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## REALITY AND POST-INDEPENDENCE DISILLUSIONMENT IN ASIF CURRIMBHOY'S GOA

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### Abstract

*This new era brought awareness among the people for their rights, needs, requirements, demands and their fulfillment. The expectations of Indian masses, which were running high, were found to be badly belied because of corruption, filthy politics, greed and self-centeredness which slowly crept in and infected the system. Though everything from government to bureaucrats, from system to authorities responsible to implement them, was their own but nothing seemed to be changed. This gap between the expectations and their fulfillment gave rise to the sense of disillusionment. Many steps were taken by the government for the welfare of the common people but the benefits of these welfare schemes could barely reach down to the people who should have been the real recipients of them. Most of the schemes were infected with corruption. Asif Currimbhoy has shown this sense of disillusionment in nearly all his plays that have their roots in the Indian setting and background. After Independence, Indians had strong expectations to get all that had been denied to them during the British rule. The people of India hoped for the best to get through their democratic system which promises equality, justice and contribution of the people in government but all these hopes, expectations and aspirations gradually started fading as the common people found themselves in the same position in which they were before independence and the promises made to them were found to be mere words not turning into reality. This was the time of disillusionment for common people and a kind of frustration was pervaded in the society.*

**Keywords:** *Black marketing, liberation, disenchantment, disillusionment.*

This disillusionment affected every person of the country from illiterate to intellectual and from common man to a literary person. The playwright witnessed the British rule during his childhood and he, like others, was also enthusiastic about the newly found Independence in the days of his youth. Like others, he was also very hopeful for the bright prospect of the country and the people. But the real visage of the new India, the crooked acts of politicians and bureaucrats stunned him and like a common Indian, he felt disillusioned and his heart was stirred to its core. Black marketing, exploitation of the poor and condition of the villagers living in the filthy condition and hovels gave a rude shock to the artist in him and he depicted this in his plays. Most of his plays are related to the events happened in the post-Independence period that shook the conscience of the people. Being inclined to the social concern, he gave a graphic presentation of the social reality, culture, religion, art and problems faced by the people. He sensed the

prevailing disillusionment among Indian people and promptly illustrated it in his plays. He wrote many plays virtually dramatizing this post-Independence disillusionment which he saw in people in all walks of life. Independence brought with itself a new era of changes as well as challenges in the life of Indians.

Goa is also marked by disillusionment and disenchantment. The people of Goa who lived in a different set up are compared to the rest of the country. Another reason of this is that a large number of Portuguese who came down to Goa and settled here nearly three or four centuries ago and they became the citizens of this place. Their dwelling for such a long time made the place a bit different. For them Goa is their native place and they feel like living in their native country. For them "this is Goa, my own, nestling amidst green hills and valleys, the rice fields and rivers that make this a paradisaical land..." (17) Even the people in administration of Goa also support this idea of the locals

as they feel that they have developed this beautiful land and the nationalists who say that it is the part of this country are wrong. The speech of the Portuguese Administrator who thinks that Goa is not a colony but an enclave developed by them makes it clear:

We've been here four hundred years. We're as old as the hills. We're part and parcel of this life whether you like it or not.... And I don't see why you shouldn't like it. It's not as though we were obstructing you....except that there are limits of course. (53)

Instead of having these thoughts and love for Goa when they are called aliens and outsiders by the nationalists, they feel totally stunned and disillusioned as what they feel their country is not theirs. Though India got her freedom in 1947, Goa was liberated in 1961 from the Portuguese who ruled over it including Daman and Diu for four hundred years. Nationalistic feelings were surging up fast as is obvious from the emotional outbursts of the Goan Nationalist in the play. He becomes the representative of the native Indians who want to breathe in the free air. Now everybody is filled with enthusiasm to get Goa free and this aura of nationalism has crushed the feeling that Portuguese had done a lot to look after this land. Now their only aim is to get Goa free and it has become the matter of their dignity. The speech of a Goan nationalist who is passionate for the liberation of Goa, says:

There's nothing.....nothing ..... one can do to stop the basic desire. You could float this enclave in milk and honey and yet we would want for ourselves that abstraction with all our hearts, and nobody, no one will ever be able to stop us, even though we may be ruthless to ourselves and others in getting it. And if freedom cannot be won alone, I'd be willing to join the devil himself to get it. (55)

Thus, disenchantment is there, but it is with the long drawn out regime of the foreigners. The Goans are willing to get themselves free no matter what they have to sacrifice. They don't want the foreigners ruling over them and they want to get this feeling of being slaves wash off from their mind as well as their lives. This much

awaited desire of the people was fulfilled on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1961 but the use of violence could not be prevented while getting Goa liberated. This change of regime and new rule of India brought disillusionment in the lives of Portuguese who were living there thinking Goa their native land. The Goan Nationalist remembers the reminiscences of the past. Though he willfully took part in the movement of liberation of Goa, he remembers his fellows, specially the Portuguese Administrator. But at the same time he is quite hopeful for the future of Goa under new regime. He expresses his view: "Tourists will come and industries will develop and this pleasant sleepy town with the languid Portuguese atmosphere will develop into Indian metropolis, giving opportunities to all" (80) Thus, Asif Currimbhoy looks around him and picks up the matters that touch the wide aspect of the society and he displays the disillusionment that is pervaded in the society. His plays are not concerned with one particular subject but they are the bunch of multi-coloured flowers which have different smells but, being in one bunch, they become one. The plays, written by Asif Currimbhoy, exhibit the Post – Independent disillusionment. Asif Currimbhoy comes as a past master when we take the Post- Independent era and the reality and disillusionment that took place has been portrayed in such a way that it is felt to be running before us live. K.R.S. Iyengar in his Book *Indian Writing in English* has registered the merit of Asif Currimbhoy in this way: "He can contrive interesting situation; his dialogues are arresting and he has a sense of atmosphere; and his plays are actable (245).

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