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### MAHESH DATTANI'S ON A MUGGY NIGHT IN MUMBAI- UNMASKING THE GAYS' ISSUES

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#### ABSTRACT

Making a thing invisible resides in denying the thing any existence. To avoid talking about anything is to invisibilize it. Homosexuality is a major problem that threatens the fabric of our multicultural country like India. All are leading life as they expect but LGBT people undergo a lot of issues. Sex has been the vital part in life. Among LGBT, gays basically men face problems. A man having love and affection towards another man is seen as the act of inhuman. Love between man and woman is considered as the perfect one to lead life. A man can't reveal himself as a gay because the society is not ready to hold it up. It is beyond the question whether the society would accept the gays. Being a man, everyone would expect to have heterosexual life. But on the contrary to this, gays are caught between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Many have considered the true love between gays as something obnoxious and disgusting one. *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* is the first Indian play boldly bringing out the subjects of homosexuality. The dramatist is the one who brings the humans from the periphery level to the center of the universe. The presenter goes to cull out the mindset of gays, their longings and their attitudes in the paper.

#### KEY WORDS:

Homosexuality, LGBT, Heterosexuality

#### INTRODUCTION

Gays are just seen as subjects to exclusion and isolation. In the play *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* Kamlesh and Prakash alias Ed are ardent lover. Kamlesh is quite different from Prakash who is not ashamed of being a homosexual and is very honest about it but on the contrary to this Ed is ashamed to have that type of relationship publicly. Prakash tries to have his own identification as heterosexual since he is physically man but he thinks that if he is found to be a gay, his identification in the society will be torn into pieces. Homosexual relations are looked down upon by the majority. Mahesh Dattani clearly brings the light to the society that inner and outer struggle of gays. Dattani by

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having the gays issue in his black and white, he proves the words said by F. Scott Fitzgerald as "You don't write because you want to say something but you write because you have got something to say".

Being a gay is not a sinful attitude rather it is a change in feeling. In order to safeguard his identity, he falls in love with Kiran, Kamlesh's sister. The fact is that he wants to keep in touch with Kamlesh through Kiran so that nobody suspects his identity. He says, "Nobody would know. Nobody would care...! I'll take care of Kiran. And you take care of me" (Collected plays P-105). He wants to pretend himself as heterosexual but still he likes to be in the part of Kamlesh. Here it could be seen clearly that though he moves towards the heterosexuality but still he likes homosexuality but the fear of society and his identification process push him behind from the true lover Kamlesh. In many cases, homosexuality may exist side by side with heterosexuality. If they hide their true self, act like heterosexuals and get married, it will result in many problems. The heterosexuals do not love their wife, because they love their friend of their own sex

They can do the things beyond our thinking to maintain their relationship as we see that Kamlesh marry Kiran to maintain his homosexual relationship with Kiran's brother who is in relation becomes brother in law to him. He sees no future in open gay relationship. He does not want himself to be branded publically as a gay. He defends himself of his intentions of pretending 'straight' in the arguments in the party when he says,

Look around you. Look outside... There are real men and women out there. You have to see them to know what I mean. But you don't want to. You don't want to look at the world outside this- this den of yours. All of you want to live in your own little bubble. (Dattani, Mahesh. p-99.)

When a boy in the teenage tends to look for boys, he suddenly goes to the psychiatrist and tries to know the reasons. When he comes to know that he is a gay, his heart may get broken. The person may fear for his family and society. But they never think of themselves. Even the psychiatrists would give them a piece of advice that 'being a man you have to concentrate on girls and get involved into heterosexuality part'. As Foucault suggests with reference to "the techniques of the self", psychoanalysis should also open up spaces for allowing a person to be what he/she chooses to be" (119)

Many fail to understand them and gays are feeling like anything as if they are unfit for life. In India every gay man is pretending as heterosexual. If they try to fulfill their longings to be gay, it will damage their identities and recognition in the society which might disapprove such a relationship and promotes marriage between heterosexual. A man who is heterosexual and unable to give birth to the child is seen something different in our country. Then being a gay in the country would go beyond the question. The society is still indifferent to LGBT people and the society fails to cuddle them as they are also one among them and not as aliens.

The presenter has made a three month study by facebook in the context of gay people and to know their mindsets. There are a few divisions as bottom, top and versatile in having a gay relationship. It depends upon their feelings and many married people tend to have relationship with gays as bisexuals. Many gays are using fake names, fake photos and in person they show their real image. The main reason for having fake things in their life is to safeguard their identification as men. In the play Prakash fails to understand that his feelings are more important. He decides to lead his life for the society by wearing a mask as heterosexual but he himself forces into it. Kamlesh's feeling moves to

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Sharad who flexes his gay identity boldly. He said that "Let the world know that you exist honey ,if you flaunt , you have got it "(CP 70)

It is not Prakash who goes away from Kamlesh, the society and the fear of society make him think that identification is more important than anything and being a gay is considered to be somewhat inhuman. For every aspect of life the society stands behind. Kamlesh feels terribly bad when his true love flown. Sharad appears to believe in internal hormonal imbalance for the desire of his friends including him (60).

Kamlesh is sincerely caught up into the frustration and anger after the betrayal of Prakash. Though he lives with Sharad, he is unable to forget Prakash. But he has sacrificed his feelings for his sister. At the same time, he is not able to love Sharad. It is understood in the following conversation between Sharad and Kamlesh.

Kamlesh : I wanted to love you. I tried for a whole year.

Sharad : But you couldn't

Kamlesh : I do love you.

Sharad : Oh! Spare me the lies! You could never love anyone because you are still in love with Prakash. (CP 56)

It shows that the homosexuals have strong bond of love and affection like heterosexual. At the same time, it is difficult to find a life partner easily in India, because the established notions of love and marriage of our society only permit heterosexuals. In this play Sharad Justifies Jeremy Seabrook's notion.

*Becoming a gay or rather becoming aware of being gay is an organic process. Mere men in India are seeing themselves and their lives reflected in this idea and the individual testimonies often give a hint of the evolution within people's lives of that consciousness ( Qtd in Shahani 219)*

Sharad, being a good person he asked Kamlesh to get rid of his mind but the reply of Kamlesh made the readers to understand the pain and agony that he undergoes every day.

*Kamlesh: I can't! I tried! I can't (CP 55)*

Many fail to control their sexual desire. When the play opens Kamlesh is having an intercourse with a security. This aspect makes the reader understand that a man can fulfill his sexual desire when he is in need of it. But he has chosen a person who is economically poor and who does it for money purpose. Sex is between two where each one has to trust. No one wishes to be a gay but it is a kind of change in human body that the world must understand. When Kamlesh needs it, he seeks a person who can fulfill his desire.

*There are two men in the bedroom. Kamlesh in his dressing room  
Smoking cigarette, watching the other man dressing in Khaki uniform  
.....takes out his wallet and offers a few hundred rupees to the guard. The guard  
pockets the money, makes a salaam to Kamlesh and Steps out of the bedroom into  
the living room. (CP 49)*

The words like Khaki uniform, hundred rupees symbolizing the socially inferior classes chosen by the upper class in order to fulfill the needs. The note of the play might be , to some extent, revealed to the readers from the following conversation:

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Deepali : If you were a woman, we would be in love.

Kamlesh : If you were a man, we would be in love.

Deepali : If we were heterosexual, we would be married. (65)

Evidently, Kamlesh is a gay and Deepali is a lesbian. Their conversation indicates that only heterosexual marriage is accepted in the Indian society and that both of them are in search of companions, ready to reciprocate their love. Dattani wants to convey is that love between persons of same sex is a reality that should be given its due recognition because it is as natural as heterosexual love between two consenting adults.

Gay and lesbian movement all over the world has caught the attention of people in general into thinking on the issue seriously. President and Founder of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, Matt Slick feels his concern to write on the subject as:

Homosexuals want others in society to accept them as normal people with normal sexual behavior patterns. They are working hard to change moral, social, and political opinion to be more in line with what they want. They are not content to be by themselves. They want others to accept them as a philosophically, morally, and ideologically valid. They want to change the opinions of people. In short, they want to change society. Therefore, it is necessary to write about something that can so drastically affect the moral fabric of this country (Matt Slick. CARM).

Lesbian, gays, bisexuals and transgender face many issues in the world where mostly man must be expected to have manliness and other stereotypical notes of men. Men are given space in the world where they enjoy themselves. Gays expect the society to love, approach and see them as one among them. It is not their own wish to be. But change lies in the inner part of the life.

### **CONCLUSION:**

"To be or not to be" has been the status of gays. Each and every second they die by heart and feeling. When someone accepts them, they get life out of death otherwise they live like scarecrow. They long for true friendship and love. Gays must be very careful when a bisexual person approaches them for sex from safeguarding themselves like getting away from disease and other things. When someone comes to know that the person is a gay, sometimes they torture whenever they need to fulfill their desire. They face many but a few could be said. Kamlesh goes away from true love for the sake of his identification where he sees his life as a primary one but Kamlesh longs for true love. The main reasons for these issues could be unaware of understanding the world. Gays are seen as objects or laughing stock devils. This attitude must be changed and gays have to be bold enough to understand the world and they have to plan for the day to cheer them up. The community of homosexual needs some kind of recognition and they are craving for their identity as a member of the society whom they are actually living in the margin of the society. In this innovative way, Dattani has tried to bring in the center of the society through his play. Being indifferent towards others is just inhuman. Let us all try to keep them with us to spread humanity in the world of life.

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