



# Gender Discrimination in Mahesh Dattani's Final Solutions

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**Abstract:** Dramatists frequently challenge the patriarchal assumption that a woman is subordinate to a man. With the advent of the feminist movement, which is supported by both men and women, the process of woman individualization has gained traction. A male playwright's depiction of strong women reassures that a woman as an individual is not completely lost. His plays and female characters emphasize the equality of women and men and celebrate feminism. The creation of powerful female characters by male writers is certainly a hopeful sign for women's future. The current article has discussed the social function of drama as well as the treatment of sexism in drama. It follows various men who have fought for women's rights, including the Indian dramatist Mahesh Dattani chosen for this study. The article also discusses the subordination of women in the domestic sphere, which results in a loss of freedom, identity, space and unfulfilled desires. It examines gender discrimination, female child sexual abuse, domestic violence and emotional trauma experienced by women. It depicts the difficulties of two artistically gifted women, a dancer and a singer.

**Keywords:** discrimination, subordination, patient and submissive

## INTRODUCTION

Drama is a living, breathing art form that is performed in front of the audience, and as such, it has the power to move people. Drama is a reflection of life and is inevitably influenced by the country's social, intellectual and economic climate. Drama, as an art form for representing life, has always been used for social purposes. It demonstrates the general concern for social regeneration. Every playwright, as a citizen, bears some moral responsibility to society. Every dramatist has a responsibility to help the world progress by raising awareness or understanding of social issues or ideas.

Literary authors frequently challenge the patriarchal assumption that a woman is subordinate to a man. With the advent of the feminist movement, which is supported by both men and women, the process of woman individualization has gained traction. A male playwright's depiction of strong women reassures that a woman as an individual is not completely lost. His plays and female characters emphasize the equality of women and men and celebrate feminism. The creation of strong female characters by male writers is certainly a hopeful sign for women's future. In almost all of his plays, Mahesh Dattani explores various issues concerning women. He raises awareness and raises people's consciousness about women's issues.

The society has created conditions that require more patience. The women are reduced to the extent of echoing their husbands' words, with no choice and no options. They lack individuality. The process of erasing individuality begins with the girls' birth. Every day, the girl child witnesses her father's superiority and authority over her mother. As a result, every woman begins to believe in her inferiority, in her inherent dependence and in her ability to endure more. All of her training prepares her to be a good, ideal wife who is submissive, docile and calm. Women can't do much to improve their situation because their status is determined by their father, husband or son.

Women simply need to be patient and submissive. Unfortunately, these acquired virtues have become ingrained in them. Women's roles in the family as good daughters, wives and mothers are clearly defined in Indian patriarchal society. The position of a woman in the family refers to a variety of roles. It includes expected behavior in interpersonal interactions between family members, her duties and responsibilities to them and her privileges and rights as a family member. It specifically refers to how she is treated by her family members. Every stage of a woman's life has been represented in relation to a man's position in the family.

Instead of becoming a bond of love, the woman's primary domain becomes a bondage. It binds her and stunts her self-hood rather than allowing her to develop and grow. Dattani explores the problems faced by women in the domestic sphere in his play *Final Solutions*. Family is not always a safe haven, an institution found on love and consensus, as it is portrayed, but it is the primary site of discrimination and oppression against women. Indeed, the greatest violation of women's rights occurs within the family. Family deprives women of mobility and access to power in the outside world, rendering them powerless. Thus, women's social oppression is simply an extension of their domestic situation, which is exacerbated by their inequality outside the home.

Marriage is a natural stage in the lives of all Indian women. Marriage is frequently arranged without the consent of the girl when she is still in her teens in India, regardless of the social and economic situation. The primary goal of early marriage is to keep social control over a young girl's virginity. Dattani demonstrates in *Final Solutions* how a girl is married when she is in her teens so that she can be easily molded by her husband and in-laws. Daksha is fourteen years old when she marries Hari. Daksha keeps a diary of her life events. Daksha's words, "I got married to Hari ... ten months ago ... I came here last week to my new home; on my fifteenth birthday" (166),

Dattani demonstrates the practice of early marriage. Most women survive in their marital homes by foregoing many of their interests, ambitions, leisure, friendships and ties with their parental family. Daksha enjoys singing and aspires to be a singer; she particularly enjoys singing film songs. She frequently hums a tune. Her in-laws, however, forbid her from singing. She notices her dreams fading away. It is evident as: "[...] All my dreams have been shattered ... I can never be a singer, like Noor Jehan. Hari's family is against my singing film songs. His parents heard me humming a love song to Hari last night. And this morning they told him to tell me..." (FS 166).

Hari lacks a voice; he cannot defend or encourage her. Daksha's enthusiasm has faded, and she feels completely defeated in her ambition. A traditional family woman is expected to be unobtrusive and quiet in her activities. She shouldn't make too much noise, whether singing or talking. A woman's life has revolved around the needs of her husband and in-laws since their marriage. These unwritten rules of behavior limit the abilities of a talented woman like Daksha and make her bitter. Marriage means losing one's individual identity for a woman. Shah points out: "The very apt word evolved by this culture of wifely subordination, 'adjust', is a euphemism for 'erase'. The wife is expected to erase her own personality and predilections in favor of those of her husband and in laws" (362).

The woman must learn to live according to her in-laws' rules. To please them, she frequently has to change everything, including her dietary habits, dress style and demeanour. In most cases, the husband's name is added as a surname, but in some cases, the girl's name is changed entirely based on the whims and fancies of the groom's family members. They reshape her identity. The new name alludes to the cultural politics at work in such a ritual. Daksha's name is changed without her consent after her marriage. Daksha is resentful, but she is unable to express her feelings openly thus: "I can't use my new name in my diary. Hardika - to match with Hari. (Looks distastefully in some direction). That's only for them..." (FS 174).

The rebellious spirit that rises within her is suppressed. Her frustrations could only be expressed in her diary. Dakshahas made a note in her diary about the Partition, how eagerly people have awaited it, and how it has turned out to be a nightmare. Daksha has witnessed the aftereffects of the Partition when she was young. She has grown up with a deep-seated hatred for Muslims that she has not abandoned. Daksha and her family were the residents of Hussainabad during the partition and her father was a freedom fighter.

When her father went out, a mob gathered outside their home, threw stones and broke the windows,. She and her mother took refuge in the Pooja room. The stones kept smashing everything in their house. She clung to her mother in terror and her mother prayed for Daksha's father's safety. However, he was killed during the clash between the two communities. People crossed borders in fear of their lives after the Partition and subsequent riots. Daksha noted down in her diary as: "The violence has stopped. Hari tells me that all the bad people have left for Pakistan" (FS 196).

Daksha tries to forget her Partition nightmares after marrying Hari. She tries to make friendship with Zarine, a Muslim girl who lives in her neighborhood. Daksha has heard Noor Jehan's songs while visiting Zarine. Her obsession with Noor Jehan's songs becomes the driving force behind her friendship with Zarine. Kanta, her servant maid, informs her that Zarine's family is in trouble because their dry fruits and mithai shop has caught fire. Zarine's father informs everyone that his shop was deliberately burned down. Daksha is perplexed as to how she could go to Zarine's house and demand her friendship while listening to her gramophone records. She learns that Zarine's father has turned down a job offer from Daksha's father-in-law. She believes he is pleased with himself. Daksha finally goes to Zarine's house, claiming she needs some embroidery done on her sari. She converses with Zarine and gains her friendship. Daksha tells Zarine about her musical interest:

I mentioned the gramophone. I told her my in-laws didn't allow me to play our gramophone. She laughed again and took me upstairs. She asked me what I would like to listen to. Noor Jehan, of course! She seemed pleased with my choice. She wound up the machine and played my favourite song! We both listened and sang along with Noor Jehan. [...] I even danced a little and spun across the room and leaned against the window looking out into the bright sunlight, like the heroines do in the talkies. Hoping I would find a koel to cocoo along with me for the rest of the song. (FS 203)

When Daksha mentions Zarine's family's problem, her husband becomes enraged and scolds her. Daksha is never informed of what has occurred. She feels uneasy when she goes there. Something has happened, she believes. But no one wants to talk to her. When Daksha goes to see her Muslim friend, her husband beats her and locks her in a room.

Daksha {banging on the door}: I promise! I won't do it again!

Hardika: Confined. Never let out of the house. Like a dog that had gone mad!

Daksha {hysterically}: Le me out! (FS 223)

This confinement breeds mistrust and hatred. She develops a hatred for Zarine, which quickly spreads to Zarine's entire religion. Daksha becomes rigid, and her attitude toward the other religion changes, and she develops intolerance. Daksha misunderstands and accuses Zarine of being to blame for her suffering. Sharma points out: "Daksha had rationalized the withdrawal and hostility of Zarine's family as an instance of resentment and arrogance" (77).

Zarine has humiliated her, but she is unaware of her family's villainous role in Zarine's reaction. Smita's mother Aruna is orthodox in *Final Solutions*, and she will not deviate from accepted ideologies. Smita feels suffocated by her mother's strict values. Aruna opposes her daughter's modern viewpoints as follows: "Because ... because I will not accept that from someone who is not proud of her inheritance [...]. You cannot criticize what you are running away from. You will be prejudiced" (FS 211).

Javed and Bobby, two Muslim boys, seek refuge in Ramnik's home. Aruna and her grandmother Hardika are taken aback when Smita recognizes them. They are enraged and demanded to know where and how Smita has met them, as well as why she hasn't mentioned it before. When they discover she met them in college, Aruna wishes to limit Smita's freedom in order to avoid a potentially dangerous situation. She reacts angrily and declares that she will discontinue her studies. She will be able to stay at home from now on. B.Manraj Kannan observes: "Historically India has a patriarchal culture, with men playing major roles in many aspects of life and believing that women, as frail beings, are entirely dependent on men for their survival" (51).

Women's roles and status in the family and society must be thoroughly redefined in order to make them believe that they are no longer the weaker and inferior sex. They must be instilled with self-assurance and confidence in their equally worthwhile life goals and pursuits. Women only become aware of their situation when they gain the strength and determination to effect the desired change. Because the growth and progress of society is also dependent on the level of development of women, it is critical that women redefine their role in society.

Equality and egalitarian attitudes must be developed in both men and women. People must reconsider and change their views on marriage. Marriage should be viewed as an equal partnership. A woman is a distinct individual with her own desires and choices. She should not be treated as man's spare rib. In fact, the Hindu belief of 'Arthanareeswara' treats women as equals, but social concepts change over time. Men should broaden their perspectives in order to encourage women's talents. Women should learn to be self-sufficient and independent. Men must stop wielding power over women. Women must also break free from their enslavement.

Women must be educated in order to understand, and only then they will stop being the enemies of their own sex. Without education, social development is incomplete because it is directly related to the enhancement of people's quality of life in society. Education is a prerequisite for women's development because it acts as a catalyst over time to bring about a noticeable change in a person or situation. Then a new generation of free women will have the opportunity to advance in education, employment and other vital areas such as political life. The education system is the only institution capable of challenging orthodox women's traditional beliefs. A well-educated mother raises an educated family.

Only when the aforementioned attitudes are instilled in men and women, a new outlook on women emerge and a new trend in society begin. Society should teach in a woman a sense of equal worth and capacity, so that she can achieve her goals and hold an equal position in the family. B.Charanya observes: "educated and employed woman is offended in traditional and democratic cultures like India, allowing millions of uneducated women throughout the world to suffer the terrible destiny. (9)

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