

# Deergasi Vizai Bhaskar's Ruthwik : A Social Drama

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Deergasi Vizai Bhaskar is one of the upcoming dramatists of the Indian literature. He has focussed on all the social evils of the society. His contemporary writers unable to try this genre of drama but he is dear enough to experiment and excel in it. Vizai Bhaskar is the bitter critic of this inhuman social custom. His Plays work as weapons to fight the social injustice of casteism and advocate for equality in the divided Indian society. Through the plays, he instructs the audience better treatment for the under privileged. His plays seem to spread the message of humanism using the cultural stories as medium of instruction.

Vizai Bhaskar handles different themes and subject matters in his plays which are both topical as well as appealing. His plays establish his reputation as a playwright in Telugu literature and launch him on his celebrated career in the Indian theatre. Most of his plays are translated into English and many Indian languages and have continued to be performed all over country. In this paper I have selected Ruthwik to speak about his versatility and preacher of morality. Vizai Bhaskar wants to highlight the issues of the contemporary society, widely varied in thematic and stylistic content. Vizai Bhaskar's Ruthwik, the central character in the play is very interesting. His description in the beginning

of the drama is very realistic and philosophical. Ruthwik is a preacher who appeals the audience to ponder over the truthful insights of human life.

**Key words:** *Humanism, casteism, society, Equality and customs.*

## **Introduction**

Through the centuries, the image and the role of the drama in educating the society has been observed and studied in various ways, and the acquired knowledge has been recorded in literature, works of art, religious texts, mythology and codes of social behaviour. As N. Velamani says in the preface to her book *Drama in Indian Writing in English- Tradition and Modernity* People have always felt that there is a need to have an understanding of the code and conduct of their living in the society within its rational system. Drama is one such meaningful form that has been worshipped and has been perceived as a powerful tool for social change. Neoclassicism was the dominant form of theatre in 18th century. It demanded decorum and rigorous adherence to the classical unities. Neoclassical theatre as well as the time period is characterized by its grandiosity. The costumes and scenery were intricate and elaborate. The acting is characterized by large gestures and melodrama.

Culture is an offshoot of a society which in turn affects and reframes the mother society. It is developed out of various influences and out of fantastic ideas of the people that include, besides others, myths, legends, folklore and, sometimes, its history. These are the

fictional narratives which many believe to be based on fact. They are actually product of the people's fantasy, their religious beliefs and social gossips. Mostly, these tales are considered as unscientific, superstitious and ritualistic by the modern scientific world.

However, they are two deeply rooted in cultures and can be interpreted in relation to the social predicaments of the corresponding time. Majority of the Indian English Playwrights have deftly used these cultural tales as their themes to bring to light the individual and social concerns of their countrymen in contemporary times. That way, such tales of the people acted as a mirror of their society for the playwrights. Through this mirror, they have reflected the individual and social problems of the common man and suggested solutions. Social Concern in the select plays of Vizai Bhaskar: a Study presents the reformist attitude as inculcated by the Playwright through his plays.

Greed of modern man is another theme that is found in Vizai Bhaskar's plays. He offers a continual flow of analysis and criticism of an age which he thinks is heading for disaster. He analyses modern man's sense of lack of direction in the life and indicates that he must re-evaluate his aims and goals, his morality and economics, and discard worn out values which no longer describe either human nature of contemporary problems. The play Ruthwik introduces this theme that modern men must overcome their limited frames of reference and must cultivate open-mindedness in their search for meaning and direction in a complex world.

Ruthwik is the character who made us realize the importance of the power of truthful living and he judges everything in terms of truth and peace. Being witness to the life of Manmadharao and his family leading, he urges to look into the value of virtuousness in human life. He gives vent to his mind that a man who habituates the virtue of goodness like the vice he practices need not worry much. He can live harmoniously with all the knowledge he requires. Vizai Bhaskar portrays Ruthwik as an engaging character from the very beginning to the end. He is the person who made us realize the reality of life and the contrast between our imagination and reality.

Vizai Bhaskar's play *Ruthwik* deals with the temptations of the human beings that are so common in the life of the modern man who suffers from the desire of power; money etc., It sermonizes the people to live harmoniously by protecting *dharma* which in turn protects human life. The dawn of new tendencies and vogues affecting the very truthful way of human life is the crux of the story. By making 'spiritual anchor' *Ruthwik* a character in the play, Bhaskar dexterously demonstrates *dharma's* co presence in the contemporary Indian home, street and office which marks the *adharma's* co-existence of their lives.

Ruthwik, the central character in the play is very interesting. His description in the beginning of the drama is very realistic and philosophical. Being witness to the life of Manmadharao and his family leading, he urges to look into the value of virtuousness in human life. He gives vent to his mind that a man who habituates the virtue of

goodness like the vice he practices need not worry much. He can live harmoniously with all the knowledge he requires.

In the play *Ruthwik* while the Ruthwik character elucidates the philosophy of life with interesting anecdotes in between the scenes of the play by following the ‘Alienation Theory of Brecht, Manmadharao’s character is an embodiment of corruption, bribery and unlawful earning in the main play. By the time he realizes that his wife and son follow his abhorable conduct and repents for the unpardonable mistakes committed by him, the deity of death knocks at his door. While the characters of his brother-in-law ‘Abbulu’ and Lawyer represent opportunism and greed for money, his wife Manikyam is equally an avaricious character though a house wife. Therefore, even in this play, Vizai Bhaskar relies on characters which commonly appear in the society. Exceptionality is his experiment through the character ‘Ruthwik’, which obviously ventilates his own wonderful school of thought.

While appreciating Vizai’s wizardry as a playwright, Dr. P.V. Ramanal, in his foreword comments on the play superficially a message oriented, creative, entertaining and very real account of an attack on present day societal ills and mistrust.

*Ruthwik* which is structured into two scenes presents the liberal and modern family with their modern tendencies of greed towards money. There is an anxiety over the desire of spending money among the members of a middle class family of Manmadharao. He has a

weakness for which he hypocritically lives. His vagabond son Sekhar who is an embodiment of all modern ills has no care on familial relationships. It is found in one of his utterances.....

*“If it is not this father, I would have born to some other Father! It may be a Royal family! Who knows? Leave it!”* (Ruthwik, 38)

Manikyam, wife of Manmadharao is more selfish and tries to be more practical. In the beginning of the play she looks a faithful wife but later when monetary issues rise, she grows to be more rigid and immoral as it is said in her own dialogue....

“May God forbid! If something odd happens to you tomorrow due to my misfortune, will anybody around me come to my rescue and allow me to enjoy the property? How am I to survive? On whom shall I depend in my last days, except my daughter? And, if I am to seek my daughter’s shelter, I must be good to her! Isn’t it? If I allow her building to be disposed of now, will she be kind to me tomorrow?” (Ruthwik, 48)

Abbulu, brother of Manikyam, is a great opportunist who lives under the grace of his brother-in-law Manmada Rao. He always takes the opportunity to exploit the conditions and shares the money with Lawyer Rama Murthy. His opportunist quality is found as the following.....

*“No more sharing hereafter Mr. Ramamurthy!”*

Management comes into my hands! Brother-in-law will not recover from bed in near future! So, no need for manipulation and no scope for your share!” (Ruthwik, 22)

He also announces that the human race is now suffering from a great disease of feeling jealous of others; in turn they are creating problems to others. Hence he demands us to be sportive in living the life to its brim by having ecstasy and tranquility. He says that the Home must be a place for practicing peace but not the battle field. When Manmada Rao collapses having strife with his wife, Ruthwik rightly defines home as.....

“H O M E means not a hotel to satiate your hunger or a Guest-house to quench your lust! It is an alma mater which imparts your duties! A pious Cottage which prepares you to perform the Matrimonial Yagna! It is a Meditation Hall which stimulates your inner Spirit! It’s a Temple of Wisdom which makes room for introspection! It’s a Mother’s lap which cajoles you to the ecstasy! The Sanctum Sanctorum which blesses you with Salvation!”

(Ruthwik, 20)

Ruthwik also criticizes modern man by saying he would get ready to practice any amount of cruelty for the sake of his well-being. He doesn’t struggle for healthy society and for his fellow human beings.

Being he is a sheer anchor of spreading spirituality, Ruthwik pungently attacks the modernity by saying....

*“In one’s own Life, when fear-complex captivates, any amount of cruelty looks logical for him!” (Ruthwik, 41)*

He also asserts the evil plans of modern man as.....

*“For a good project, there may be only one path! But, for executing an ugly plan, there are hundred and thousand ways!” (Ruthwik, 42)*

Ruthwik highlights Global Family conditions by sermonizing the onlookers of the drama. The scientific study of Ecology describes the interconnectedness, the interrelatedness and the interdependence of living creatures in a given environment. A study of Ecosystems deals with the concepts of Mineral Sharing, Energy Flow and Population Control. Living organisms belong to social communities. The understanding of ecological principles would help us to come together as one large global community and it would enable us to treat life with a sense of respect and appreciate the intrinsic beauty and value of all living creatures. Similarly Vizai’s play *Ruthwik* also strives to see the whole world should be like a family by helping each other to aspire for Universal Peace. It appeals the truth lovers rhetorically to know the reason behind unrest among all the Nations today. On one hand the play is demanding all of us to get united as we have to practice the concept of Vasudhaika Kutumbam.



Through this play the writer shows how the deeds of parents have the bad reflection on the life of children. By the time Manmadha Rao realizes his mistakes his son has become his own facsimile. There is no love and affection among the family member's only commercial relationships. How the modern world killing familial relationships and substitutes with need and benefits. Ruthwik narrates the story sometimes and try to awake our conscience. Finally, we observe how the characters fall as prey to their own deeds. Here this play reminds us of the proverbs "What you sow so you reap." As the king so the subjects, as the father so the son"

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