

CULTURAL CANVAS OF KARNAD: STAGING INDIA

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Dr. Geeta Monga

*Principal, Shah Satnam Ji Girls' College,
Sirsa-125055, Haryana, India*

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Preface

Girish Karnad. The very name conjures images of powerful narratives, resonant dialogues, and a stage alive with the pulse of India. More than just a playwright, Karnad was a cultural cartographer, meticulously charting the complex terrains of Indian history, mythology, and contemporary society through the potent medium of theatre. His plays are not mere stories enacted; they are vibrant canvases upon which the rich and often contradictory hues of India are boldly painted.

This book, "*Cultural Canvas of Karnad: Staging India*," embarks on a journey to explore this very artistic endeavour. It delves into the intricate ways in which Karnad's dramatic works engage with and interpret the diverse threads that constitute India's cultural fabric. From the echoes of ancient myths in *Yayati* and *Nagamandala* to the sharp critiques of social and political realities in *Tughlaq* and *Hayavadana*, Karnad's oeuvre offers a panoramic view of a nation grappling with tradition and modernity, power and vulnerability, faith and reason.

Within these pages, we will examine how Karnad masterfully employs theatrical conventions – folklore, music, ritual, and innovative stagecraft – to bring forth nuanced perspectives on caste, gender, religious harmony and conflict, and the ever-evolving identity of India. We will trace the intertextual dialogues his plays engage in with classical Sanskrit drama, regional performance traditions, and contemporary socio-political discourse, revealing the depth and complexity of his artistic vision.

This exploration is not merely an academic exercise in literary analysis. It is an invitation to witness the dynamic interplay between art and society, to understand how Karnad's plays serve as both mirrors reflecting India's realities and catalysts prompting crucial conversations. By examining his "cultural canvas," we aim to gain a deeper appreciation not only for Karnad's significant contribution to Indian theatre but also for the multifaceted and ever-shifting portrait of India that he so powerfully brought to life on stage.

Dr. Geeta Monga

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