

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study taboo cultures in South east Asia through drama and theatre. This research focuses on ongoing accepted taboos in South East Asian society and highlights the current taboo trends in a literary perspective. This research aims at a partial if not complete understanding of the concepts of taboos, their importance and acceptance in aforementioned societies. This research is an anthropological study of taboo culture through literature (drama). The plays used for this study are: *Kari*, *Watch the Play and Move On*, *the New Born*, *Still and Still Moving* and *Dukhini*. This research work will explore south east Asian societal taboos through plays written by Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi writers on the themes of Honour Killings, Exploitation of Blasphemy Laws, Female Infanticide, Homosexuality, Prostitution and Sex Trade. The research will further study the prevalence of societal taboos through drama (Stage semiotics) and the need of theatre as a platform to elucidate the importance of taboos as part of the inherent societal culture.

This research is divided into three sections. Each section focuses on a single form of taboo. The two plays in each section are a further extension of the larger taboo. The first two sections comprise of two plays each and the third section comprises of one play. Each play is interpreted and analysed in light of a particular theory which forms the larger framework of the research. These multiple theories form the larger framework of the entire research. While all theories used in this research are part of a single genre in literature. Each section opens with a section page that introduces the section and the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 1 will talk about the taboos of honour killing as a form of individual honour in Pakistan through Shahid Nadeem's play *Kari*. This chapter mainly focuses three levels of understanding of the taboo through the lens of drama. Chapter 2 will talk about the taboo of the exploitation of the Muslim Blasphemy Law in Pakistan through Shahid Nadeem's play *Dekh Tamsha Chalta Ban 'Watch the Play and Move on'*. This chapter mainly focuses three levels of understanding of the taboo through the lens of drama.

Chapter 3 will highlight gender based identity (homosexuality as an identity) and will elaborate on homosexuality as a form of alternative gender based identity. Chapter 4 will focus on biological identity (female infanticide/ foeticide) and will showcase the taboo of female infanticide/ foeticide. Chapter 5 will talk about the taboo of sex slavery and human trafficking in Bangladesh through Shahid Nadeem and Sara Zakir's *Dukhini 'The Woman of Sorrow'*. This chapter mainly focuses three levels of understanding of the taboo through the lens of drama.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of Subaltern Studies and Gothic Literature and its ability to highlight tabooed topics in an academic environment to conduct a potent discourse on the subject.