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**Topic: 'Identity' And 'Desire': A Critical Analysis Of Select Plays Of Mohan Rakesh**

**Key Words: Identity, Desire, Dysfunctional Relationships, Hindi Theatre, Nayi Kahaani etc.**

### **Findings**

Mohan Rakesh is one of those playwrights who have been able to manifest all their life experiences unabashedly through their creative outputs. Although not preferred, it is hard to separate his personal experiences from his writings because of the close resemblance in terms of the characters and situations.

An attempt has been made in this research to investigate the interplay of 'identity' and 'desire' on the human psyche as reflected through the observance of Mohan Rakesh and his writings. The three plays selected for this discourse on 'Identity' and 'Desire' in Mohan Rakesh are *Aashaadh Ka Ek Din*, *Halfway House (Aadhe-Adhure)*, and *Lehron Ke Raajhans*.

In terms of structure, the thesis is divided into three chapters, excluding the Introduction and Conclusion.

The first chapter, titled 'Psychological Structures in Mohan Rakesh' investigates the psychological constructs of the author, characters, and the dominant psychology of the age underpinning the ethos of the play. This chapter highlights various pertinent concepts and issues that impacted the psychology of the author, the country people, the plot and characters in the play. Through Rakesh's plays and characters, we are able to investigate the various psychological processes at play. The pertinent concepts and issues discussed in this chapter are- the impact of independence and partition on the psychology of the commoners, the socio-political and personal desire for freedom, the veracity of truth and conflict of choice, artistic struggles and dilemmas, reasons for weak resolutions in male protagonists of the plays, societal expectations of the facade of strength at all times, role-based identities, safe brain and threat brain, flight, fight and freeze responses, attachment styles and anxieties, trust issues, toxic masculinity, dysfunctional families, evolutionary psychology and monogamy, intergenerational scripts, evolution of sophisticated neurobiology and behavioural geometry, codependency, psychology behind sarcasm, childhood trauma and disguised competition, pair bonding, transactional nature and economics of relationships.

The second chapter, 'Identity: Formation through Negation,' investigates the construction of identity and the processes at work in the context of Mohan Rakesh's plays. The role of 'self' and 'other' in identity constructivism is explored via neurological, psychological, and social processes. The distinction between personal identity and social identity is established. The

politics of group dynamics and its behavioural impact on collective consciousness is explained through the Ripple effect. Abandonment versus Disillusionment and Sentimentalism versus Corruption are the ideas explored at the national level during Rakesh's time and also in the plot of his plays as well as in the personal lives of his characters. Masculine and Feminine identities are analysed, and the concept of Nagaraka, and various instances from Rakesh's plays are cited to substantiate these arguments.

The third chapter is titled 'Desire: Cultural Reframing of Yearning.' This chapter is dedicated to understanding the dynamics of desire. It looks at the primal and basic instincts of humans. It establishes the link between Lack, Want, Intention, Desire and Belief. Economic concepts of demand and supply are employed to understand the dynamics of desires in the intricacies of human relationships. The Belief-Desire-Intention (BDI) model is employed to understand these desire-based processes. The three plays are discussed in detail to tease out the interplay of identity and desire in the lives of the characters. Sundari's 'Kaamotsav' is a celebration of desire. However, Rakesh's characters often suffer from an absurdist search for meaning or self. Suitable references are used and analysed from the plays to explore the various forms of desires and their incorporation into the play.

I have tried to analyse Rakesh's work prolifically with a multidimensional perspective in order to ensure that it is a useful addition to the academic resources and approaches regarding Indian drama.