

Plays of D Vijayabhaskar – a foray into contemporary social scenario via theatre.

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Ask any theatre buff in Andhra Pradesh to name some mainstream playwrights of the day in Telugu; the answer is surely to include D Vijayabhaskar. Of all the major playwrights of present generation Vijayabhaskar's name elicits most recognition.

A prolific playwright Vijayabhaskar penned more than Twenty works and each work is unique its own right.

His plays are not edgy. They do not confront the audience with the author's simmering rage against the decadence of values in society but silently nudges us into thinking.

They unveil our complexities, confusions and contradictions and of course the hypocrisies through which we live.

Wherever they are staged the audiences respond with delight to see the contemporary scenario put on the stage. His characters are from present times but of timeless interest. They are well crafted and built on the foundation of human character in its varied shades.

He builds scenes in his plays with full of emotional appeal that allows the scene and the realism melt into each other without a pause. As soon as a play of his is staged, it wins the approval of the learned and the laity and becomes a talk of the town.

His plays are however not simple and their staging demands a larger than usual amount of energy and application. The productions of his plays won several prestigious awards.

Emotional vulnerability triggers an immediate self-protective response; the natural instinct to withdraw from the imminent confrontation. Vijayabhaskar tackles it in *Minister* – one of his outstanding plays- with aplomb.

It is about a minister who hones abuse of power and corruption into a sort of fine art in practice. A close brush with death and a dialogue developed with the spirit of death metamorphose the protagonist into an honest and caring human being. Selfless service and altruism are no out come of repentance but must be inalienable feature of our character is the point that it straight drives home.

An officer in the corridors of power, Vijayabhaksar has a distinct advantage of watching the power play from close quarters. He excels in presentation of a realistic picture of how it works in the corridors of power.

*Kurchi* –the chair- is an interesting play. It won him best playwright award from the government of Andhra Pradesh. Backed by the knowledge of keen observation of real politicking from close quarters Vijayabhaskar presented several strands of socio-political reality in a theatrical weave. It unfolds how the vested interests of high and mighty come in the way of Dalits enjoying the fruit of power acquired through the constitutional means. *Kalakutam* is another play that exposes political class in all its wiliness.

The playwright values democracy and rues its decadence and he chose the medium of play for its expression. What looks amazing is Vijayabhaskar's ability to encompass all the important traits of contemporary politician in thought-provoking play.

His plays are not innovative for innovative sake. They are intuitive and intellectual at one and the same time. Each play focuses on confrontation and its resolution, either addressing a conflict or achieving a comfort level that is less threatening for character.

“Life is no war to beget misery or bloodshed. Think it as a piece of art and it affords a bundle of experiences to cherish”, expounds his play Ritwik.

Against the backdrop of a thick family drama, it highlights the futility of the pursuit of wealth in preference to values in human relations. With an acute awareness of the complexities of the most ordinary occurrences characters essay to rise above their inadequacies, embracing uncomfortable truths with the courage required.

His satirical dialogues aglow with philosophical import are interesting and instructive. The dialect, tone, idiom, punch and wit are such that express the stark reality in directness and lucidity that captivates the beholders

Another play that deals with the power of money in life is Kinchit Bhogam – a slight treat. “To be rich may not be possible but to be honest is well within our hands” is the crux of its theme. It received a golden Nandi award from the government of Andhra Pradesh.

Puliswari, Hiranyagarbha, Brhammaratha – take any of his plays, his concern for values based system and erosion of values in our life surfaces in all its depth at frame of his plays.