



Girish Karnad (A Short Introduction)

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Life Sketch

- Full Name : Girish Raghunath Karnad
- Father : Dr. Raghunath Karnad
- Mother : Krishnabai
- Date of Birth : 19th May 1938
- Birth Place : Matheran , Bombay.
- Death : 10th June 2019
- Mother Tongue : Kannada

Main Points of Karnad's Life

- Girish Karnad was born on 19 May 1938 in Matheran near Bombay, in a semi-Marathi and semi-Kannada Saraswat community. His father was a doctor.
- His early childhood was spent at Sirsi, a small village in Karnataka.
- Girish Karnad received his early education from Karnataka. He graduated from Karnataka University, Dharwad, in 1958.
- He came to Mumbai for further studies. He received the prestigious Rhodes scholarship and went to England for further studies. He was at Oxford from 1960 to 1963. Later he was awarded Bhabha Fellowship to study abroad from 1970 to 1972.
- In 1987, he went to the U.S.A as Fulbright Scholar in Residence at the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago.

Works of G.Karnad

- Yayati (1961)
 - Tughlaq (1964)
 - Hayavadana (1971)
 - Angumalige (1977)
 - Hittina Hunja (1980)
 - Naga-Mandala (1988)
 - Tale-Danda (1990)
 - Agni Mattu Male (1995)
- Karnad wrote all his eight plays in Kannada ; these have been translated into major Indian languages including the national language Hindi. Five of his plays – Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, Tale Danda and The Fire and The Rain – have translated into English.

Girish Karnad :As a Playwright

- Karnad is known for his plays. His plays has contributed a lot in the growth of Indian English Drama. He has provided his dramas with historical perspective, mythical significance, with the traditions of folk theatre.
- Girish Karnad is one such dramatist who makes an attempt to retrieve the treasure of culture and tradition. He has been rightly called the 'Renaissance man'.
- His plays appear to discuss mythical stories or historical events but his subjects are psychological problems, dilemmas, and conflicts experienced by modern India men and women in their different social situations.
- Yayati is Karnad's first play which was written in 1961. It is based on the mythical character in Mahabharata . The play is written on the theme of responsibility. Through the mythical character, Karnad wants to tell the meaninglessness of physical pleasure.

- **Tughlaq** (1964) is a historical play which explores the paradox of the idealistic Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq. He is a sensitive and intelligent ruler always willing to do the best for his people. The play is a tragedy of the limits of human power in predominantly psychological context.
- Hayavadana is based on a story of Kathasaritsagara. The main theme of the play is man's constant effort to achieve completeness.
- Thus Karnad borrow the story of his plays from past and presents it before us to show the plight of common man of contemporary society.

Girish Karnad : A Man of Celluloid

- Girish Karnad is a multifaceted personality. For a common man he is an actor first . But for a student of English literature he is a dramatist of repute who has made Indian English drama stand at par with poetry and novel. His genius in the field of role-playing and direction comes next though it is not less fascinating than writing plays.
- Today Girish Karnad is the name of an actor, a director, as well as a scriptwriter. It is worth noticing that his each work has been praised and awarded.
- As a man of celluloid , he occupies a prestigious place in hindi as well as Kannad movies.
- Karnad made his debut as an actor and scriptwriter in Kannada movie Samaskara (1970) , based on a novel by U.R.Anantmurthy and directed by Pattabhirama reddy. This movie got the President's Gold Medal.

- In Television, he played the role of Swami's father in the T.V series Malgudi Days based on R.K.Narayan's books.
- He made his directorial debut with Vamsha Vriksha(1971) based on a Kannada novel by S.L.Bhyrappa.
- Among His famous movies in Kannada are Samskara, Vamsha Vriksha (1972) , Kaadu (1974) , Ondanondu Kaaladalli (1978) Cheluvi (1993).
- Apart from Kannada movies, he also shown his presence in Hindi Films. Among his famous hindi movies are – Nishant (1975) Manthan (1976) , Swami (1977), Pukar (2000), Iqbal (2005), Dor (2006), Aashaein (2010) , Ek Tha Tiger (2012) , Tiger Zinda Hai(2017) etc.

Awards and Honours

As a creative artist Girish Karnad has contributed a lot to both the world of Literature and the world of celluloid. He has been widely acclaimed for his works. He has received many awards for writing plays and working in celluloid. His achievements include the following awards :

- Mysore State Award for Yayati in 1962.
- The Government of Mysore Rajyotsava Award in 1970.
- The Sangeet Natak Academy award for playwriting 1972.
- The Padma Shree Award in 1974.
- The Padma Bhushan Award in 1992.
- Sahitya Academy Award for Tale-Danda in 1994.
- The Jnanpith Award in 1999.
- He also served as Director of the Film and Television Institute of India from 1974 to 1975.
- He was chairman of Sangeet Natak Academy of Performing Arts 1988 to 1993.

Critics view on Girish Karnad

- *“ To this date, Girish Karnad is the most notable personality among the living Indian dramatists in English translation. His involvement with the screen world (both big and small) may be accountable for the meagre output from his dramatic genius but he has learnt a lot from the screen world to develop his dramatic art.*

R.T.Bedre

- *“ Karnad is India’s best living playwright... His journey from Yayati to The Fire and The Rain holds a mirror to the very evolution of Indian theatre and during nearly four decades. The likes of Girish Karnad enable us to pretend that there is such a thing as a truly “Indian” theatre which contemporary concerns.”*

K. Chandrashekhar



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