

DISINTEGRATION OF FAMILY: DISREGARD OF PARENTS IN NATSAMRAT

Dr. J. D. Pardeshi

Associate Professor, Department of English
 Yeshwantrao Chavan College, Sillod, Tq. Sillod Dist. Chh. Sambhajinagar

Introduction:

Natsamrat is Marathi-language drama film which was released in 2016. It was directed by Mahesh Manjrekar. It explores the emotional and psychological complexities of an elderly theatre actor, Ganpatrao Belwalkar (which was played by versatile actor Nana Patekar in the movie), who struggles with the consequences of his devotion to his career and the emotional neglect meted out to him by his children. The central theme of the movie is the emotional indifference and disregard shown by the children to their parents especially in their old age. The portrayal of this disregard serves as a powerful commentary on modern societal tendencies towards aging parents and the disintegration of familial dynamics in contemporary world. This paper undertakes to explore the theme of parental neglect in Natsamrat by analyzing the emotional turmoil faced by the protagonist as his relationship with his children becomes stretched. Natsamrat serves as a reflection of broader societal issues, such as the devaluation of parental wisdom and the changing nature of familial relations in modern days.

Objectives:

1. To study the Marathi film Natsamrat carefully
2. To highlight the central theme of the film
3. To analyze the film as a narrative of neglect of ageing parents

Hypotheses:

This research paper attempts to prove the validity of the following hypotheses:

1. The film Natsamrat depicts the pathetic plight of ageing parents
2. There are certain reasons for disintegration of family in the film
3. The fictitious narrative of Natsamrat is increasingly becoming the fact

Research Methodology:

This research paper is secondary research of interpretative nature. The movie Natsamrat is studied, analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive, argumentative and critical method. The disregard of elderly people in the film is studied and interpreted to arrive at a conclusion of the research inquiry.

Ganpatrao Belwalkar's Role as a Parent:

Ganpatrao Belwalkar is a respected theatre actor who has dedicated his entire life to his craft. However, as he reaches old age, he is forced to confront the isolation and neglect that comes with the sacrifices he made throughout his life. His children, who were once the focus of his love and care, are now indifferent to him, pursuing their self-interests instead of looking after their parents' emotional needs.

In the movie, Ganpatrao's sacrifice for his children is evident when he looks back at the years he spent in theater and how it impacted his family life. He raised his children with love and care, but as they grew older, they distanced themselves from him, prioritizing their own careers and aspirations. Ganpatrao's wife Kaveri is more practical and accompanies him through thick and thin. She tolerates her children's neglect with patience. After being abandoned by their children, they are subjected to emotional aloofness and disregard in their senile days.

The Rejection of Traditional Values:

Natsamrat accurately portrays the rapid degradation of traditional family values. The children, once nurtured and supported by their father, view him as a burden as they are engrossed with their own lives. The movie presents this transformation as a consequence of societal changes, such as the rise of materialism and the growing emphasis on individual interests. The lack of respect for elders demonstrated by children showcases how society has shifted away from the

reverence once given to the parents. The emotional neglect is poignantly depicted when Ganpatrao's son, Makrand, despite being financially secure, shuns his filial responsibilities. Notwithstanding his father's years of sacrifices, his children are too absorbed in their own lives to acknowledge their father's emotional and familial needs.

The Sense of Isolation:

The sense of isolation keeps hunting the protagonist Ganpatrao Belwalkar who undergoes a physical and mental downfall after retirement. His children show disregard to his emotional and familial needs of affection, respect and empathy. This abandonment creates a sense of emotional isolation that is further worsened by his physical frailty. The film highlights Ganpatrao's silence and helplessness in the twilight years of his life. The traditional joint family system, which provided more space for elderly people, is now almost replaced by nuclear families where older people are left alone, both physically and emotionally.

The Changing Nature of Family Relationships:

Natsamrat portrays a significant shift in family dynamics, especially in relation to elderly parents. Ganpatrao's children demonstrate a lack of empathy and filial responsibility. They represent the changing attitudes toward aging parents in modern society, where the filial duty of caregiving is often ignored in favor of personal advancement. Ganpatrao is confronted with the stark reality that his son, Makrand, has no intention of looking after him in his old days. This moment is pivotal in the film, as it highlights how the pursuit of self-interest and individual goals has led to disregard of the older generation. The film critiques this shift, pointing out that while children once revered their parents, the changing socio-economic structure of contemporary India has eroded this respect.

Parental Disregard and its Consequences:

The emotional consequences of parental disregard are explored deeply in Natsamrat. Ganpatrao's life falls apart as he is confronted with the feelings of betrayal, loneliness, and helplessness. His emotional breakdowns

depict the inner turmoil of an elderly person who has been deprived of the affection and respect they deserve after years of sacrifice. The movie poignantly highlights the impact of neglect on an elderly person's mental health. Ganpatrao's once-proud persona as a stage actor is overshadowed by his emotional suffering. As the film progresses, the audience is led to sympathize with Ganpatrao's plight and recognize the moral failure of his children. The neglect of Ganpatrao illustrates the broader issue of how elderly people are often neglected by their own families in society.

Societal Reflection and Commentary:

Natsamrat addresses a broader societal issue—the erosion of family values and respect for elders. The film critiques modern society wherein mutual respect and affection among family members is replaced by self-interest and materialism which in its turn has ushered in a breakdown of the traditional joint family system.

The film brings to the fore the harsh reality of neglect of elderly people in society at large. It reflects a time when familial responsibilities have been superseded by personal success, material wealth, and career advancement. In the case of Ganpatrao, his children's disregard for him symbolizes the breakdown of the traditional bonds between parents and children, a breakdown that is becoming increasingly common and all pervasive in modern India.

Psychological and Emotional Impact on Parents:

Ganpatrao experiences emotional trauma due to the indifference of his children. This neglect is not only physical but also psychological. His desire for affection and respect from his children becomes a source of immense pain. This abandonment manifests in his worsening mental health which leads to a sense of worthlessness and aloofness. His inability to cope with the emotional void created by his children's disregard reminds the impact of family neglect on the mental health of old people.

Need for Societal Changes:

The movie highlights the lack of institutional structures to support ageing parents in Indian

families. The absence of strong social support systems for elderly people, in terms of healthcare, welfare, and emotional support, remains a pressing issue in many parts of India. Natsamrat implicitly critiques this gap, pointing out that elderly people should be supported by some kind of institutional structures. The film brings to light the often-hidden struggles of elderly parents who are abandoned by their children and ignored by society. It serves as both a critique of modern family dynamics and a wake-up call to action for societal change. The physical, emotional and social implications of neglect explored in the movie are not only reflective of individual family crises but also of larger societal issues, calling for more empathy, care, and due respect for elderly people. Natsamrat highlights the need for a return to values of care, respect and filial duty. It is a powerful reminder that while children may grow up and leave home, the emotional needs of ageing parents should never be neglected and society must take greater responsibility in making sure that they are treated with affection and dignity.

Conclusion:

Natsamrat effectively portrays the disregard of parents in a modern society that prioritizes self-interest over family bonds. Through the emotional journey of Ganpatrao Belwalkar, the film brings out the disintegration of traditional familial values and highlights the

pathetic emotional condition of the elderly parents. It calls for a reconsideration of how we treat our parents, particularly in their old days. Through Ganpatrao's pain, the audience is challenged to reflect on their own treatment of aging parents and the importance of giving affection, respect, and empathy to our parents in their senile days when they badly need it. Natsamrat is more than just a film about an aging actor, it is a reflection of a cultural shift in familial dynamics and societal values. The fictitious story of Ganpatrao is increasingly assuming the form of reality in our society. The film is not just a personal story but a larger societal commentary on the need for compassion and care for the aging population in contemporary social milieu in India.

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