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12

BHARATA DURDASHA

The name of Bhartendu Harishchandra is well known in Hindi drama literature. Through the play Bharata Durdasha written by him, we can assess the situation of India in the British Empire for ourselves. In Bharata Durdasha, Bharatendu describes in an entertaining manner the exploitative policy of the British during their rule and the internal vices prevailing in India. Like Pratik plays, he also presents the reasons responsible for India's plight in the characters and through them he tries to bring India's plight in front of the audience.

While studying the Bharata Durdasha, it is very important for us to understand the contemporary India. This play was written by Bharatendu in 1875, hence the plight of India should be assessed in the context of this time period. In this lesson we will try to know and understand the drama Bharata Durdasha. How Bhartendu has created the story of Bharata Durdasha, this is also an interesting topic.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, you-

- know about Bharatendu, the author of Bharat Durdasha;
- know about the story of Bharat Durdasha;
- know about the characters of Bharat Durdasha; and
- know about the writing style of Bharat Durdasha.

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12.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF HARISHCHANDRA

Bharatendu Harishchandra, born in Kashi in 1850, has given a new dimension to Hindi theatrical literature in just 35 years of age. Due to his contribution, he is considered the father of modern plays in Hindi literature. Bharatendu Harishchandra wrote works in both Brajhasha and Khadi Boli. He has been active not only in drama but also in writing essays and thoughts. Bharatendu inspired many playwrights to write with his writing style. That is why the period from 1850 AD to 1900 AD is known as Bharatendu era. Bharatendu also gets the credit for starting drama in the Hindi region. As a reaction to Parsi theatre, he initiated modern theatre. Today we see its developed form. For him, theater was not just a means of entertainment but also a medium of social consciousness. He wrote plays himself and also acted in them. While starting theatre, he also started many theater institutions.

Bharatendu's Plays

Bharatendu wrote both original and translated plays. Among his original plays, he wrote original plays like 'Vediki hinsha Hinsha Na Bhavati, Satya Harishchandra, Prem Yogini, Vishasya Vishamoushadham, Chandravali, Bharat Durdasha, Bharat Janani, Neeldevi and Sati Pratap'. Apart from this, he has also translated Sanskrit and Bengali plays like Vidyasundar, Ratnavali, Pakhand Vidamban, Dhananjayvijay, Mudrarakshas and Karpur Manjari. He has also translated Shakespeare's famous play 'Merchant of Venice' in the name of 'Durlabha Bandhu'.

Bharatendu's Concept of Theater

Bharatendu Harishchandra's Rang Sanskar is a fusion of Sanskrit, English and Bengali dramatic literature. Bharatendu, influenced by Indian theatrical tradition and folk plays, creates a new twist in the creation of drama and presents the concept of new modern theater useful for the society. Bharatendu made social issues his base and made continuous efforts for social cultural awareness. He has tried to make Indians aware through humor and satire through skits and plays.

12.2 MAIN CHARACTERS OF BHARATA DURDASHA

Bharata Durdasha is written in 1875 AD. All its characters are symbolic. Bharatendu has created characters responsible for the plight of India. If we study this play of his, we are reminded of Shri Krishna Mishra's play 'Prabodachandrodaya'. The list of characters is as follows: -

**Notes**

1. Bharata:- Bharatvarsha
2. Nirrlajjata :- Shameless behavior prevalent in the then society.
3. Asha:- Hope of freedom from misery
4. Bharat Durdaiv:- One who brings bad luck to India.
5. Satyanashi Faujdar:- One who destroys everything
6. Roga:- Tendency like exorcism without getting the disease treated.
7. Alasya:- Lazy tendency
8. Madira:- Propensity to consume alcohol etc.
9. Andhakara:- Darkness spread due to ignorance
10. Sabhapati
11. Six civilized
 - ❖ One Bengali
 - ❖ One Maharashtrian
 - ❖ Editor
 - ❖ Poet
 - ❖ Two Desi Mahashya
12. Disloyalty Police
13. Bharata Bhagya:- India's destiny

The character Bharat enters the second part of the play. Bharat is a symbol of contemporary India. Through the dialogue on Bharat, it is revealed how the British traders took over the entire country in the name of trade. He discusses the Mahabharata character Duryodhana and calls him brave and excellent. After all, how did the Indians hand over such a huge country to the British? He raises questions on the ability, knowledge, civilization, generosity and steadfastness of Indians and pleads to save themselves. He prays to God to free himself from this situation.

Bharat Durdaiv has been shown by Bharatendu in a cruel form, half Christian, half Muslim and with a naked sword in his hand. Bharatendu also has his own meaning behind the design of this character. He provides such costumes to Bharat Durdaiva to

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show the subjugation in a dramatic form. On one hand he praises the British rule and on the other hand he also opposes it. In fact, the historical environment of that period was also similar in which the Indian class both praised and opposed the British. Bharatendu takes a dig at this two-faced behaviour.

There are many warriors in the army of Bharat Durdaiva. Laziness, religion, drought, excessive rains, priests, courts, disease, alcohol, darkness etc. are enough in themselves to make India miserable. There is also an act in the play in which he has used real characters instead of symbols. For example, in the issue of Sabhapati and six Civilized, through the representatives of these intelligentsia, he attacks the intellectual class of the then Indian society because such people only make claims but in reality their failure is causing the plight of India.

Bharat Bhagya is Bharat's friend and seeing the plight of India, he feels like committing suicide. He also tries to wake up Bharat several times but it has no effect on Bharat and ultimately Bharat loses his fate and embraces death. It is clear from the names of these characters that Bharatendu Harishchandra has portrayed the social, cultural and religious distortions in India in this play.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.1**

1. Who is the father of modern Hindi plays?
2. Which are the original plays written by Bharatendu?
3. When was Bharat Durdasha written?
4. What is the basic basis of the story of Bharat Durdasha?
5. What strategy has been adopted to portray the characters in Bharat Durdasha?
6. Who are the main characters of Bharata Durdasha?

12.3 PLOT OF THE BHARATA DURDASHA

The basic plot of the play Bharat Durdasha is Bharatendu's thoughts arising from the chaos, addiction and exploitative policies prevalent in contemporary India. In the original story, Bharata Durdaiv attacks on Bharata with his army and makes him helpless. At last Bharat Bhagya commits suicide. Through symbolic characters, Bharatendu tries to make Indians aware of the compassionate condition of dependent Bharata and tries to awaken love and cultural consciousness for their nation in them. He has written this

story in six acts which are as follows-

Act-1

In the first act, a Yogi enters the stage and starts singing Lavani. With the help of this singing he mentions the ancient stories of glory of India. By remembering Buddha, Harishchandra, Ram, Yudhishtira, Krishna, Arjun, Bhima and Karna etc., he brings India's past in front of the audience. He also communicates about the current plight of India. He says that now I cannot bear to see this condition of Bharata. In that period, along with modernisation, there was plunder of paddy of the Indian people. In this act, Bharatendu informs the audience about the current plight of Bharata with the help of singing.

Act-2

In the second act, broken temples, crows, roaming dogs and jackals, scattered bones are seen. Bharat comes on stage and expresses his grief. He says that the country whose people used to die for their motherland, what is the plight of the people there today? We had thought that after the British rule, we would entertain our sad minds by reading books and live a happy life. But here too we are disappointed. At the end of the act, he tries to remember God but is unable to and faints out of fear. Then Nirlajata and Asha (shamelessness and hope) come and take India with them.

Act-3

In the third act, an army camp is visible. Bharata Durdaiva arrives in India. He very beautifully presents the complete picture of the plight of Bharata. He describes the faults of the British rule in a poetic manner. Famine, inflation, disease, drought, hatred, plague etc. are also addressed. The Satyanasha, Faujadara of Bharata Durdaiva comes. He also praises himself. After this, the internal defects of India have been described in terms of soldiers, in which the first place is Dharma (religion), behind which Bharata has deteriorated a lot, abundance of differences of opinion, mutual tussle in the caste system, prohibition of child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, marriage in old age, polygamy and prohibition of sea travel (overseas travel) have greatly helped the plight of Bharata. It has been mentioned that despite having crores of Gods and Goddesses, Hindus still worship Pira and Ghazi Miyan, and Hindu people, while leaving after offering Namaz, get their children exorcised by Muslims. After this comes the turn of Santosh and Begari (satisfaction and forced labor). Earn a little, eat a little, Santosham Param Sukham, this thing has been like a policy in this country. In India, managing bread and pulses is the ultimate effort here. In this way, Bharatendu describes the political, social and religious reasons of Bharata in this act.



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Act- 4

In the fourth act, Bharata Durdaiva sends Alasya, Roga, Madira and Andhakara (laziness, disease, alcohol and darkness) to Bharata. Roga praises himself and laughs at the stupidity of the Indian people. He says that in Bharata, people lose their lives due to lack of treatment for their diseases. Vaidya Shastra is not progressive and due to this the number of people is increasing in India. There is no dearth of opium eaters and alcohol drinkers in India. Alasya (Laziness) resides in it. After this the Andhakara (darkness) in the form of ignorance comes on the stage and is sent to Bharata. He says in his dialogues that Bharata is a lover of ignorance. He considers education, study and teaching only as a means of livelihood and through this system the young men who have done B.A., M.A., considering themselves to be great scholars, consider it an insult to go into any profession. We get this complete description in the fourth act.

Act-5

In the fifth act, there is a scene of a meeting in which there is a Sabhapati (chairman) and 6 civilized members. Of these, one is Bengali, one is Marathi, two are Swadeshi, one is a poet and one is a letter editor. The basic objective of the meeting is to stop the rise of Bharata Durdaiva in Bharata. In this meeting, the Bengali culture gives advice to save Bharat from Bharata Durdaiva by creating chaos in a very humorous manner. The second solution he gives is to bridge the Suez Canal with Pisan. The poet wants to protect himself by becoming a heroine and pretending to be like the British. The editor continues to praise his speculations. The Maharashtrian preaches to increase the machine business by wearing civilized indigenous clothes and creating public institutions. The desi civilized person is unable to tell anything and only makes fun of others by showing flattery and love. But it also draws people's attention towards the progress of indigenous knowledge, unity and art teaching. At this moment the disloyalty police come and take them all away.

Act-6

Bharat Bhagya arrives at the beginning of the sixth act and laments pitifully about India's ancient historical glory and present condition. There was a time when India was the center of the whole world and no country was able to match it, but I don't know what happened that India buried itself in the dust. Despite being tainted by the stigmas of the world like slavery, jealousy, hatred, it has not yet been erased. It is better for such a powerless country to disappear forever. Thus, lamenting the present condition, Bharat Bhagya commits suicide and with this the play ends.

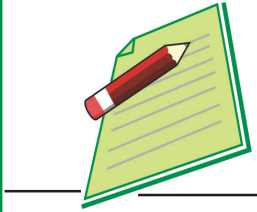
**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.2**

1. What does Yogi do in the first act of Bharata Durdasha?
2. How many total acts are there in Bharata Durdasha?
3. Which internal factors are responsible for India's plight?
4. Whom does Durdaiva (misfortune) send to attack India in the fourth act?
5. In which acts is the scene of the meeting?
6. What happens in the end?

12.4 WRITING STYLE OF BHARATA DURDASHA

Bharatendu himself was a theater artist and used to act in plays. He established several drama companies and through them attracted the interest of actors towards literary values. The plays written by Bharatendu have been done keeping theater staging in mind. At the time when Bharatendu was writing plays, he was finding the Sanskrit theater form incomplete to express the times, western theater was also not complete to express the indigenous sentiments, hence Bharatendu took the help of folk theater forms. However, occasionally he is also seen using elements of Sanskrit drama and Western drama. The time for which Bharatendu was writing the play was the time of the British Raj. India was struggling to regain its lost independence and social and cultural consciousness. In such a situation, while making his plays interesting, Bharatendu also included elements of entertainment. He is not careless even in the use of songs and ghazals.

Especially in the context of the play 'Bharat Durdasha', he creates the structure of the play by realistically portraying the reasons that are weakening India. If we look carefully at the dialogues of the play Bharat Durdasha, Bharatendu is seen expressing his views on many important events of that time. Due to the use of symbolic style in this play, there seems to be some lack in the struggle of the characters but Bharatendu fulfills that lack through songs and colloquial language. There is neither a Sutradhar nor any Bharatavakya in this play. The ending is tragic in which India commits suicide. Bharatendu was a strong advocate of a theater which was contemporary and talked about modernity. The importance of Bharatendu becomes more important because this vision of Bharatendu has been adopted by other playwrights also. Not only in Bharata Durdasha, Bharatendu incorporates the ideas of modernity in all his plays, but in Bharata Durdasha, this modernity comes out even more vocally.



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**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.3**

1. What was the concept of theater of Bharatendu?
2. What was the specialty of Bharatendu's contemporary society?
3. What is the reason for lack of character in Bharata Durdasha?

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT**

- Bharatendu Harishchandra has given a new dimension to Hindi theatrical literature in only the age of 35. Due to his contribution, he is considered the father of modern plays in Hindi literature.
- The play Bharata Durdasha was written by Bharatendu in 1875 AD.
- Bharatendu's original plays are - Vediki Hinsa Hinsa Na Bhavati, Satya Harishchandra, Prem Yogini, Vishasya Vishmaushadham, Chandravali, Bharata Durdasha, Bharata Janani, Neeldevi and Satipratap etc.
- He has tried to make Indians aware through humor and satire through skits and plays.
- Bharatendu has influenced many playwrights with his writing style. That is why the period from 1850 AD to 1900 AD is known as the Bharatendu era.
- Bharatendu Harishchandra's theater style is a mixture of Sanskrit, English and Bengali dramatic literature.
- The basic plot of the play Bharata Durdasha is Bharatendu's thoughts arising from the chaos, addiction and exploitative policies prevalent in contemporary India.
- Bharata Durdasha is a six-act play.
- In the original story, Durdaiva attacks on Bharata with its army and makes it helpless. At last Bharata Bhagya commits suicide.
- Through symbolic characters, Bharatendu has made the Indians aware of the pitiful condition of dependent India.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. What was theatrical consciousness of Bharatendu Harishchandra?

2. What is the basic story of Bharata Durdasha?
3. Write about the characteristics of Bharata Durdasha?
4. Write about symbolism in the Bharata Durdasha?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

12.1

1. Bharatendu Harijchandra
2. Vediki Hinsha Hins na Bhavati, Satya Harishchandra, Prem Yogini, Vishasya Vishamoushadham, Chandravali, Bharat Durdasha, Bharat Janani, Neeldevi and Satipratap etc.
3. In the year 1875
4. The plight of contemporary India
5. Symbolic
6. Bharata, Bharata Durdaiva, Roga, Alasya, Andhakara, Nirlajjata, Asha aur Bharata Bhagya (disease, laziness, darkness, shamelessness and hope, Bharatbhagya) etc.

12.2

1. With the help of his lavani singing, he describes the ancient glorious history and present condition of India.
2. Six acts
3. Many problems like abundance of differences of opinion, mutual conflict in the caste system, prohibition of child marriage, widow remarriage, old age marriage, polygamy and prohibition of sea travel.
4. Alasya, Roga, Madira and Andhakara (Laziness, disease, alcohol and darkness) etc.
5. The scene of the meeting is in the fifth act.
6. The play ends tragically with the suicide of Bharat Bhagya.

12.3

1. Modern
2. Struggling for independence and social and cultural consciousness
3. Use of symbolic style



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MODULE -5

Theatre: Technique and Design

In this module, learners have been introduced to theater techniques and design –

- 13. Rangmanch: Introduction and Types
- 14. Theatrical Music