

# Unraveling the Complexities of Power: Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* and the Interplay of History, Politics, and Faith

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**Abstract** – This research paper treats Girish Karnad's 'Tughlaq' as a chronicled play. 'Tughlaq' by Girish Karnad is a great playwright in Indian English. The play centers around the chronicled character of Muhammad Tughlaq in the fourteenth century. In the play, Karnad manages the history of that time. He was extremely impressed by Tughlaq's story. The play is profoundly mind-boggling and can very easily be seen and interpreted from a range of points of view. Tughlaq is clearly a chronicled play with a mixture of truth and fiction in his account. Karnad looked deeply at the facts associated with Muhammad Tughlaq before writing 'Tughlaq.' Reciprocal to the role of playwrights as interpreters was their job as experts, scholars and analysts. Their perception in the scholarly world can be credited with their dynamic inclusion in the plan as well as the verbalization of the theater's ideas and strategies. They had concrete and independently specific ideas of language, sensational strategies, the craft of depiction and execution, which transformed the site into a systematized craftsmanship and a national social establishment.

**Keywords-** Tughlaq, Girish Karnad, Ain-ul-Mulk, Historical, Contemporary Indian Dramatists

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## INTRODUCTION

Tughlaq is a 1964 Indian Kannada language play written by Girish Karnad. The 13 scene play is set during the reign of the Tughlaq canister of Muhammad[1-2]. It was first conducted in Urdu in 1966 as an undergraduate program at the National School of Drama. More widely, it was structured in Purana Qila, Delhi, in 1972. It was established in Mumbai in 1970 in English. Tughlaq, a 13-scene play composed by Girish Karnad, a fourteenth-century Turko-Indian ruler, is both a chronicled play and a discourse on contemporary legislative issues of the 1960s[3]. The Times of India notes: "In the novel, the narrator, Tughlaq, is depicted as possessing exceptional thoughts and a tremendous dream, but his reign was a wretched failure. He started his term with the enormous goals of taking India together, but he declined to chaos and his kingdom[4]. The contemporary historians' emphasis on mass exodus, which Girish Karnad also presents in Tughlaq, is not correct. In fact the upper classes comprising nobles, courtiers, sheikhs, ulema and the elite were shifted to Daultabad[5]. The general Hindu public remained unaffected by this project. In order to prove that Sultan Tughlaq was a devil, Karnad greatly alters the historical facts of the rebellion of Ain-ul-Mulk[6]. Karnad makes Tughlaq weak. So this play at last

considers a classic play and a regarded as a famous historical play.

Girish Karnad closely follows historical sources in this respect. In the opening scene, the old man signifies the orthodox clerical class, vehemently opposed to Tughlaq's liberal and rational initiatives. He says, It's an insult to Islam. The young man who defends the liberal attitude of the Sultan appreciates his devotion to Islam, which has also been mentioned in the aforesaid words of Ibn-i-Buttuta[7]. He said you're practicing five times a day, because that's the rule, and if you violate that, you'd have the police on your back. Could you remember an earlier Pharaoh, in whose time people read the Koran in the streets as they do now?"Karnad continues the history of making Tughlaq accused of parricide and fratricide. The third man in the first scene learned that the Sultan was guilty of killing his father and brother. Girish Karnad adroitly employs historical evidence about Tughlaq's rash decision to change the capital from Delhi to Daultabad. It is a turning point in his carrier and it causes inexpressible suffering to the common people. Historical evidence also shows that Tughlaq has taken a dramatic step towards shifting capital to efficient administrative control of the south.

## MAJOR WORKS

Girish Karnad's success in the area of contemporary theater bears witness to the fact that Indian theater has revitalized itself through the use of imaginative models. His plays are a discovery that only by returning to its roots can Indian theater gain significant success. His plays are an intriguing combination of the classical and modern elements of the Indian theater. He borrows theatrical techniques both from the Sanskrit and the folk theatres of India. His plays are often considered to be an important part of Indian English literature, the consensus being that he himself has translated these plays in to English. Karnad, whose mother tongue was Konkani, wrote almost all his plays in Kannada, which was a second language to him. The English translations of his plays are considered by many to be far better in terms of literary merit than the Kannada originals. Another interesting aspect of Karnad's plays is that they do not directly base themselves on the original versions of a folk tale or a legend. They quite often develop out of a distinct and identifiable English translation of the original. In his preface to his *Naga-Mandala*, for instance, Karnad argues that the play is based on two oral tales from Karnataka, which I first heard from Professor A.K.Ramanujan.

*Yayati* (1961) is a play regarding the King of Chandravamshi in the Mahabharata, who traded his decrepitude with the youth of his youngest son to fend off the plague of premature old age. The play demonstrates his eclecticism in stealing components from playwrights such as Jean Anouilh, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Eugene O'Neill. This play has founded Karnad as a popular playwright, allowing use of the magical framework that is so central to his works. The play attracted the attention of many readers when it first appeared in Kannada. *Hayavadana* (1971) marked another significant achievement in his career as a playwright. The play is remarkable not just to Karnad's theatrical endeavours, but also to the new directions that post-independence Indian theatre was taking in around that time. It explores the question of the efficacy of revitalizing indigenous performance genres for a supposedly modern expression. It also marked the beginning of the genre in urban people's art, which makes the use of Yakshagan's showy and performative stereotypes, such as stock characters, music, dance, masks, and talking dolls. Play revolves around the story taken from the Kathasaritasagara, centered around the change of heads[8]. The play raises a number of important issues about personality and desire. Karnad's *Nagamandala* (1988) is often said to have rehashed a huge number of these thoughts. The play begins with a prologue where a failed playwright is cursed with death, because he has sent so many people to sleep in the theatre, the playwright himself is helped to stay awake by Story personified, who recounts to him the exciting narrative of a cobra and a married woman. The newly-wed Rani is ignored by her husband, Appanna, who locks her in the house.

King Cobra falls in love with her and visits her each night under the guise of her husband. Knowing this, her husband requests her to verify her innocence by holding her hands in the ant-hill. She emerges unscathed in the process and is raised to the status of a village goddess. The play moves at a brisk pace and the dialogues are delivered in a smooth flow which preserves the spontaneity inherent in the narration of a folk-tale[9].

One of the dramatic techniques central to Karnad is the re-contextualization of history in the framework of the present. The past gets a contemporary relevance in most of his plays. This is clearly evident in works such as *Tale-Danda* and *Tughlaq* (1964). *Tale-Danda* is grappling with the final crisis in the life of one Basavanna, a social reformer of the Karnataka 12th century. The play illustrates the indignation of the Upper Caste against the reformist ideals of Basavanna, which hits a climactic moment when one of his Brahmin followers offers an untouchable marriage to his friend. The Mandal and the Mandir movements and the unrest they generated in the country become the chief sources for the play and the reason for its contemporary relevance[10].

For his *The Fire and the Rain*, Karnad borrows a story from *The Mahabharata* and gives it a contemporary meaning. This story highlights the dangers of knowledge without wisdom, power without integrity. Karnad expanded the original story and invested it with rich meaning and universal significance. The play reverberates with symbolism and suggestions. The fire in the title of the play is thus the fire of lust, anger, vengeance, envy, treachery, violence, and death. The rain symbolizes self-sacrifice, compassion, divine grace, forgiveness, revival, and life.

## CONTEMPORARY INDIAN DRAMATISTS

The plays of this era of writers are defined as creativity, development, and a feeling of social recovery. A wide group of writers such as Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani, among others, highlight the shift of perspective. Mohan Rakesh (1925-1972) wrote his first play *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (One Day in Ashadh) in 1958, which is now translated into English. During this time, no screenwriter could have accomplished the stature that Rakesh so effectively scaled. In 1959, with his first book, he won the Principal Prize of the Sangeet Natak Academy. Throughout his career, Rakesh wrote three full-length plays, *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (1958), *Lehron Ke Rajhans* (1963) and *Aadhe-Adhure* (1969), which became English. He also kept in touch with a number of acting works, *Dhwaninatya* (sound play), *Beejanatya* (seed play) and radio plays, *Ande Ke Chhilke* and *Raat Beetne Tak*. *Pair Tale Ki Zameen*, left incomplete, was later completed by his neighbor Kamleshwar. Rakesh's first play *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (One Day in Ashadh),

1958, a true story, in view of the life of the revered Sanskrit poet Kalidasa, is about his first love, Mallika a poignant representation of the predestination of a plain rural young lady who loves the writer and dreams of his senses. Her dream is known, but it is necessary in her life to sacrifice it. For her, Kalidasa is her all-out presence, but Kalidasa is just her motivation. This juxtaposition between self-esteem and the renunciation of being in a man-girl connection is investigated in the play. The play is also worried about the conflicts between workmanship and passion, creativity and situation, emotion and action, and the artist and state[11].

*Lehron Ke Rajhans* (The Great Swans of the Waves), 1963, often represents the pressures of the advanced world at an all-extraordinary level. The issue here is the relationship between man and woman, the conflict of their consciences, the separation of characters and the powerlessness to talk to each other. What is hanging out right now is the dejection of the individual, the internal clash, the agony of not being able to convey it. The powerlessness to mold oneself as per the will of the other in every case, where one might want to do as well, the focus on handling one's own sense of self and desires to be as extremely significant as opposed to giving up and trading off, are new, twentieth-century styles.

*Aadhe-Adhure* (Halfway House), which was transmitted in 1969, likewise handles the struggle between the inner self of man and woman, the stress, the suffocation, and the dissolution of such a partnership, yet on an absolutely extraordinary scale. Right now, it's not just a bond between a couple, which is broken by all accounts, but the whole family is going to make things worse. Without precedent for this play, Rakesh has put man in a state-of - the-art setting to manage current issues. The subject, here as well, is a collapse of relationship yet in an alternate way and on a truly extraordinary level. Without a question, such an objective, heartless depiction of our lives and our issues in a state-of - the-art environment is rare[12].

*AadheAdhure* is the greatest literary work in Rakesh. It's also considered to be one of the best dramatic literary works in the Hindi Theater and an essential landmark in the Indian Theater. *Pair Tale Ki Zameen* (Sun below the Sun) was also written recalling the disruption, languor and suffocation of present-day life. Essentially, this activity moves towards existentialism. Nevertheless, the atmosphere is not a local tourist club in Kashmir. Characters are not connected to each other. Destiny has been uniting them for one day. Suddenly, a frightening flood begins to blast away the scaffold that connects the club to the city, and the characters are cut off from the rest of the world. The altered mental state of these protagonists, influenced by the threat of sudden death, was beautifully described and

explored by Rakesh. A few hours after the news shows up on the subsidizing waters, the phone starts ringing and their security is guaranteed, everyone comes back to regularity.

*Vijay Tendulkar* (1928-2008), a leading writer, is a social analyst at a very basic level. In his few impressions of the post-independence Indian social arrangement as columnist Tendulkar, he was deeply concerned about the pickle of different areas of society, especially the negligible role accorded to the ladies. In spite of the fact that he never professed to be a champion of women's freedom, he noticed that male concealment and abuse of women was an industrious problem in Indian culture. Tendulkar observes that, throughout Indian culture, the woman endures argely as the object of a hierarchical grouping. Often there is a clash between the two, that is, the ladies and the society that starts with savagery. Tendulkar appears engrossed in the dominant part of his plays with the idea that a woman, as a wounded person, is prone to violence and is usually stripped of her privileges.

## **VIOLENCE IN TUGHLAQ**

Tughlaq's play is full of intrigues, machinations, mayhem, horrific killings, abuse and terror. There's a long chain of double playing and abuse. Seven or eight important characters are performed and countless individuals move on as they exceed expectations. The Sultan is responsible for the circumstances in which his father and brother are executed. He invites Sheik Imam-ud-commotion and sends him as a messenger of peace to visit Ain-ul-Mulk. Both of these people, who were brain agony for the Sultan, was murdered in a single attack. The Sultan is a smart businessman. At a period when seven to eight Amirs, Sayyads and Sheiks are similar to the ultan's skilled attacker, some twenty Hindu warriors are popping up behind the drapery and catching the backstoppers. He kills Sihab with his own hands until his Namaz is over the Sultan. The scheme is the peak of the game. This turned out that the Sultan is cruel and evil. The backstabbers are guillotined, and their bodies are hung up for individuals to see. The development mother of the Sultan is of an underhanded sort and tries to kill Najib, a trustee in the Sultan's contractor as she finds him to be responsible for the debasement of the Sultan. When the Sultan begins to think about her troublesome character, he demands her death sentence by stoning[13].

In such a way, fratricide, patricide and matricide are available in the game. "His domain moves into the kitchen of destruction, before he becomes Lord of the Blood." (S.T. Kharat 42) The capital is converted to the city of Daulatabad. This frightening selection of the Sultan has made him annoyed. Thousands of people bite the dust of appetite and starvation. Individuals who respond to the Sultan's orders are



punished. Even in doubt, he kills. Ghiyas-ud-clamor is murdered by Aziz and Aazam. A ton of bloodshed has appeared on the stage and is further described at the same time. The public witnesses evil acts of abuse on display on the grounds that the abuser is concealed in every human being. It is Artaud who points out that "the use of pitiless was a way of causing a kind of rehabilitation for the soul." (Artaud 29) India was conquered by the Moslem by the power of the weapon, and Islam was compelled even by unwilling Hindus to be regarded as peasants in their own country. They were called 'Kefirs,' or heathens, and the people who did not pay Jiziya were abused and brutally rebuffed. High populism has foreshadowed a vast scale, and Hindus have continued to live in fear of their lives. It was in the fourteenth century that Muhammad-receptacle Tughlaq took the position of monarchy and tried to change all of this. Most scholars agree that Tughlaq is an ancient moral story. When writing this book, Girish Karnad was struck by the parallelism between the reign of Tughlaq and contemporary history[14].

Tughlaq is a strong guy, but he's disintegrated within the short span of the 25th and the feeling of frustration at the end of the Nehru era. Karnad himself says, "I have not been actively writing about the Nehru period, and since then I have been equally involved in the development of politics. So I suppose, yeah, that's a blessing that any playwright would be delighted to get here, but it wasn't supposed to be a co-writer. I think if one gets involved with one's characters or one's play then it should develop into some kind of a true statement about oneself. I think a play can be only as contemporary as the playwright is. If the writer does not have contemporary convictions or is not committed, the play will not be contemporary. You can not be fashionably committed or fashionably partnered. If you're interested, issues will come that don't occur if you're not involved. "Tughlaq's influence and governance were linked to religion. The Sultan wants Muslims and Hindus to be treated equally during his reign. This is the Sultan's political ideology. And to prove this, He is providing justice to the Hindu Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad. Sheik Imam-ud-din, a religious figure, is engaged in politics. He's making public appearances and telling people how the Sultan is putting an end to Islam. He acknowledges the Sultan's order to act as his interpreter and to dissuade Ain-ul-Mulk from the folly of turning against the Sultan. The Sultan confronts the Sheik and tells him that only Muslims will die if the war is going to take place. Muhammad: Because I want peace. I am willing to make peace but how can I do it? I don't even know why he has turned against me. He won't even see my official envoys. But he will see you. He respects you as every Muslim in India does. He will trust your word. That's why I'm asking you, if you don't mind, kindly go as my emissary and prevent him from being indiscreet? Also, Sheik Sahib, I'm not asking you solely for my sake, but for all the Muslims who will move on to the hands of the Muslims if there is a battle. (Karnad 23) Sheik Imam-ud-clamor accepts the Sultan's advice

as he respects Islam. The Sultan managed to kill Sheik Imam-ud-clamor so that no one could speculate on him. There, the stern leader transforms into a victim of Tughlaq's chaotic political game. During the hour of petition (Namaz), the Sultan killed his brother and father. The timei petition was used for assassination. The petition halls are dirtiated of exchanges on government issues. The plea in play is infected by the wellspring of political ancestry. He also enacted a law that the Muslims will implore five times a day. The Koran is allowed to be searched in the lanes, and every religion must be viewed in the same way. The word petition is rehashed a few times and resonates through the play. It is tainted at the very root, however it may be, and thus never again has the epicasy of a complaint. Religion makes it the tenant to inquire. Aspiration for influence and cash vitiate petition and religion. Supplication is used as an unfortunate task and not as an end in itself. The play Tughlaq is accompanied by morality and the political concerns of the idealist. This helps to show that the ruler's ambition can fall flat and demolish the idealist. Tughlaq has been short since he tried to combine governmental issues with religion[15]. Tughlaq is antagonized by the faith pursued by him. "Tughlaq's alienation from the traditional religion stems primarily from the manner in which he is an existentialist in his faith and, thus, he unfailingly conflicts with conservative devotees and fundamentalists in religion" (Gomez 116).

## MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

**Tughlaq-** In the play, Tughlaq emerges as a headstrong and idealistic ruler. He is helpless and continually admits his missteps and allows himself to be openly rebuffed. He transfers his money to Daulatabad on the grounds that it is a town governed by the Hindus. This move will further serve as a reason for unity and public solidarity. The vision of the Nehruvian period is pointed out by this character. Responsible for parricide, Tughlaq is often on the verge with his misconduct. His unyielding liberality and sense of social equality grasps and treats all religions in a fair manner. This character is a device that speaks to a blissful inspection of the patriotic concept of reciprocal concordance and tight conjuncture, the very aims that were set before independence, and which later became a frustration to the segment of India. The opening scenes show the peculiarities and erraticisms of this individual. He is contemplating matching the value of copper coins with silver dinars. In order to establish himself as a worthy ruler, he opens himself up to open contempt and welcomes open judgment. He delays his own enemy's process through a series of deeply thought-out steps to foresee himself as a compassionate and successful dictator. His irrational and erratic tactics are being severely scrutinized by his topics and people. He develops as an astute contriver and a brutally eager ruler. He is responsible for the death of Sheik Muhammad, his most extreme

pundit, who accuses him for parricide and for being un-Islamic. He's pressing Shihab-ud-clamor when he's trying to make a plan against him. In spite of his own imprudence and anger, he is doomed to become a heartless monster. The stature of his madness is reflected in the later stages of the play. Then, he transforms into a different entity, and encounters mental conflicts and logical inconsistencies. His final detachment in a world turned out to be an outsider gives the play a pitiful measure.

Tughlaq could be viewed as the over-ambitious foreign tyrant, aimed at restoring new cities and territories, and placing people's culture under imperial pressure. Every scene reflects Tughlaq's radical regression and dehumanization, contributing to his dramatic demise.

**Step-mother-** Tughlaq's step-mother constantly appears in the earlier scenes of the play. She is ripped apart by conflicting emotions— her overbearing empathy about her son undermines her belief that he is guilty of parricide. She appears troubled and trusts Najib, a courtier and politician. It is constantly portrayed as an expression of reason and care. Then she attacks..... To save her son from the absolute destruction. Tughlaq ordered her to be stoned to death for an unwarranted act.

**Azizis** very clever, humorous, creative, discreet and impenetrable, Aziz offers his ironic comparison. Like him, from the very beginning, Aziz has been adamant about what to do in the future (when he hits his destination). In search of his vision of being wealthy by crook or crook, he manipulates the government's decision to reward those whose property has been seized by the state. He is a Hindu, but he disguises himself as a Brahmin in order to get rewards. This is how he punctures the bubble of the King's welfare policies.

**Aazam-** He's a close friend of Aziz's and his collaborator in the story. They are both vagabonds, so they survive mostly by theft and deceit. Of course, Aziz is the more cunning of the two. The actions of Aazam are staged on a smaller scale, and the actions of Aziz have larger ramifications. We regularly debate and examine the Sultan's actions and provide a variety of perspectives on the political climate of practice.

**Najib-** He is a democrat and a smart contriver, a Hindu, who then adopted Islam. In most of the scenes, the Sultan has been briefed on issues of political action and diplomacy. He is a champion of merciless political expansion and domination, and he is a perfect contrast to Barani, the historian. In the words of the Sultan, he wants peacocks of flesh and blood. He has no ability to breathe life into these bones... he reflects the more logical dimensions of

Tughlaq's self and is a constant companion in royal political affairs.

**Barani-** He is a historian and a close associate of the Sultan. He witnesses and records history unfolding before his eyes. He radically differs in his opinions from the more rational Najib, and is more interested in looking at events in a relational and humanitarian point of view. He is sympathetic and tries his best to save the Sultan from his own whims and fantasies. The Step-mother confides in Barani and advises him to guard the Sultan from his temperament.

**Sheikh-Imam-ud-Din-** He's a maulvi, and perhaps Tughlaq's biggest opponent. He freely proclaims that Tughlaq is un-Islamic and asks for his animosity. He offers public lectures and accuses Tughlaq as being accused of parricide. By his provocative remarks deriding the behavior of the Sultan, he tries to influence the general public. He was later murdered in a cleverly crafted Sultan story.

## RELIGION-POLITICS INTERFACE

Tughlaq is very positive as it consolidates the theological and political concerns of the idealistic yet progressive Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq[16]. It means showing that the vision of the ruler is going to come short and demolish the idealist. Ideas like secularism, harmony and unity in a nation like India are particularly at the forefront of events. In India, despite everything, individuals are driven away by holy people and strict heads. We support more of their stern founders than a leader. The red hot addresses of the stern holy person are flipping people to this side or that side of the poll. Individuals, given all, are befooled by them as they were during the Tughlaq era. In these sections, the identity of persons is reflected and disintegrated by the contact of the holy people and the legislators. Tughlaq, who professes to be a true adherent of religion, submits to his government innumerable murders. He submits to patricide, fratricide, and wipes out stern and revolutionary leaders such as Imam-ud-clamor and Shihab-ud-noise for his supremacy. He tells the reason for killing his Step Mother in a basic way: they could not bear the weight of their title. They couldn't set things behind, and they kicked the bucket low in their youth, or they were dead. At a time when Step-Mother admits that she killed Najib, Muhammad does not acknowledge this fact. Be that as it may, as she argues, it was better than murdering one's father or brother. It was superior to the murder of Sheikh Imam-ud-commotion, answers Muhammad, I killed them for perfection. Don't I know the results? You're not going to say I've felt the vil? My mother's not going to address me. I can't investigate a mirror because of a paranoid fear of seeing their features in it. Muhammad is torn away in the search of peace in his own world, which has become the kitchen of destruction (65). There is only one punishment for

inequality, he states to his Step-Mother, it's suicide. And for the slaughter of Najib, he arranges for his Step-Mother, whom he loves more than any other human, to be stoned, hauled and hanged.

## CONCLUSION

Tughlaq is an epic update on Sultan Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq's reign in India in the 14th century. Karnad studied deeply the facts of Muhammad Tughlaq before writing 'Tughlaq.' The position of playwrights as translators was complemented by their function as writers, thinkers and commentators. Their prominence in the literary world could be attributed to their active involvement in the creation as well as the articulation of new concepts and methods of theater. We had specific and uniquely distinct conceptions of expression, theatrical methods, the practice of depiction and interpretation that turned theater into a systematized art and a national cultural institution. Karnad himself has suggested that he found Tughlaq's history contemporary. So, it is to be concluded that Tughlaq is a history and a historical play.

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- [10]. Comment on Karnad's use of theatrical devices in his Tughlaq.
- [11]. Write an essay on Girish Karnad's use of symbols in Tughlaq.
- [12]. Parallelism between Aziz and the Sultan is one of the central theatrical strategies
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