

CHAPTER - V

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Conclusion

Vijay Tendulkar, the prolific Marathi playwright, a successful wielder of the pen, has won the Sangeet Natak Akedemi Award, the Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay Award and the Padma Bhusan. For Tendulkar, the inspiration comes from the society around him. He is a keen observer of human relationship especially in lower and middle class society. In almost all his plays, women play crucial roles in the plot. Thematically, in his plays there is the exploration of man-woman relationships and he depicts in them the social individual tensions and the complexities of human characters.

Tendulkar demonstrates how society adds to the depreciation of women as human beings and deprives them of most human rights. He shows how women are exploited, tortured and victimized. The dramatist deals with the syndrome of power and violence. He has focused on men's superiority complex and shown subtle inverted and preservative relationship of man and woman.

Tendulkar's drama *Silence! The Court is in Session* shows out men like Mr. Kashikar, Sukhatme, Karnik, Prof. Damle, Ponkshe, Rockde, Samant against the protagonist, Leela Benare and torture her through a mock trial. He exposes the hypocrisy of male domination tradition and society and its hostility against women. Through the depiction of violent response of the male dominated world, pre-marital relationship and motherhood, the dramatist holds a mirror to our social response to such things. It is pre-eminently male biased.

The play introduces a theatre group that concentrates on social evil, dissects and finally disturbs it for its elimination through stage performances before the village. The

problem is the charge of infanticide put against the spinster, Leela Benare who gets pregnant. In the course of the court proceedings Benare's private life is exposed and publicly dissected revealing that she is a woman of loose character. Vijay Tendulkar expresses the attitude of authorities, the basic hypocrisy and the double standards on which the society is founded. He also displays how the desires of women are repressed under the onslaught of reactionary ideas of the fundamentally orthodox society. It shows how women are disrupted to do certain things – cannot talk freely, walk freely and live freely. Benare, a school teacher, is self-reliant, bold, successful working lady, having her individuality, leads her life in her own freeway. But she falls a victim of male's ego, of superiority, lust, for flesh or body.

Prof. Damle, who is equally responsible and guilty is well protected and trial is not set against him. He is just a witness. Only Benare is blamed of the wrong doing and blame for the immoral act. The play brings out the hypocrisy of the society by excusing men and prosecutes women for the same offence. If Benare has committed a crime Prof. Damle has committed dual crimes – one against Benare and the other against his wife. Damle who is responsible for Benare's pregnancy withdraws easily from all responsibilities. But Benare is totally devastated and is in a sense of fear like a caged animal and is dismembered morally and socially.

Another kind of man-woman relationship is between employer and employee. Benare works as a school teacher is exploited physically, mentally, psychologically and sexually by the employer. She is victimized by the employer Nansaheb, who asks to do an enquiry when he hears about the licentious and profligate behavior of Benare and her pregnancy. His approach towards the pregnancy of Benare is different from that of

Benare's. Benare considers it to be her private life, while Nanasaheb considers it to be an act of sin before marriage and thinks it be still more immoral to let such a woman teach. Benare is a progressive woman but in the Indian society certain norms are prescribed for the women. It is expected that women should adjust to these norms. The norms are different for men and women. Since it is a patriarchal society, rules are male prejudiced. There are many restrictions for women and when a woman tries to throw these restrictions away, the society blames her for her action and behavior.

It is hypocritical on the part of male dominated society when Mr. Kashikar advocates the supreme position of women as mothers but on the other hand he drags a mother into the witness box and punishes her with his most heinous judgment. The verdict in this case is that Benare cannot allow the birth of the child out of wedlock. Benare wants to give birth to this illegal child. She gets no support and hence stands isolated and alienated by the society, because to others marriage is a very foundation of the society's stability and to them motherhood must be sacred and pure.

The character of Leela Benare is presented as contrast to all other characters of the play and in particular Mrs. Kashikar who is just the opposite of Benare. Mrs. Kashikar, an illiterate lady, is childless and who longs to have one stands against Benare that she must be punished in order to avoid immorality in the society. She goes to the extent of saying that the child marriage system should be introduced and recommends that girl should be married off before puberty.

Mrs. Kashikar is orthodox and she is worried too much about the society whereas Benare's character is carved out as a rebel. She stands against the system. Leela Benare is

innocent of the ways of the world but shows great courage. She shows her moral courage and integrity to admit the mistake that she has committed in her childish innocence.

Tendulkar projects another aspect of man-woman relationship which is the husband and wife relationship. Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar is a middle class couple with the usual male hegemony. Mr. Kashikar, an educated gentle man engaged in social work hides his failure and career to retain the social status. He loves his wife but pays little time to her. There is no natural impulsive love towards her but his love is duty oriented. The Kashikars put on a show of mutual fondness in public in order to hide their conjugal discord. Mr. Kashikar buying garlands for his wife and Mrs. Kashikar buying shirts for her husband are indicative of their attempts to protect themselves to the world as an ideal couple – ‘made-for each-other.’

In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar brings several questions about love, sex, marriage and moral values prevalent in the society. It is a society which asks everyone to conform to its own yardsticks of decorum and propriety. Tendulkar highlights the hollowness of middle class moralities. The moralities may have slight variations, but, at all times and all ages they remain the same. An individual cannot take ‘primrose path of dalliance.’ Irregular or abnormal behavior will not be tolerated and no reasons will be good enough to justify and find alibis for a person’s erratic behavior.

In the play *Kamala*, Tendulkar exposes the condition of women in contemporary Indian society. Kamala and Sarita are two women characters in the play, who are treated as feeling less objects as if they have no sentiments. Tendulkar displays how both of them are prevented from doing certain essential works and suffer an unfair justice emotional and mental crisis. Kamala is from a rural flesh market whom Jaisingh wants to present at

the press conference. Jaisingh did not have any motive to reform Kamala's life but it is only a means by which he could get promotion in his job and win reputation in his professional career. His craze for name and fame has transformed him loveless and mindless fellow. He treats both Sarita and Kamala not as human beings but as objects of exhibition. The former brings him promotion and reputation in his job and the latter provides him with domestic comfort and sexual pleasure in conjugal life.

Kamala's entry into Jaisingh's house reveals to Sarita her husband's egoistic and deceitful nature. Kamala makes Sarita conscious that she is a slave to husband. Sarita, the wife, after her association with Kamala realizes that she too is just a pawn in Jaisingh's game of chess. Sarita asks questions like "Why aren't women ever the masters? Why can't a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as a man? Why must only a man have the right to be a man? Does he have one extra sense? A woman can do everything a man can" (47). Sarita insistently asserts on the need of a change in the concept of womanhood.

Vijay Tendulkar attacks on marriage institution. Sarita is an embodiment of the women who are used either as slaves, menial servants or stepping stone of the male counterparts. The women characters Kamala and Sarita depict simplicity, innocence, sincerity, generosity and spirit of devotion to their male companions.

Kanyadaan is an account of Jyoti who is born in a political family with progressive views marries a dalit man because he is good at writing poetry. Her father's lofty ideal has inculcated in her a spirit which tries to find a good in people. After getting married to him she realizes there is a strange malice in him, a sadistic desire to punish her for the sufferings his ancestors have gone through ages. The father with lofty ideals of

humanity and socialism is defeated – he finds himself powerless before the predicament of his daughter. Vijay Tendulkar sheds light on the sensitive issue of spousal abuse and how a woman in the name of marriage institution is caught in the web of domestic violence.

In the select three plays *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar exhibits how women in Indian society are victimized, tortured and exploited. His women characters, Leela Benare, Sarita, Kamala and Jyoti are presented as marginalized objects in interlocking system of sexual politics and power politics. Vijay Tendulkar's women fall a victim of an imbalanced and distorted man-woman relationship which places women in subjugation to man in society. It is not only his women characters but on the whole the female race from the time immemorial are treated as beasts and slaves.

Vijay Tendulkar's plays lucidly picturize that women are mere sufferers and victims at the hands of men in Indian society. They are treated as an inferior figure by men and gradually they are innate with the thought that they consider themselves inferior and weaker sex. They sacrifice everything for the sake of men in their family, including their lives. In reality, they have no social identity rather than as a daughter, wife and mother. L. Amritashwori Devi in the article "Women as Victims in Mahesh Dattani's *Bravely Fought The Queen*" states,

Indian women are still under domination and oppression that the long sustained patriarchy is still going on will be going on and on for men are not going to get themselves reformed. The subjugation, the torture or the way our women suffer may be different but the age-old system of

dominance over women by men will never end and they are and will always be the victims in our male chauvinistic society. (196)

Marriage as a social institution has laid down stringent rules and restrictions for women. Women are expected to adjust to these prescribed norms and when they try to throw these restrictions away, the society blames her for her action and behavior. He exposes the gender discrimination in patriarchal society and women's fight against this injustice.

Benare's struggles against the orthodox society and when her private life is exposed and dissected publicly she goes to an extent of standing against the social norms and customs. Having a zest for life she does not care about society. In *Kamala*, Tendulkar shows a relationship between Jaisingh and Sarita, the exploiter and exploited relationship between Jaisingh and Kamala. Though Kamala and Sarita are loyal, docile, hardworking and tender hearted. Jaisingh treats them as slaves. In *Kanyadaan*, Jyoti becomes the subordinate part of the social values and custom when she attempts to bring a reformation in society by marrying a dalit boy, Arun. She becomes the victim and finds herself in even more pathetic circumstance. As a modern woman, she does not want to go back to her parent and so bravely faces the consequences. As a result, her search for individuality again becomes the ingredient of the social assessment.

The representation of Leela Benare, Sarita, Kamala and Jyoti connote a movement for securing impartiality between man and woman in all walks of life. He has focused upon the lack of emotional fulfilment in the man-woman relationship. Vijay Tendulkar's works aim at ensuring the equality of women in all respects. An unbiased man-woman relationship can only be established when the people get rid of the

traditional customs and social convictions. Worshipping woman as a god has isolated her from the realities of human life. Thus Tendulkar shows how the modern Indian women like Leela Benare, Sarita, Kamala and Jyoti in the select plays, attempt to free themselves sexually and domestically from the role bondage sanctioned by the age old traditions and customs.

So Vijay Tendulkar portrays his women as growing, evolving and dynamic beings. Their efforts culminating in utter hysterical, anguish and in hopeful resolutions are profound expression of their quest for individuality and liberty. They emerge as capable modern women who challenge the male chauvinists in society. His plays divulge message that women possess the strength, the courage and puissance for facing and surviving the onslaughts of institutional power. They should be brave enough to fight their own scuffle.

As a social realist, Tendulkar raises several questions in his play and leaves open-endedly to open his reader's eyes to a social problem which continues to evade easy solutions. He sounds the clarion call to women to rise up to the occasion and restore the lost social balance about a peaceful revolution in Indian society. To him, freedom for women continues to be a distant dream and a lot has to be done to realize the desired goal.

Though the society welcomes and appreciates the talents possessed by women in the modern 21st century, they are not able to unchain themselves from male dominance. A makeover can be processed only if men repent their misdeeds towards women and acknowledge their worth. Pratibha Sharma and Sanjit Mishra in the article "Social Concerns in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar" quotes the words of Tendulkar in one of his

interviews, “.... By not giving a solution, I leave possibilities open, for whatever course the change may take” (713).