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## UNIT 3 THEMATIC CONCERNS IN SUDRAKA'S *MRICHCHHATIKA*

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, we shall take up a few important issues and through them highlight the concerns of the playwright at the time of writing this play. An attempt will be made in this unit to establish a link between the said issues and the characters that raise them in the text. Light will also be shed on the value and importance of the issues with respect to the emphasis and focus given to them.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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**Sudraka's *Mrichchhkatika*** is a drama text and it falls under the category of literary writing. The writing involved the active imagination of the author who aimed to entertain the audience and to engage them with situations they could relate to. The society in which the writer lived was uneven and difficult to comprehend. It was hierarchical in nature and at its top sat the king. The text of the play indicates in clear terms that the king in company with merchants, high state officials and judiciary ruled the country. The environs of the play are those of a vibrant city where trade and commerce thrive. It can be safely assumed that through trade, the city (of *Ujjayini*) has a vital linkage with the villages surrounding it. When we come to know that in the city's jail is imprisoned a cowherd insurgent called *Aryaka*, we become aware that rearing of cows would be an important occupation forming a vital part of the city's economic life. We can imagine that the rich and privileged in the city would be leading a life of luxury which is possible only when a huge population of the poor are available to render services to them. All this is indeed there in the play. It is a different matter though, that servants, maidservants, cart drivers, porters, door-keepers, and attendants draw attention only when they are seen at work in different places. The first question that can be posed in this context is whether such a social set up could remain at peace for a long time?

Additionally, we may ask whether the playwright will care to look at such an aspect and show some feeling towards it. This in brief could be the implication

of the word “concerns.” Here, “feeling” is a mild word to use. **Sudraka** has built the image of the protagonist *Charudatta* around the question of poverty—he is a Brahman merchant who has fallen on bad days and his decline from a prosperous man to one who has no money to live by is referred to again and again throughout the play. This is poverty of the gravest kind since it entails a fall from above and one that causes great anguish. In the same manner, the management of a vast society along a legal framework and administrative function would bring in problems of disagreement, friction and violence. Humans caught in clashes to outdo one another would create a complex picture of feuds, and petty quarrels. **Sudraka** takes a keen note of all this and puts to use his imaginative might for presenting a picture of variety and fascination. We will get a view of this as we read the play from beginning to end. Let us follow this simple method of traversing the scene of the play and gain insight into the factors constituting the play, by examining the role and function of the prayer next.

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### 3.2 THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE PRAYER

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Let us begin with a remark on the prayer at the onset of the play. Gods, indeed, are important in the ancient period to which the play belongs. The two gods, *Brahma* and *Shiva* represent creation and protection respectively, these see to it, (if offered respect) that whatever well-intentioned act is planned for execution will turn out successfully. Such a beginning of the play that opens with an invocation is termed *Nandi* in the traditional sense. Also, mark that the verses set to music contain wisdom and goodness couched in philosophy. *Shiva* is talked of as sitting in a yoga-posture and his sense is described as

*so suspended as to cause the cessation of all perception, by reason of the vital airs being confined within; and who, with the eye of truth, is visualising himself and the Universal Soul as one*

*Kale, p. 59*

In it, “*the eye of truth*” is stressed and may emphatically suggest that the play will adhere to the dictum of genuinely knowing what actually goes on in the surrounding world. The utterance would surely cause vibrancy across the play assuring that the dramatic piece so begun will reach the intended end uninterrupted. The same can be said of the figure of *Sutradhar* who, seeing the hall empty, says:

*This music hall is empty! Where could the actors have gone?  
(reflecting) Ah! I got it!—*

*The home of a sonless person is empty; he who doesn't have a real  
friend finds all the time empty; the quarters are empty to a fool;  
and everything is empty to a poor man. (62)*

Such quotations were given conventionally. The famous Indian classic *Panchatantra* is replete with them. They served the purpose of authenticating a perceived happening in the manner of that which all believes in as established. Additionally, the verse connects directly with the state of *Charudatta*, the protagonist of the play when he appears on stage for the first time. Did the narrator *Sutradhar* and his wife *Nati* have a purpose in the play? Lets' look at that next.

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### 3.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *SUTRADHAR* AND *NATI* IN THE PLAY

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The beginning of the play arouses curiosity about the manner in which society that is captured in the play, functions. We note that the first act presents *Sutradhar* surrounded by worries of a peculiar nature. After he has made a general statement, he is joined by *Nati*, his wife and co-actor. The two are in and out of the first act and enjoy a kind of familiarity with the audience that makes them feel at ease with the environs. They indulge in fun and merry-making and create an atmosphere of pleasurable give and take. We visualise a relaxed audience facing the stage. The exchanges that *Sutradhar* and *Nati* have with each other present the image of an audience equipped to appreciate nuances of wit and humour.

The lively exchange between *Sutradhar* and *Nati* tells us about the class differences existing in the ancient period. By convention, *Sutradhar* was a person accomplished in the arts and higher learning. He would hold dialogue with the scholars of the times and also train artists as a guide and teacher. He is held in esteem by the society's upper sections. This bestows on him even linguistic superiority that in turn places him on a high pedestal. In this play, *Sutradhar* ordinarily speaks *Sanskrit*. But see that he shifts to *Prakrit*, the language of the common people, when he talks to *Nati*. The latter is an inferior in the social hierarchy for being a nonentity in the world of arts and letters, and also since she is a woman. The play makes a deft use of the shift in language to draw a line of demarcation between the weaker and powerful sections of the society of the times.

The distance between *Sutradhar* and *Nati* is further augmented by the tone the two adopt in conversation with each other. *Sutradhar* is jovial but is generally authoritative. *Nati* knows that she is to remain conscious about her station in life which demands of her to show nothing but agreement with whatever the husband says. Yet, she has an agile mind, something that puts her in contrast with *Sutradhar*, who has a simple mind, not possessing subtlety and nuances of speech. When *Sutradhar* assumes a mightier stance, she punctures him suddenly with a turn of speech. This makes the former angry. Seeing this, *Nati* changes tack, retreats from the position she held previously. The question is, who comes out stronger at the end of it all? The answer is a clear affirmation of *Nati* as the more powerful communicator of the two.

Entry into the play is provided by the food-based argument between *Sutradhar* and *Nati*. During the discussion *Nati* has observed a fast which can be ended only when a *Brahman* is fed. The ritual of feeding a *Brahman* necessitates *Sutradhar's* inviting *Maitreya* (who from offstage) declines the offer—as it become clear that he is already enroute to another home for food and the tribute of money thereafter. The movement from *Sutradhar-Nati* dialogue to the inside of the dramatised action is smooth. *Maitreya* is *Charudatta's* close friend and a reference point to the latter's lean economic phase. We see that the quarrel between husband and wife is resolved successfully - as **Sudraka's** dramatic skills are underlined by such an arrangement of the *Prologue*. We face, however, the question as to why the *Prologue* is so long and elaborate. Is it that the first scene, which is a mixture of informal imparting of information and introduction of hidden tensions, will pave the way for calling in the protagonist to the stage

so that the drama's serious business can begin? We need to think about it as we analyse the play. Meanwhile, what is troubling our hero *Charudatta*? The next section examines the trouble of the hero.

### Check Your Progress 1

1. What function do Sutradhar and Nati serve in the play?

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## 3.4 CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE HERO

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On stage, *Maitreya*, indeed, is heard talking to himself but also announcing for one and all the point that *Charudatta* is facing misfortune and worry. See what *Maitreya* says in the manner of a general announcement:

*Or I, too, Maitreya, have to look for invitations from others! Ah, Fortune, you have made a pauper out of me! I, who indeed, when my friend Charudatta was prosperous, used to devour, day and night, upon the sweetmeats, emitting savoury smells at the effusion of breath, and prepared with great care, and I, sitting at the entrance of his antahpura, surrounded by hundreds of dishes, used repeatedly to touch them with my fingers and put them aside when satisfied, just like a painter surrounded by hundreds of colour pots touching each with his fingers and removing it after use, and who used to remain ruminating like a bull in a public square of the city. (65)*

What strikes us as significant in this quotation is the long sentence containing clauses in which each has a narrative of its own. *Charudatta* is prosperous and his friend *Maitreya* enjoys dishes as a *Brahman* should in the situation. The simile of the painter with many colours on his palette at his disposal is interesting. Just as the painter is shown to be creating an object of beauty, similarly the *Brahman* has many tasty dishes at his disposal to taste/eat. The bull symbolises relaxation as well as authority. The word ruminating is employed for the bull that is unconcerned with what goes on around it. All these images weave a picture of harmony and plenty. We may note that pictures in this description tell of a situation as much with information as with suggestion of sounds and hand movements.

The First Act is well laid out in terms of situations that are concrete entities. They can be visualised by the audience. Additionally, they bring in dimensions of the larger society. This may be seen in company with those imagined few who share life's values with *Maitreya*. **Sudraka's** aim appears to be making him a symbol of goodness and virtue. We have, for instance, *Charudatta* and *Maitreya* discussing poverty with respect to its negative effect on life, even as it may not amount to much in the play. *Charudatta* explains it effectively. *Maitreya* tries to console his friend by sympathising with him. He refuses to worship deities that do not reverse the misfortune of such a good man as *Charudatta*. As the play progresses we know that the stalking, chase, kidnapping, and proposed murder of *Vasantasena* is eminent, that aspect will be examined next.

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### 3.5 ADMINISTERING THE STATE: REPERCUSSIONS

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Think of another situation in the play. It is violent and greatly disturbing since it involves showing of the chase of a young woman by uncouth stalkers. Mark that it is presented in a poetic mode rendering the description comic and serious simultaneously! If one looks at the woman, one feels a sense of helplessness, observing that there is no possibility of escape for her from her molesters. She is terrified and panic-ridden. However, the dialogues of the rogues have a discourse that is couched in repetitive words bound with a refrain. The humour emanating from their efforts and words is sinister. It may appeal to those among the audience who came to the performance for titillation. The play does not present titillation but shows the villainous group in a negative light. This is how the comic is to be interpreted in the context. To see the point in greater clarity, let us refer to the repetition of words in the description as follows:

*Vita: Stay, Vasantasena, stay!—*

*Why are you, setting aside your tenderness of limbs owing to fear, and plying your feet which are trained by the practice of dancing, running away like a female deer, frightened when being pursued by a hunter, with eyes casting affrighted and tremulous side-glances?*

*Sakar: Stay, Vasantasena, stay!—*

*Why do you go, run and scamper and stumble? Be pleased, O girl! You won't die. Stay awhile. Indeed, my poor heart is being burnt by passion, just like a piece of flesh fallen on a heap of burning charcoal.*

*Cheta: Stay, lad, stay!—*

*You are running away from me in terror, like a pea-hen in the hot season with her tail fully grown and outstretched. Here is my lord and master bounding (after you) like a young cook in the forest.*

*Vita: Stay, Vasantasena, stay!—*

*Why do you run away, quaking like a young plantain tree, your red silken garment trailing with its ends fluttering in the breeze, and dropping off the numerous buds of red lotuses, like a cave of red arsenic, being excavated with a chisel? (68)*

The chase and dialogues continue for quite some time till *Vasantasena* does the disappearing act and walks into safe territory. Consider the stylised dialogues that have the tone of a musical pattern. The remarks by the group of scoundrels led by *Sakar*, the king's brother-in-law, combine to turn the chase into a net from which the supposed bird, a helpless young woman, cannot fly away.

The details of life woven, in this set of the rascals going after a lone woman are so much a part of social discourse in a male-dominated environment that we in the modern era, too, see in it a close familiarity. It is horrifying. 20<sup>th</sup> century films and those of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are full of atrocities against women. Their purpose is to titillate the audience in such a manner that males in the audience accept them as a norm. In *Mrichchhakatika*, the account is focused upon the satirical manner. Mark the hidden suggestions of violence to be done to the woman as soon as she is caught. In the context, the first image is of a female deer pursued by a hunter. We note that passion in the male for the female body is expressed here in terms of burning charcoal.

The third is of a pea-hen falling in the hands of a cook who would fry it and make a dish out of it— vocabulary such as this - of cutting into pieces, burning and eating is repulsive. The last description leaves nothing to the imagination as the writer lays bare the entire game of dark pleasure graphically— *Vasantasena* is being compared to a plantain tree—with its “*red silken garment trailing with its ends fluttering in the breeze, and dropping off the numerous buds of red lotuses, like a cave of red arsenic, being excavated with a chisel.*” The artistic control is manifest in the pictures that has been created to show the horror of the city scene. In it, the young woman doomed to bear untold agony, symbolises the helpless populace of *Ujjayini* ruled by an insensitive ruler. We may keep in mind, too, the mix of comedy and social criticism the playwright intended to exhibit. Let us examine this a little thoroughly next.

### Check Your Progress 2

1. Critically analyse the theme of instability in *Mrichchhkatika*.

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## 3.6 MIX OF COMEDY AND SOCIAL ANARCHY

In the scene that we are interpreting, there is another example of comedy used by **Sudraka**. It brings to the fore social divisions that create disharmony and a distorted value system. The playwright maintains a subtle distinction between the profound and ludicrous, alternating each with great mastery. In one case the king's brother-in-law *Sakara* plays the fool and misunderstands ‘calm’ for ‘fatigued’ (the Sanskrit words *shanta* and *shranta* respectively). In the process, he waxes eloquent about the male not fatigued but as more aroused by the chase of a beautiful woman. The playwright uses it to combine absurdity and social criticism beautifully. Consider the following:

*Vasantasena*: Sir, I am only a feeble woman!

*Vita*: Hence you are alive!

*Sakara*: Hence you are not killed!

*Vasantasena* (to herself): Even his courtesy strikes terror! Well, I will proceed thus, (aloud) Sir, do you expect to take my ornament?

*Vita*: Heaven forbid! O *Vasantasena*, a garden-creeper deserves not to be robbed of its blossoms. So we have nothing to do with ornaments.

*Vasantasena*: Then what, indeed, can it be now?

*Sakara*: That I, a heavenly personage, a man, and *Vasudeva*, should be loved.

*Vasantasena* (angrily): Enough, no more of this! Get away! You talk wickedly.

*Sakara* (clapping his hands and laughing): Friend, friend! Just see. This courtesan girl is indeed very much attached to me and hence she says to me, ‘come, you are fatigued, you are exhausted’, while I have not gone to another village, nor to another city. Lady, I swear by my friend's head touched by my feet. I am fatigued and wearied while chasing you here and there.

*Vita* (to himself): Oh! The fool understands *shranta* (fatigued) when she said *shanta* (enough or calm down).

(aloud) O *Vasantasena*, you have spoken in a manner contrary to your profession—

*Remember that the courtesans' quarter is dependent on young men for help and also consider yourself like a creeper growing by the wayside. You possess a body that can be bought for money and hence it is like an article for sale. Therefore, O good maiden, serve equally one much coveted by you and one disliked by you.*

*Moreover—*

*An erudite eminent Brahmana, and also an idiot of the lowest caste, both bathe in the same well. Even a crow bends on the same creeper in bloom that had been bent by a peacock sitting upon it. And by the same boat Chandalas (Shudras) cross a river, by which Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas cross it. You are a harlot, and therefore like a well, or a creeper, or a boat. Wait upon all equally.*

In the passage, the use of language as well as the act of giving *Vita* an opportunity to make a point about money and the market widens the scope of meaning. **Sudraka** uses a very interesting ideological move by branching out into neutral concepts such as the articles for sale, or the boat not distinguishing an upper caste *Brahmana* from a *Chandala*; even if philosophically posed, lights up the scene enormously.

Given a play of this nature it is but inevitable that there will be class differences, and given that *Vasantasena* is a courtesan, the world of *Shringara* and love will also feature predominantly. So, the question really is what purpose does *Shringara* and love serve in the play? Let's look at that next.

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### 3.7 **SHRINGARA, LOVE AND CLASS DIFFERENCES**

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The play gains in the unfolding action. The two situations depicted for presentation offers a contrast to romance, shedding deep colour on sensitive individuals and mundane happenings in which ordinary people participate. The first is characterised by the talk between *Vasantasena* and *Madanika* involving love. The subject belongs to the category of *shringara*—

*Maid: Sir, what next?*

*Samvahaka: Lady, owing to the large gifts he borrowed in compassion, he now—*

*Vasantasena: has lost all his fortune?*

*Samvahaka: How did Your Ladyship know it, even before it was told to you?*

*Vasantasena: What is there to be known? Virtues and riches are seldom found to exist together. Water is most plentiful in those pools which are unfit to be drunk from.*

*Maid: Sir, what may his name be?*

*Samvahaka: Lady, who is there that does not know the name of that Moon on this Earth? He resides in the merchants' quarter; he, of auspicious name, is called the noble Charudatta.*

*Vasantasena: (joyfully getting down from her seat. And take up a fan, His Honour is wary with fatigue.*

*(Maid does as ordered)*

*Samvahaka (to himself): How! By the mere mention of the noble Charudatta's name they are showing me so much respect! Excellent, noble Charudatta, excellent! You alone really live in this world, while all other persons merely breathe!*

(94)

We notice in the middle of the ordinary exchange a sudden shift to thoughtful words such as *live* and *breathe*. These need to be examined in their deeper connotations. This is preceded in the quotation by the statement that “*Virtues and riches are seldom found to exist together.*” This is then elucidated by “*Water is most plentiful in those pools which are unfit to be drunk from.*” Significantly, the supposed elucidation leads us to an indicator of a broader truth that plenty is not necessarily good but rather the opposite, something extremely hateful. To reiterate, money and riches are not valuable in themselves, but only as items that make living easy. Also, if stored, they breed evil. The observation that “*Pools which are unfit to be drunk from*” makes a direct reference to the privileged sections who command not genuine respect but artificial adoration. This bigger dictum is hidden well behind the simple details of life as is shown. Further, “*living*” contains quality such as happiness and high thoughts because of which it is looked up to. On the other hand, “*breathing*” puts humans on par with animals that breathe alone and do not know the aims and purposes of life that might lift one to the heights of noble principles of sympathy and compassion. *Mrichchhakatika* is a great play since out of a simple comedy bordering upon buffoonery, it suddenly lights up the stage with insights of the kind brought forth in the quotation above.

In a significant sense, class differences exist in the play and are accepted as such by all. The subtlety of perception is, however, shown at work, and its source is the heart of *Charudatta*, the *Brahman* caught in distress. He is generally of an aesthetic bent, and in the circumstances, his capacity to observe still deeper levels of understanding, is truly notable. This happens in the context of *Vidushaka*, a friend of *Charudatta*'s and a *Brahmana* by birth who has come to spend valuable time with *Charudatta*. The latter arrives home and is received by a servant with a pot of water in hand in readiness to wash *Charudatta*'s feet. This is how the act is represented:

*Vidushaka: Varadhamanaka, call Radanika to wash our feet.*

*Charudatta (with compassion): You do not awaken a person who is sleeping.*

*Cheta: Sir Maitreya, I'll hold the water, and you may wash Charudatta's feet.*

*Vidushaka (angrily): Friend, here is this fellow, the son-of-a-slave going to hold the water, while he wants to make me, who am a Brahmana, wash your feet.*

*Charudatta: Friend Maitreya, you may hold the water and Vardhamanaka will wash my feet!*

*Cheta: Sir Maitreya, pour the water.*

*(Vidushaka does accordingly, Cheta washes Charudatta's feet and moves away)*

*Charudatta: You should also pour water over the Brahmana's feet.*

*Vidushaka: What good will water for my feet do? I shall again soon have to roll on the ground, like a beaten ass?*

*Cheta: Sir Maitreya, you are indeed a Brahmana!*

*Vidushaka: Yes, I am a Brahmana among all the Brahmanas, like the harmless and despised dundubha among all the serpents!*



Mark that *Vidushaka Maitreya* has the hidden arrogance of a *Brahamana* and none in the company minds it. But the playwrights stressed it unmistakably, suggesting its peculiar nature—the conversation is out of place in the circumstance of economic inequality. Thus, once the ritual of washing the feet is finished, the state of poverty comes to the surface and the poor *Brahamana* is the one who compares himself to creature that has no sting. Also, the economically mighty, bear comparison to poisonous snakes. The playwright’s hand in showing the truth of the matter is unmistakable. Let us analyse another important aspect of art and its use in our lives next.

### Check Your Progress 3

1. How are Shrinagara and love depicted in Mrichchhatika? Discuss with examples.

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## 3.8 WISDOM THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT

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Even as the talk so far has been smooth and somewhat inconsequential, it has offered a background to what follows—an episode of rare subtlety and brilliance. It relates to *Sarvilaka*, the *Brahamana* adventurer who is forced by necessity to commit a robbery. Let us bear in mind that *Sarvilaka* is well-read in scriptures and conversant with knowledge of the highest quality. However, the playwright has assigned to him the role of a lover out to get his woman of choice freed from bondage. The act he is to commit is unlawful but the mission is of love. This fits in well with the tone and tenor of the play—a work providing entertainment and a realistic picture of the complex world of ancient India. What strikes us is the dramatic conception of the sequence of happenings—on display being the sense of timing, changes and shuffles of detail that bring out skills of the writer impressively. Under the scheme, *Sarvilaka* breaks into the house of *Charudatta* in the dead of the night and steals the ornaments that *Vasantasena* had left with *Charudatta* while trying to escape from the clutches of rascals who were in hot pursuit of her. The scene of committing the theft is presented in terms of suspense. Thus, a single wrong move can be disastrous. At the same time, the effective execution of the crime can provide satisfaction to the audience.

The question can, however, be raised whether the notion of moral conduct can be persuasively established with use of characters driven by desire alone. On the one side, we have *Charudatta* and *Vasantasena* who are upright and honest. They generate an atmosphere of sweet emotion. Whereas, *Charudatta* is living a life of misery and want, *Vasantasena* suffers the pain of ignominy and helplessness. In this, too, the former maintains an exterior of self-control and discipline, and the latter appeals to the audience by her sense of straightforward love. As companions, the duo appears to be pillars of strength to the society at large. In the city, they are discussed as carrying the weight of righteousness. This makes them a bridge between the established tradition of projecting the high principles of life on the one hand and a thin line between the newly emerged world of success and manipulation on the other. The writer **Sudraka** walks

on the fine thread of the immediate surroundings that seek balancing on standards of acceptability. It was a serious challenge that dramatic art faced at the time marked by transition. In the historical context, the old rule of the king to serve the cause of order was being fast replaced by a pattern in which trade was the pragmatic requirement. As writer of vision, **Sudraka** would not compromise on realism and kept instead his eyes and ears open to a changing scenario.

The requirement of capturing an existing world through recognition of its amoral parameters was a task worth fulfilling. With this end in view, **Sudraka** displaced the figure of the king and his court from the centre and peopled the play with the men of the streets. The task entailed the risk of faltering on the side of the immoral and becoming a means of presenting the vulgar stratum. Accomplishing a balance between the change in economy and society was a challenge for **Sudraka**. In response to such a question, we may think of the play that has so many characters. It appears to be the case of the many portraits that hang on the wall and draw the attention of the viewers to the wealth of pattern they carry. Indeed, the audience might lose track of what goes on in the play as a well-knit sequence. The crowding of personages on the stage and the lines of their movement may have criss-crossed interminably.

That is why perhaps, the last scene is heavy with issues. We are made to ask as to where it will all end, and whether some sort of answer will emerge finally. We wonder, for instance, whether the play will end as a tragedy with the death of *Charudatta*? One answer is in the play of chance or fate. This is what **Sudraka** has used for ending the play on a happy note. But he has achieved more than this. He has changed the entire texture of the play by using the shadow of change happening in the background. Mark that the said changes are of great proportions! It points towards the replacement of the unjust and autocratic king by another who is a people's hero. As we view the happenings on the stage, we are constantly reminded of the presence of the new king who escaped the scene in the beginning of the play but came back finally to assume authority. This theme of grandeur in the background enables the writer to offset the imbalance caused by gamblers, thieves and tricksters. The latter eventually become colourful agents of the dynamic life that the circumstance of the time produced.

#### Check Your Progress 4

1. To what extent can *Mrichchhkatika* be called a play of hope? Discuss.

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### 3.9 LET US SUM UP

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**Sudraka's** *Mrichchhkatika* provides a vivid picture of the socio-political scene in ancient India that is ridden with issues of instability, poverty, and suffering. At the back of these, however, are ideals that may shine forth when conditions became improved and the city gained is in the hands of a rightful authority. Also to be recognised in the play is the various thematic concerns of love, emotional suffering, longing and pain. These are not presented as universally

**Sudraka:**  
*Mrichchhatika*

present issues of life. Instead, they are given specific colouring of the circumstance of the day. Even as the concerns are of a serious nature, they are given the perspective of a realistic art resting on comic entertainment. This broadens the reach of the play. For this reason, *Mrichchhatika* wins appreciation in our time of crisis and contentious questions. The finally emerging hopefulness is a sign of the play's strength and significance.

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### **3.10 HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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#### **Check Your Progress 1**

1. Read Section 3.3

#### **Check Your Progress 2**

1. Read Section 3.5

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

1. Read Section 3.7

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

1. Read Section 3.8

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### **3.11 GLOSSARY**

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*Antahpur*: The inner part of the palace where the queen and her maids reside.

*Bull in a public square*: A picture signifying peacefulness.