

TRAVAILS OF REFUGEES IN ASIF CURRIMBHOY'S THE REFUGEE

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ABSTRACT

The paper entitled "Travails of Refugees in Asif Currimbhoy's The Refugee" deals the anguish and their difficult experiences which they had in the time of Partition. It also focuses how the refugees are victimized by the political turmoil.

Asif Currimbhoy has great interest in producing dramas he has written 29 plays. His plays reveal his deep concern for dramatic effectiveness. His plays are first and foremost meant for stage. He brilliantly succeeded in producing 'actable plays'. Faubion Bowers calls him, "India's first authentic voice in theatre" (5).

Currimbhoy began writing plays in his late twenties. Through his plays involved himself in the society. He depicted the real world which is around him and within him. He has chosen controversial themes for his plays and presenting them in a unconventional plays. He used arresting dialogues and constructed and resolved plots in his plays

Partition of the country which caused the deepest anguish especially in Bengal and Punjab. The trauma of partition was responsible for sudden failure of brotherhood. It also collapsed human values. This kindled Currimbhoy in the raw and it all served as the source for pen of his plays. His interest in the society gives unmistakable impression in the dramatic world of Asif Currimbhoy.

Currimbhoy's plays can be divided into three important categories: Romantic plays, Social plays, Political plays. His *Inquilab* (1970), *The Refugee* (1971), *Sonar Bangla* (1972) Can be called as 'Bengal Trilogy' which based on political themes. It connected with Bengal and its problems at different parts of time.

As a man of nation interest Currimbhoy successfully faced by the Refugee and refuge nation in 'The Refugee'. It is about the influx of Bangladesh refugees into India during 1971. This play has as its setting a house hold in a border in West Bengal.

The play *The Refugee* begins with the description of the initial massacre of intellectual at universities in East Bengal on 25th March 1971. As a result, a few thousand refugees leave East Bengal and come into West Bengal. The Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 js the case of the partition. The first batch of the refugees arrives in West Bengal during the freedom struggle in East Bengal. Yassin is one among the refugee leaves his in East Bengal which was in the clutch of Pakistan after the major partition in 1947. He welcomed Yassin. He is sympathetic towards him. He finds Yassin as a reminiscent of his past memories. He encourages Yassin to forget his bitter

experiences. A sudden change occurred in Sen Gupta. As he was an Indian refugee, he differentiated Pakistani refugees who are mostly Muslims. He deviates from Yassin because he was a refugee from Pakistan. Sen Gupta does not want to hurt him. His kindness towards Yassin makes him unhappy.

Ashok, the son of Sen Gupta is interested in participating in the combat of the Mukti Bahini. He says that he is doing so as a patriot. Sen Gupta disapproves of it. Ashok says that Bengalis must fight for their own liberation but Sen Gupta is much more interested in the welfare of his son than his country. He is ready to accept Yassin as a fighter but not his own son. He says to his son, "There are other able-bodied men from East Bengal who should do so ... Go now ..." (21).

The refugees' problems affected the psyche of the two refugees, Yassin and Ramul contradictorily. Yassin saw the twin parts of contemplation and action. In the freedom struggle, he "became involved through no choice" (15). He had to face the firing squad. He had to dig his own grave but somehow escaped and reached West Bengal.

Ramul is much concerned with the refugees in the camp. He longs for his native. Being an half-eccentric in nature, repeating again and again that the place which is encroached by him is his own. Even he takes Sen Gupta's house as his own. He also expects sympathy from the Indians like Sen Gupta. He became distressed when he knows Sen Gupta is not a sympathizer to the refugees. He wants to send all able bodies to fight in the war. But he himself will not move from the town. Like Yassin, he also does not act, but he pretends that he is active.

Mita, the daughter of Sen Gupta, is sympathetic with the Bangladesh cause. She helps Yassin to realize his duty to his country. As a social worker, she works for the rehabilitation of the refugees. She is affected by the condition of the refugees. She condemns Yassin's negligence towards the refugees.

Sen Gupta feels that the problem of refugees must have a political solution. He says that the refugees who have come to India are not intellectuals or politicians of Pakistan, but minority Hindus. He opines that the exodus of refugees is an undeclared war. Sen Gupta's words tensed Yassin. He bursts out against the talk of war. He explodes as a Pakistani, when he is asked about his identity. His alienated mind longs for his own identity, "If I am my body, I have to be Pakistani" (28).

Currimbhoy presents the picture of mental trauma which refugees undergo. *The Refugee* dealt the sufferings of refugees both physically and mentally. The atrocities of the Pakistanis cause the exodus of the refugees. The refugees became the creatures of the circumstances. They groan at their sufferings. They suffer contagious and infectious diseases like cholera and die like flies. Agonies and mysteries of the refugees are depicted very realistically in this play.

The cry of Mita resembles the cry of the playwright himself. Currimbhoy views that the government should not be officious in handling the refugees' problem which has to be looked from the human point of view not from the administrative point of view. He explains it through Mita's words that the refugees are with unique feelings of their own. They are individuals. As history is so replete with stupidities and brutalities, their primary dimension is ignored.

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