a concept from modern civilization, it also dates back in time. The idea that men engage in gender discrimination is false since women also do it; they separate women from men. When the opportunity arises, they will also favor men over women.

Tara is from a middle-class, well-educated household. even though Tara could easily and comfortably survive with two legs because her body had a higher chance of living than Chandan's, they choose the boy while deciding between the conjoined twins despite their high regard for the boy in society due to their education. The social environment, however, was crucial to the surgical separation process. Because he owns a sizable property and requires an heir, Bharti's father, a respectable and wealthy politician, meddles in the choice of a son to succeed him.

The Patel family's painful experience with gender discrimination is due to the play's antagonist, Bharti's father, who never appears on stage. He pays Dr. Thakkar to do the treatment that benefits Chandan. The fact that he gave all his money to his grandson Chandan and nothing to Tara highlighted social issues about how boys are given the advantage and that male chauvinism is still alive and well. The idea that money is more influential than all other things is another truth that Dattani's Tara illustrates. Dr. Thakkar's choice to take a bribe in exchange for performing unethical surgery by refusing to amputate Tara's leg, which was attached to her body's blood circulation, was influenced by money. Although Chandan's third limb was still linked to him, it was soon amputated since it was unable to draw blood. Dattani's drama teaches us that a person without a position in society cannot be seen as remarkable. To "project grotesque images of everything that passes for normal in our world," K.G. Manikrao claims that his play wants to "reflect the malfunction of society but to act like freak mirrors in a funfair."

The norms and codes of behavior for girls are established by the society in which Tara lives. An example of one of these victims, Tara, is a girl who must sacrifice her abilities and intellect on the altar of gender. Her life has been offered as a sacrifice to gender. This practice has traditionally been used by women, and Tara is no exception. "Since the beginning of time, the male body has been used to comfort, refresh, and even amuse the female body. Further, it would not be incorrect to claim that the female body is also viewed as a tool for eradicating masculine flaws and abnormalities (Web Source). Crippling Tara completes Chandan. Tara has a malformation that is improved upon Chandan's. It is also sad to mention that no one would have dared to object when this evil work was being conducted.

Even though Tara's father, Mr. Patel, was solely opposed to it, he sat still as he awaited the start of the horrifying crime against a daughter whose only transgression was that she was a female. Tara was paying with her life the price of being a girl. Mr. Patel's repressed desire was also at play. How could he oppose it when he is formed of the same blood and flesh? The dictatorial, uncivilized, and oppositional Mr. Patel, who is also a devoted husband, remarks, "Maybe I'm expecting the worse. It might never occur because nothing is out of control. I must be concerned for her. Yes. Concerning my wife, I am concerned" (336).

Patel is the one who tells Tara and Chandan about the plot that Bharti and her father created. According to a scan, the girl was responsible for a substantial portion of the blood supply to the third limb. Your mum requested a second confirmation. The outcome was identical. The girl had a little greater probability than average of keeping the leg. Dr. Thakkar met with your mother and your grandfather in a secluded setting. I was not invited to attend. Your mother informed me of her choice

that evening. The strategy will be followed exactly. However, I found it hard to imagine that they would risk giving the boy both legs. Perhaps if I had objected more vehemently!

I tried to convince her that it was wrong and unethical—even the doctor would agree! I was assured that the doctor had consented. I did not learn about his plans to open the biggest nursing home in Bengaluru until much later. Three acres of prime real estate in the city's center have been purchased by him from the government. The political influence of your grandfather had been exploited. The surgery was completed a few days later. They quickly understood what a terrible mistake they had made. He had his leg amputated. A morsel of dead tissue that might have once been Tara. I-I had intended to share this with you both when you were older, but... (57–58).

The play's overall idea is encapsulated in the text extract above: Dr. Thakkar's avariciousness compels him to do this unethical job in need of money and three acres of land in the prime heart of Bangalore city to start his own nursing home. Bharti's full consent and desire to have a complete son. Tara's sudden death. All these things contributed to Tara's sudden death. In addition, Mr. Patel's response seemed passive, as if he were merely a bystander who dared to object to what was happening. Establishing himself as a gentleman and a loving and devoted father, he made every effort to avoid taking any action. The function of the doctor in society is also discussed by Dattani. Obtaining money, a doctor who is meant to be the God of Earth and whose job it is to save people's lives may conduct these kinds of crimes. Society will never forget Dr. Thakkar's gaffe and his Faustian deed with Bharti's father. The play's plot and Tara and Chandan's lives might have taken a different turn if Bharti's father had been convinced of the negative effects of their separation as desired. They might now be living happy lives after their surgical separation. However, in modern times, money is valued above all morals, ethical employment, and social norms. In totality, Tara was deprived of everything by society, Indian present social values of authoritarianism, male chauvinism, and having a male successor. A culture started the social idea that having a boy child would give the family more control. In society, men have traditionally held positions of power and authority. According to Tara, "The women looked after the cave while the men in the house were deciding whether they were going haunting" (328).

Here, Tara justifies the struggle of women who were kept inside the four walls to care for the needs of the entire family because they were thought to be only suitable for domestic duties. "She is of the highest importance" according to Virginia Woolf, "but practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is absent from history" (53). The middle-class society, which is supposed to be well-educated and has a respected reputation in society, has been exposed by Dattani. He is skilled at portraying the actual circumstances of females who have been living in a culture where they are treated with little respect or honor.

Roopa, Tara's neighbor, responds to Tara's inquiry about how the girls were treated in the Patels family by saying, "Since you persist, I will tell you. It will not be accurate. However, I have heard this. In the past, the Patels disliked having daughters as babies. They used to draw them in milk so they could claim that the woman choked on her milk because of dowry and such (349). Since Chandan was utterly innocent and uninformed when this deed was planned, Tara's death has had a significant impact on him.

If Chandan had known about it, Tara would not have had that thought. When Chandan realized his parents had made a mistake that had a severe effect on his life, he became furious. He left everything behind and went to London under the guise of Dan intending to write a play about his twin sister based on his memories of being alone there "in a bed-sitter in a seedy suburb of London, thousands of miles from home." Knowing that his sister Tara had not been treated fairly by society or nature, Chandan felt a shame that tormented his thoughts. Chandan was the only one who truly assisted Tara with her problems, although it seems that Tara had thought of everything in terms of him. On the other hand, it is he who is aware of Tara's pain. They would not have what they have now if it had been in his hands. Chandan is delaying attending college till Tara does.

Tara was born and raised in a contradictory world where women play no significant roles and, if they do, they are irrelevant. Regarding whence he got the inspiration, Dattani composed the Tara play. He said: "Well, basically, it started with reading an article in a medical journal about Siamese twins being separated. Of course, they were always of the same sex, and there was the thing about a fused leg, which had the quantities of left and right so there had to be some careful consideration as to which twin was supplying the blood to the leg.

Although that served as inspiration, I believe that by the time I had finished *Dance Like a Man*, I was ready to address the gender issue head-on, and that was a powerful metaphor. Once again, the play is misinterpreted, and people frequently pay attention to the play's medical specifics when they should not. It can be interpreted as a metaphor for the fact that people are created equally and share a lot more, and that when they are surgically separated, prejudice and cultural differences follow. However, on another level, it could also refer to the idea that people have both male and female selves, with the importance of one's gender being given a lower priority. Dattani clarifies that he favors masculine dominance over a female and that his plays are not "literature to be read," but rather "to be seen and heard."

His play *Tara* serves two purposes: first, it exposes the contemporary educated urban family that adheres to the conventional attitude of favoring anything masculine; second, it highlights the corruption that is pervasive in the bureaucratic society and the decline in medical ethics. The puritanical sensibility of the Indian audience is "embarrassed, irritated, and shocked" by certain of Dattani's play themes, according to Basavaraj Naikar (132). His courage, candor, and honesty in presenting these delicate subjects are commendable. More than anyone else, *Tara* affects Chandan on an emotional level. When Tara adds, "May we still be," they are as "two peas in a pot," and it is faultless. like we have always been. Inseparable. the way our lives began. Within one cozy womb, there are two lives and one body. till we were ejected. (325).

*Tara* is the tale of every girl born into modern Indian culture; it is not just the tale of Dattani's *Tara*. Every girl, just like *Tara*, is subjected to what was done to *Tara*. Even though females have excelled in every area of life, they continue to face discrimination due to their gender everywhere. They have reached the pinnacles of accomplishment, but they remain bound by the long-standing, deeply ingrained stereotype of gender discrimination. The most heartbreaking form of prejudice against girls is gender discrimination. They occasionally give themselves up and give in to their desire to see their brothers happy. Gender inequality is unquestionably a widespread problem that we see in the majority of Dattani's plays.

Due to gender bias, *Tara's* bright charm has been tainted by society. She is left to navigate all of society's terrible truths. Any girl's passion could be suffocated by several disappointments, but despite having encountered many challenges throughout her life, she still has a positive outlook on things. She feels happy just to be alive. She is trying to think of a wonderful way to be remembered by those who are like her. I will spend the rest of my life taking care of those...starving naked millions everyone talks about, she declares. I can create a company that will take care of everything, or I may follow Mother Teresa's example and give my life in service to a worthy cause. If I could, I would be overjoyed since it is what I desire (370). *Tara* revealed that even being disabled, a girl may sacrifice herself for the good of others. She makes a comparison between men and women and tells Chandan, "Women mature more quickly." We are more caring, intellectual, and sensitive people than creeps like you, she continued (51). *Tara* must endure the burden of having a physical disability her entire life since she is an innocent victim of society's unfairness. *Tara's* illness is revealed by Satwana Halder. "If *Tara* were a disabled girl like any other, her tale would be pitiful and elicit pity from people. However, *Tara's* situation is terrible because it is now known to her that her deformity was the result of a conspiracy and that her mother the person she has always loved the most and who has long professed care for her daughter participated in that scheme" (58).

Parents are the best guardians for their children, according to Dattani, but what happens if parents are complicit in a plan against their kids? The people who are supposed to be *Tara's* protectors and guardians—her mother, her maternal grandfather, and, of course, Mr. Patel—all take part in *Tara's* deception. *Tara* is crippled and denied all the good things in life due to Dr. Thakkar and the idea of society. In this instance, *Tara* has drawn a line since a boy youngster is involved. This play addresses the injustice committed in the name of constructing gender identities, according to G.J.V. Prasad, who notes that "this hierarchization and demarcation of roles does as much harm to men as it does to women" (141).

In *Tara*, Bharti, Mr. Patel, and Chandan were all filled with regret. Bharti started giggling as soon as she realized what she had done to *Tara*. Because of it, she was about to become agitated. It frequently happens that good people's choices will follow them for the rest of their lives. It includes Bharti. Since she sinned against *Tara*, she now experiences chronic schizophrenia. She contributed to *Tara's* early demise and took away her opportunity in life. She wants to shower her with her mother's

affection to absolve herself of her guilt. She wants Tara to receive the kidney donation that she wants to make. She became upset when Mr. Patel objected. As a result of her realization that her sin makes parenting stigmatized, she experiences a nervous breakdown and changes dramatically. Whatever it is, Tara receives her motherly affection when she says, "Tara! My adorable little lady. Observe her smile! Laugh, Tara. Laugh once more for me! Oh! Observe the glint in her eyes. My most lovely kid, you are (58). Tara has since grown close to her heart. Since discovering her disability, Tara has yearned for her two regular legs. Yes, Chandan," Bharti said, expressing Tara's helplessness as she tries to console herself and speaks to Chandan. People will put up with you. Except for her, the world will accept you! Oh, the suffering she will experience when she looks in the mirror at age 18 or 20. 30 is unimaginable. How about forty-five and fifty?" (349).

Dattani may want to draw attention to issues that are pervasive in society including gender discrimination, patriarchy, masculine desire for women, political power and wealth, greed, and superiority through Tara. A girl child who is complete is seen as less vulnerable than a guy child who is handicapped and unfinished. "Tara is sacrificed because she was a girl and had no right to have a better life than her brother," Anish Rajan observes astutely. The concept of a full girl kid and an incomplete boy child is so repugnant that a girl's sacrifice is more acceptable than a boy with a disability" (69).

If Dr. Thakkar had denied doing the procedure, as Bharti's father claimed, and if he had conducted his work morally and following medical findings, Tara and Chandan would have lived happily ever after. Everyone played a part in the uncomfortable atmosphere that had replaced the family's joy and harmony. The sociocultural system, according to Subhash Chandra, "is responsible for Tara's death," and "the beliefs, attitudes, and prejudices that are deeply ingrained in the collective cultural psyche become instrumental in taking Tara's life" (157). Every connection in Tara is destroyed by Dattani. Because only her brother Chandan is concerned for Tara, her mother Bharti eventually realized her error, but it was too late, and she had no further purpose for her attempts to demonstrate maternal affection.

**Conclusion:** -There is no society or family, and Tara has been treated unfairly by nature. Since the beginning of time, women have always been marginalized. Powerful Indian sage Manu once said, "A woman must never seek independence. In childhood, she must be dependent on her father; in youth, on her husband; her lord is dead, on her sons; if she has no sons, on the near relatives on those of her father; if has no paternal relatives, on the sovereign. The sentence "Dattani takes the family setting again and again and uses the family home as his locale and fragments them" (ix) would be a better way to conclude this paper. In Dattani's depiction of the Tara family, cultural beliefs play a part in the development of a scenario in which a girl's life is sacrificed on the altar of gender. Simply because she is a woman, she is slain.

Many women still do not have the option to choose their careers. Society makes regulations so that they can walk, communicate, and use their ability to draw. Society has physically divided Tara and Chandan, but their minds are one. Siamese twins Tara and Chandan have three legs and are linked at the hip. They were surgically separated because of Dr. Thakkar's unethical work for money and land in Bangalore's city core to build his nursing facility. They were surgically separated because of Dr. Thakkar's unethical work for money and land in Bangalore's city core to build his nursing facility. He took them apart surgically and removed two of Chandan's legs from his body, which quickly died from a lack of blood. Dattani falls short of creating an equitable setting in Tara where women can live contentedly.

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