

communal divide and communal riot in the Indian society through the play *Final Solutions*.

Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions* focuses on the problem of communal disharmony between the Hindus and Muslims in India, especially during the period of the post-partition riots. The play starts with Daksha reading lines from her diary. The setting suggests that the period is late 1940's.

Daksha is the mother of the central character of the play Ramnik Gandhi. She shuttles between her two identities, namely that of a girl of fifteen and that of a matured lady who has witnessed forty years of freedom. The chorus chanting at the back sometimes assumes Hindu masks and sometimes Muslim ones. The words rendered by the chorus are clear indicators of the communal disharmony and its painful consequences that are soon to be experienced by the characters in the play. The masks have leaving effects on minds of the characters who wear them.

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*Final Solutions* talks of the problems of cultural hegemony, how Hindus has to suffer at the hands of Muslim majority like the characters of Hardika and Daksha in Hussain's hand, and how Muslim like Javed suffers in the set up of the major Hindu community. This all resulted in communal riots and culminated in disruption of the normal social life, and thus hampered the progress of nation. The locale of the play is Ramnik's house and the central characters are his daughter Smita, wife Aruna and mother Hardika, besides himself and the two Muslim boys Bobby and Javed who entered into his house during communal tension occasioned by the attack on the Rath Yatra procession. In the beginning, Daksha recollects from her diary about the past when she was married at the age of fourteen. And now after forty years Daksha has become Hardika but her prejudice against the other community continues to be with her. Javed, as Bobby tells Ramnik, became a fanatic because he was ill-treated by persons of another faith and hired by the hooligans to spread communal violence. This creates the



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spread communal violence. This creates the problem of communal divide in our country.

Dattani attempts a balancing act in tracing the malady of communal disharmony. The ground he treads is full of mines ready to explode, as this involves the fanatic elements within the Hindu and the Muslim communities. It is obvious to all that people are paid to create political instability and cause communal riots to fan distrust and suspicion that tear the social fabric. Inevitably the politicians exploit the susceptibilities of the two communities on sensitive issues. In the play, the chorus is an expedient device used brilliantly to provide the commentary on the way communal provocation instigates mindless mob violence. There is always someone to light the fire of violence. The play illustrates how the notions of pollution, food, kitchen habits and fear of contamination by touch become repeated instances of communal clashes. The characters in the play motivate us to think that angry outbursts lead



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