

CHAPTER - I

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Introduction

India has the longest and the richest tradition in drama. The origin of Indian drama can be traced back to the Vedic Period. K. Venkattareddy and R. K. Dhawan in the book *Flowering of Indian drama: Growth and Development* opines that “As a manifestation of our national sensibility Indian drama came into existence as a means of exploring and communicating the truth of things and was popularly hailed as the “fifth Veda”” (7). During the age of the Vedic Aryans, drama is performed in a simple way. Sanskrit drama flourishes in its glory till the fifteenth century but there after Indian drama activity almost came to an end due to certain invasion on India. Later when British came to India, the crippled Indian drama regained its strength.

In the pre-Independence era, a new drama in almost all the Indian languages comes to the fore when literary giants like Rabindranath Tagore, Shri Aurbindo, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Bharathi Sarabhai through their plays, contribute to the growth and development of Indian English drama and open up new vistas in the genre. In the hierarchy of Indian dramatists writing in English, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) finds a prominent place. Each of Tagore’s plays bear the stamp of the experiences of his own inner and outer life.

Tagore writes of the mental state and the mood of men and of the progress of human thought and aspiration. Tagore’s well-known translated plays are *Chitra* (1892), *The Post Office* (1912), *The Cycle of Spring* (1917) and *The King of the Dark Chamber* (1988). Beena Agarwal in the book *Dramatic World of Vijay Tendulkar: Explorations and Experimentations* writes that

. . . it is evident that without the contribution of Tagore, the voice of Indian drama would have been dead and dry. In the context of Tagore's dramatic vision, it is essential to mention that within the framework of his plays, he has been successful in constructing a comprehensive picture of Indian womanhood. Tagore's women characters retain the internal strength of their spirit in spite of their truthfulness to the idealism of Indian womanhood. (10)

The play *Chitra* shows the dramatist's mastery over human drama of love from physical to the spiritual and from romance to realism. The play shows how saints and sages surrender their life-long penance at the feet of a woman, and how the union of man and woman is ultimately sanctified through marriage.

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) writes originally in English and his well-known plays are *Perseus the Deliverer* (1955), *Vasavadutta* (1957) and *Rodogune* (1958). Most of his plays are mythological or legendary. The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo devotes a place to the understanding of women in the society.

Indian drama gets a new footing when the modern Indian theatre is given a new, versatile and broader approach at every level of creativity; the year 1972 is a landmark year for Indian theatre. Asif Currimbhoy and Nissim Ezekiel are the earliest Indian dramatists to show interest in producing drama for the stage. Their contribution to Indian drama in English is great. They gather their material mostly from a distinctly Indian experience showing intense realism, but are not literal-minded transcription of near facts.

Asif Currimbhoy's (1928) plays can be called as microcosm of Indian life. His plays *The Hungry Ones* (1965), *Inquilab* (1970), and *The Refugee* (1971) deal

with social, political, religious and psychological issues. P. Bapaya Reddy in *The Plays of Asif Currimbhoy*, comments that the plays *Inquilab*, *The Refugee*, *The Hungry Ones* deal with social realism, which “. . . is the acute awareness of the social forces that surround the individual, their power to influence the lives of men and women and the overall interaction of individual and society” (35). Asif Currimbhoy seeks to expose his ‘vision of man’ through his dramatic art. His plays show his abiding faith in the efficacy of love and compassion. They serve as panacea to the ills of the society. He shows great concern for overall humanity.

Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) begins his literary career by writing plays in 1968 and he brings new dimensions to Indian English Drama. He clearly projects the middle class in his plays. As a dramatist, he is greatly influenced by the great writer, George Bernard Shaw and also having Shavian influence, the plays of Ezekiel intends to project the notions of the dramatist especially his views regarding women and their works. Mostly all his plays have the contemporary social and domestic themes. The themes in his plays are mainly of social realism, urban middle class complexity, the follies of various social moves, the problems related to marriage and the man-woman relationship in the Indian society. Some of his most prominent plays are *Nalini (1969)*, *Marriage Poem (1969)*, *The Sleepwalkers (1969)*, *Song of Deprivation (1969)* and *Don't call it suicide (1993)*.

Contemporary Indian dramatists like Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar have contributed to the modernization of the face of the Indian theatre, and have made bold innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both

thematic concerns and technical virtuosity. They are vibrant representatives of the Indian drama of the present times in Hindi, Bengali, Kannada and Marathi respectively.

Mohan Rakesh (1925-1972) presents the total absence of communication between one man and the other in contemporary life. His Hindi play *Adhe Adhure (Halfway House)*, 1959, which is translated into English presents a gloomy and dismal picture of family life. The dramatist makes use of historical characters to portray the moral and social breakdown of modern society. His noteworthy plays are *One Day in Ashadha* (1958) and *The Great Swans of the Wave* (1902). His plays mostly attempt to depict the disagreement and dichotomy of family life, how parental discords affect on the children's life and investigate on the man-woman relationships in the most realistic manner.

Badal Sircar (1925-2011), popularly known as a 'barefoot playwright' uses contemporary situations in order to present the existential attitude of modern man in the present times. Through his characters, he successfully reveals the hidden social and moral evils and also the problems of women and their relation to the society. His plays are *Evam Indrajith* (1962), *That Other History* (1964), *Procession* (1976), *Bhoma* (1976), *Stale News* (1979) and *There Is No End* (1971), which contribute for further development of Indian English Drama.

Girish Karnad (1938) in his plays shows absurdity of modern life and its passions and conflicts; his objective being the re-interpretation of the past from the vantage point of the present. He takes his material from the myths and legends of the golden past and tries his best to make his characters of legends, the vehicle of his new vision of life. His well-known plays are *Yayathi* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970), *Naga-Mandala* (1990), *Tale-Danda* (1993), *The Fire and the Rain* (1998). Girish Karnad is

considered as one of the most significant Indian dramatists of post-modern era. His plays evaluate the mind and behavior of his female protagonists in a collective perspective – impact of the patriarchy, women’s endeavor to fulfil their desire and their extinction from their world. His plays from *Yayati* (1961) to *Wedding Album* (2009) show concern with psychological problems, dilemmas and conflicts experienced by modern Indian men and women in their different social situation. In the plays, Karnad discusses on the aspects of women who struggle against patriarchy male dominance and gender discourse. Writers like Tendulkar and Karnad write on women issues as they consider women to be suppressed by men.

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar (1928-2008) is one of the leading Marathi playwrights in Indian English Literature, who is basically a social observer. Having inborn creative writing from his father, he starts to write stories and essays when he was six. He is a freelance writer and to his credit has a number of Marathi plays, which are translated into English and also in other languages.

Vijay Tendulkar is the one to abolish the traditional form of drama of three acts of plays and creates new models to bridge the gap between modern and traditional theatre. Girish Karnad in his *Three Plays* rightly points out that, “The past is never totally lost; it coexists with the present as a flow. A rich variety of theatre form still exists, with a continuous history stretching over centuries” (11).

Tendulkar is always in the forefront and frequently achieves something new which gives some new track to the Indian drama. His attempts to bring out the contemporary social issues through his plays is clearly evident. His subject is not

concerned to Indians alone but had universal appeal. This shows he has more responsibility towards the revolutionary progression of Indian English Drama.

Vijay Tendulkar is a recipient of many prestigious awards like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award (1970), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1971), Padma Bhusan (1984), the Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar (1990), the Janasthan Award (1991) and the Kalidas Samman Award (1992). Vijay Tendulkar is the author of thirty full-length plays and twenty three one-act plays. His first major play *Manus Navache Bet (An Island Called Man)*, 1955) is followed by a number of plays like *Madhlya Bhinti (The Walls Between)*, 1950), *Chimnicha Ghar Hota Menacha (Nest of Wax)*, 1950), *Mee Jinklo Mee Harlo (I Won, I Lost)*, 1963), *Kavlanchi Shala (School for Crows)*, 1963), and *Sari Ga Sari (Rain, O Rain)*, 1964), *Dambadwipcha Mukabala (Encounter in Umbugland)*, 1967) and *His Fifth Woman* (2004).

Vijay Tendulkar's well-known translated plays are *Shantala! Court Chalu Ahe (Silence! The Court is in Session)*, 1967), *Gidhade (The Vultures)*, 1971), *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972), *Sakharam Binder, (Sakharam the Book-Binder)*, 1972), *Safar/ Cyclewallah (The Cyclist)*, 1991), *The Masseur* (2001), *Kamala* (1981) and *Kanyadaan (Daughters Gifted Away)*, (1983).

Vijay Tendulkar is fundamentally a social commentator, who has come across various problems and restrictions of contemporary Indian society. He gets a chance to be acquainted with the realities of human life as well as human nature. His focus is on the middle class life in India and shows the isolated individual's confrontation with adverse circumstances and hostile surroundings. So in his plays, he brings in the ideas like criminals coming out of jail, exploited women in modern social circumstance, a spinster

become a victim of uncontrollable physical drives, wobbly life of middle class people as well as in husband-wife relationship, frustrations and broken promises, an abnormal philanderer having his own chancing codes for man-woman relationship, and women having life of sexual slavery in the male-dominated world. His plays, which clearly show his responsibility as a writer towards his society threw light over the social evils and victimizers. He is very much concerned about the predicament of marginal position granted to women. Dealing with the problems and sufferings of women living in towns, he dives deep into their psyche.

Tendulkar is noted for criticizing the hypocrisies, promiscuity, dishonesty, immorality and other such vices existing in the society with his diabolic dialogue. He is mainly known for his boldness in using obscene words and filthy language whenever the situation demands him. He is also to be called as an 'Angry Young Man' by the Indian writers. It is mainly because he furiously portrays the realities and the truths of the Indian society, which is seemingly hidden behind the influence of power and supremacy of masculinity.

Vijay Tendulkar himself has bitter experiences over the human nature and life reality. His father is such an honest and a candid human, who refuses to accept the bribe and against the illegal deeds. As a result, he suffers financially and his family starves. He also refuses to give bride money in his daughter's marriage, and so she remains unmarried. He observes that in such Indian social condition, it is mostly woman who always suffers as a victim. So Tendulkar has a lack of respect towards honesty and truth.

Vijay Tendulkar's first play *Manus Navache Bet* is published in 1955, bestows a light on the urban mechanized social condition and the life of modern isolated and

secluded individual. After his first play, numerous plays are bloom with the premise of middle class individual set against the milieu of aggressive modern society. Tendulkar's plays are mostly concerned with the modern man's fight for endurance, the social position of women, and the hidden violence in human being. His play *Shantala! Court Chalu Ahe (Silence! The Court is in Session)* 1968, is considered as the first significant modern Indian play in any language to centre on woman as protagonist and victim. It is this play, which earns him glory not only in India but also throughout the world.

The play, *Sakharam Binder (Sakharam, the Book-Binder)*, explores the complication of human nature and the manifestation of physical lust and violence in a human being. Sakharam is the central character, who is a lower middle class bookbinder with voracious desire for female sex. He gives shelter to helpless women in order to satisfy his sexual hunger. This play enrolls the theme of women victimization through the female characters, Laxmi and Champa.

Vijay Tendulkar in *Kamala* (1981) depicts the deplorable state of women who are treated as mere objects to be bartered, bought and sold. Here Tendulkar uses 'Media' as an instrument of the mechanization of power. The playwright portrays the dreadful condition of Kamala, who is merely bought and sold in the Luhardagga Bazaar in Bihar. Jaisingh Jadhav, buys her for a paltry sum of Rs.250. He wants to expose this racket of woman-selling as a slave. Sarita, Jaisingh's wife fails to appreciate and compromise with her husband's act. He fights for the freedom and equality of woman but keeps his wife Sarita as his slave. She performs all household activities as 'lovely bonded labourer'. Kamala exposes the attitude of Jaisingh on his wife, Sarita. Sarita now musters up the

courage to put forward strong resistance against male domination and then to prove her own capability.

The play *Kanyadaan (The Gift of a Daughter)* is published in the year 1983. Jyoti, the central character, is the daughter of Nath Devalikar and Seva. Her parents are social reformer and idealist, who do not interfere in their daughter's love marriage to Arun Athavale. The play proceeds with the suffering of Jyoti after her marriage, and her realization of the wrong choice makes her stick to individuality at any situation and longs for an identity.

In the play *Gidhade (The Vulture)* 1971, it is a set of human vultures slanting against a vulnerable woman character Rama, the wife of Ramakant. This play pictures the realistic depiction of sex and violence, materialism and selfishness. The lusty and ambitious characters are as hungry as a vulture and they want to fulfill their own desires without considering about morality.

The play *Dambadwipcha Mukabala (Encounter in Umbugland, 1967)* is his first political satire, which exposes the secrets of politics that are designed to reach positions of authority. *Ghashiram Kotwal* is also a political play. It focuses on the power games that men engage in and the corruption, violence and sensuality in which they indulge in the process. The core of the play is the relationship between power and corruption and how absolute power engenders oppression leading to mockery of the law. This play brings forth the existing political and moral debauchery, corruption and immorality.

In *Mitrachi Goshta (A Friend's Story)* 1982, again comes the theme of power and violence. It is executed on a college going lesbian, Sumitra Dav, referred to as Mitra in the play. Babu, a first year student in the college, narrates the story of Mitra and

highlights her brief association with Namita Deshmukh. When her parents insist her for marriage, Mitra attempts to commit suicide but is rescued. She asks her parents not to interfere in her personal life. The play witnesses Mitra's conflict with society, her frustrated love and consequential state of bewilderment in her.

Tendulkar's play *The Cyclist* (1991) has pictured the realistic nature of Indian contemporary society and it is a fable about the journey of life and its reality. The play analyses three journeys – an actual global journey by the protagonist, a historical journey of the bicycle about its different phases of manufacture and a psychic journey of the cyclist submerging into his sub-consciousness. The young man's global journey conveys that he endeavours escaping from his present location to meet different people.

His Fifth Woman (2004) is a sequel to *Sakharam Binder*. It describes about the two friends in conversation with each other sitting near the mistress of one of them lying on her death bed, a destitute picked up from the streets. He provides food and shelter, exploits them physically but at the same time does not get emotionally involved. His other friend has a sympathetic attitude towards these destitute women and perceives them as persons having desires and capabilities. This play victimizes women as mere objects. The message that the writer conveys is that real justice results out of compassion and love and not from hypocrisy, autocracy and selfishness.

In all these plays, Vijay Tendulkar is concerned with the middle class individual set against the backdrop of a hostile society. He presents a modern man in all his complexities. His concerns are man's fight for survival, the varied mortalities by which people live and the social position of women, exploration of woman relationship, socio-individual tensions of the society, and alienation of the modern individual. He creates

memorable male and female characters. Tendulkar's journey in the field of dramatics and dramaturgy from the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* to *A Friend's Story* exhibits that women have always been treated either as slaves or stepping stones in Indian society. He in his plays pictures the man-woman relationship and their psychological temperament of man and woman in the contemporary society. It highlights the hollowness of modern middle class moralities in the Indian society. The moralities that represent in the play may have some slight contrast depending on situations and modern civilization but for all the ages and at all the times they remain constant. The plays are poignant, sensitive highlighting the vulnerability of the women in Indian society.

The status of women remains secondary in this world. She is still considered secondary or weaker sex. An ideal woman is she who confines herself within the four walls of the house and rears up the children and looks after the family. In India, it is believed God dwells, where women are worshipped but she is exploited more due to patriarchal society. Women are suppressed by the ideals of patriarchal society from time to time. In spite of all the developments that Indian society has attained, women are being still suppressed even in the modern era by facing entirely new and suffocating situations. When women accept the norms of male society during ancient days, they were only locked inside the four walls of their household and endured with pains inflicted by their fathers, brothers and husbands. Women are ready to sacrifice their needs and desires for the sake of the male counterparts in their family.

In the plays, Tendulkar tries to explore the world of woman in which a woman, the heroine gives up the role of an ideal woman and behaves according to her own wishes

and as usual the society cannot accept her as an individual and she becomes the object of criticism only.

Vijay Tendulkar explores the position of women in contemporary Indian society through his female characters. It is his women, who help to reveal his social conscience on account of their position in society. He examines the effects of development on women and has clearly exposed that in many areas of the country the rights of the women are infringed and women are exploited emotionally, socially and physically.

To quote the views of Sapna Chaturvedi and Seeme Mahmood who in the article “Female Status, Their Roles and the Psychological Situation as Depicted in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar” state that

In Indian society women were treated generally as maids or slaves as they had no will or desire of their own. The pre-Independence period women in India were just restricted to household work. They were more of a puppet in the hands of their husbands, sort of to produce kids and look after them cook food in the house, etc. they were never given the freedom to do anything on their own nor were they allowed out of the house unless they went with their husbands. (151)

Anita Myles in the book *Contemporary Indian English Drama: An Overview* quotes Vijay Tendulkar who emphatically states, “As a writer I feel fascinated by the violent exploited-exploiter relationship and obsessively delve deep into it instead of taking position against it. That takes me to a point where I feel this relationship is eternal, a fact of life, however cruel, and will never end. Not that I relish this thought while it grips me but I cannot shake it off” (84).

Woman suffers largely as the victim of the institutional body of power. Often there is a collision between woman and society in most of his plays. Tendulkar depicts this pattern of power and violence in the contemporary social setups. In majority of his plays, Tendulkar projects a woman as a victim subjected to hostility and supremacy of modern circumstance and in various situations. His plays disclose the message that a woman too, possesses the strength, the courage and the puissance for facing and surviving the onslaughts of the Indian society.

In most of his plays, Vijay Tendulkar presents women in pairs. They are quite different from each other. One woman is portrayed as loyal, docile, religious, hard working, self-effacing and kind-hearted. The other type of woman is more selfish, cunning, vicious and assertive. Both these types of women resemble each other in the ultimate truth of being commanded by men, for their pleasure and under their laws. Also Tendulkar's women characters are in the process of progression and in the course of play they gain knowledge about the cruel social realities and endeavour to gain freedom and decorum and the so-called modern, nature of liberal minded men and their true colours as chauvinist, selfish and hypocrite are brought to forefront.

The frustrated male members try to subjugate women to prove their power in social hierarchy. From the very beginning the man derives certain norms and ideals in the name of traditions and customs, which should be strictly followed by the society especially for woman but not for man, because most of the norms are favorable to the man. The present study on the select plays of Vijay Tendulkar *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan* show how man compels the woman to follow those convictions in order to survive with dignity in the society.

When the women characters in the play exceed their limitation, they undergo severe oppressions and difficulties by ruling society, which exploit them cruelly. The position of Indian women in the post-independent society can be viewed clearly in the words of Catherine Thankamma in her article “Women that Patriarchy created: The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani and Mahasweta Devi” in the book entitled *Vijay Tendulkar’s Plays: An Anthology of recent criticism*, who states

The roles allotted to women in the patriarchal set up are purely domestic – daughter, wife and mother. From birth the girl – child is subjected to the negative reinforcement of her vulnerability to rape and assault. As a girl she is under the protection of her father/brother; after marriage her husband is her lord and master and in old age her son becomes her protector. As part of the gendered difference that is emphasized from childhood the girl is taught to believe in the importance of the ‘family values’ – values which are presumed to be her responsibility and not the male’s. A girl/woman is expected to be meek, submissive, patient; she should subordinate her will and desires to those of the male unselfishly. Such sustained sociological conditioning inhibits and restrict the full development of a woman’s personality. (81)

Tendulkar seems to be interested in bringing out the reality – how such simple and innocent people spin into violence; how and why they become lonely and isolated from their family and society and how they enslave by passions. The image of women in the contemporary Indian literature changes radically which can be clearly seen through the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. As modern women, they have hope and courage to fight

against their exploitation and suppression, but at last they easily become the prey to their exploiter with all societal approval.

Tendulkar's first play *Silence! The Court is in Session* is based on a grave social problem of unmarried motherhood and men's attitude to her. The central theme of the play is the plight and predicament of a woman whose bodily wealth is plundered by a few selfish men. It is story of Miss Leela Benare, a dutiful and punctual schoolteacher, who becomes the victim of the carnal desires of some men; who seldom takes care of her modesty and position in society. She commits a conscious and bodily relation with Prof. Damle whom she worships as a God. But this god takes the offering of her body and then turns his back to her. This humiliation is unbearable to a forsaken woman who is in constant search of an identity of a married woman.

Leela Benare ignores the social norms and dictates. She is competing for equality with men in their own world. She becomes a prey to the hypocrisy and the double standard of the society. Her bitterness towards the society for the way it treats and plays with her emotions and feelings is expressed in the mock trial. The agony in her words is symbolic and representative of Indian experience. On the other is Mrs. Kashikar who is a middle-aged, married and a housewife disapproves of a 'free' woman like Leela Benare. Mrs. Kashikar is also presented as a perpetrator of patriarchy in the play. As a woman, Mrs. Kashikar too fails to understand Benare. She thinks that it is an automatic right of a man to insult and snub a woman. She does not oppose her insults and sees her husband to be a caring husband because he buys a string of flowers for her hair, a token of romance and not love. All the characters in the play other than Leela Benare, like Ponshe –the science student, Sukhatme –the lawyer, Karnik –the theatre actor, Balu Rokde and Mr.

and Mrs, Kashikar seem to be presenting the patriarchal forces of society that cut the wax-wings of Leela Benare and pathetically subjugates her.

The play *Kamala* is an inspiration from a real life incident. The main things which Tendulkar throws light on are the ghastly flesh market, the position of women in society, the cut-throat competition that goes on in the success oriented contemporary generation and the egoistic hypocrisy of the young journalists. The play is based on skin-market and about the identity of women.

Jaisingh buys Kamala from the flesh market and presents her at the press conference and accepts a great and dangerous risk not because he wants to reform Kamala's life but it is a part of his professional commitment. For him Kamala is a means by which he can get a promotion in his job and can win reputation in his professional career. He does not think what will happen to Kamala after the press conference. He is crazy for money and success. Sarita rebels against her husband after becoming conscious of the selfish hypocrisy of her husband and of the fact that her position in the house is not different from that of Kamala's.

Kamala is exploited outside the walls whereas Sarita is exploited inside the walls. But Sarita provides emotional support to Jaisingh when he is in problem. The characters of Kamala and Sarita are the symbols of Indian women who are simple, innocent, sincere, generous and devoted to their male companion. Tendulkar attacks the institution of marriage in India through the husband and wife relationship of Jaisingh and Sarita. In *Kamala* it is observed education has not enabled us to overcome the traditional barriers of sex-discrimination. Women are still victimized in the male-dominated society.

Kamala does not have the spirit to rebel against her present condition. Tendulkar raises certain questions regarding the value system of a modern success oriented generation who are ready to sacrifice human values even in the name of humanity itself. The protagonists Sarita and Kamala are contrast to each other. Sarita is educated and self-assured, while Kamala though an illiterate village woman understands the man-woman relationship and goes to an extent of advising Sarita. Sarita is the wife of Jadav and is childless. When she sees herself as a slave and also decides to leave her husband, Jadav, but she gives him moral support once she gets to know that he is betrayed by his editor.

In *Kanyadaan*, Jyoti, the daughter of Devalikar, an MLC decides to marry Arun Athavali, a boy from the lower stratum of society in spite of all opposition. The truth of the situation emerges soon when Arun proves to be a violent husband. Jyoti's marital and social experiences teach her that it is almost impossible to change either people or society. The greater dismay for her is that she fails to bridge the gap between her section of society and that of Arun's. Being disgusted with the tortures of Arun, Jyothi returns to her parental home. After sometime Arun comes looking for Jyoti as he is repentant for what he has done and desires to begin life afresh. Though he realizes that he is an offender his true colour emerges by drawing his knife, while begging Jyoti to return with him. Jyoti's mother Seva asks him why he beats his wife. Arun becomes nostalgic and says that Jyoti having the knowledge of everything before their marriage and exercising her free will in marrying him should have had the courage to bear the consequences. Jyoti immediately decides to go back with Arun.

The attitude of Arun in the play exhibits the misuse of power and violence. He thinks that as a husband he has complete control over his wife; and in no way he is

prepared to compromise with the independence of Jyoti. The portrayal of Arun brings out the idea of male domination in the traditional Indian society. Jyoti willingly surrenders herself to the exploiter. Joyti's marital and social experience teaches her that it is almost impossible to change either people or society. Tradition demands that a woman has to yield meekly to male domination and surrender to his masochistic power, however unjust they may be. Tendulkar states that it is not the story of victory; in reality it is acceptance of defeat and intellectual confusion.

The present dissertation deals with the violent exploited- exploiter relation with reference to *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan*. It is significant that these plays focus on woman's issues. The plays portray the male-dominated society. The plays depict the violent tendency of egoistical and equally self-centred society. The dramatist acts as a representative to voice the protest of these middle-class women against the traditional oppressive stereo-type image the age old tradition has set as written by Shruti Vaidya in the article "The Rejoicing Victim – A Study of Naayantara Sahgal's *Simrit*" that "man to command and woman to obey" (79).

Leela Benare, Sarita, Kamala and Jyoti play an imperative role in the select plays, which present a world, apparently dominated by the male chauvinists. Women become victims of uncontrollable physical drives as in the case of Leela Benare; abnormal womanizer hunting for forlorn women and unfortunate woman sold away in the flesh market as in the case of Kamala; so called house-wife, Sarita identifies herself as slave at the hand of her journalist husband; and an educated modern woman Jyoti who voluntarily undertakes the dismal life under her drunkard revenging dalit husband – all having a revelation of finding themselves on the common platform of sexual slavery in the male-

dominated world. The women become the violent exploited and humiliated at the hands of the exploiter.

Women are victimized. Irregular or abnormal behaviour is not to be tolerated. From time immemorial, man has assigned woman a secondary place and keeps her with such subtlety and cunningness that she herself begins to lose all notions of her independence, her individuality, her status and her strength. Rajesh K. Pallan in the article “Archetypal Nuances in R. K. Narayan’s *The Dark Room*” quotes the words of R.K Narayan, who says “A wife in an orthodox milieu of Indian society was an ideal victim of such circumstances” (44).

The number of compromises a wife has to make and the way she has to adjust to her husband’s life style make her a victim figure because she has to erase her true self and rewrite herself according to the desires of the master. Marriage becomes a form of slavery. Women have followed the course of self-abnegation and whittled all their wants out of fear, a fear haunting them constantly from the cradle to the funeral pyre. Women go through a whole gamut of emotions of which, the most striking one is the loss of self-esteem. Regarding such treatment S. P. Swain in the article “*Roots and Shadows – A Feminist Study*” observes “Man has subjugated woman to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish gratification, to minister to his sensual pleasure, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort; but never has he desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could do to debase and enslave her mind. . . (48)

Tendulkar makes use of irony, satire and pathos to highlight the hollowness of middle-class moralities. These moralities may slightly vary, but at all times and all ages they remain the same. The writer raises several questions about love, sex, marriage, and

moral values prevalent in society. It is society, which asks everyone to conform to its own yardsticks of decorum and propriety.

Tendulkar strives to undo this distorted image of women, who are denied the freedom to act and to choose on their own. Protests and resistance reflect a writer's concern with the predicament of women and social reality. The dramatist takes care to suggestively weave the various factors for victimization – the economical, social, historical, political, sexual as well as psychological – within the framework of the plot. He treats his women characters with understanding and compassion while pitting them against men who emerge as puerile creatures and embodiments of selfishness, hypocrisy and treachery. The plays are remarkable for a penetrating insight into the conflicts of human passions and desires.

Anita Myles in her book *Contemporary Indian English Drama: An Overview* agrees to the views of Vijay Tendulkar about the usage of characters in the literary works by saying:

The one characteristic of my plays which I can legitimately boast of is characterization. My characters are not cardboard characters; they do not speak my language; rather I do not speak my language through them; they are not my mouth pieces; but each of them has his or her own separate existence and expression. (85)

Tendulkar succeeds in portraying the modern Indian women differently and raises the status of Indian women from a weak person to a powerful one. Though the playwright give extreme power to his women character to face their trouble and overcome it, finally they get the same place as victim as before. Nothing can change anything in the Indian

psyche. As a modern woman, she only gets hope and courage to fight against the exploitation through the education or something else unlike the women in the 17th and 18th century, who were not ready to raise their head in front of their husbands or fathers. But the dominant creatures of the 20th century also become more powerful to handle the modern women and their situations, which are clearly pictured in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. So he projects his women characters as the process of evolution and as in the course of play they gain knowledge and strive to gain freedom and dignity.

As a keen observer of life, Tendulkar presents the changing reality of contemporary society authentically and honestly in the plays. His real and genuine concern for the oppressed and his awareness of social evils has originated from his true understanding of the society. He does not certainly approve of the waywardness of his women protagonists but he tends to sympathize with them. Tendulkar does not offer any solution to their problem but leaves it to the discretion of the readers. The treatment of the theme, characterization and the structure of the plays reveal his artistic excellence. The plays are widely appreciated for its technical experiments, textual compactness, sharp dialogue, skilful art of characterization and brilliant plot construction. The use of irony and satire certainly enhance the dramatic effect.

The first chapter "Introduction" deals with Indian English drama, its perception over man-woman relationship from its beginning to contemporary times and at large focuses on Tendulkar's writing career, style, awards and his involvement with the social issues chiefly on the woman suppression in Indian society. As a writer he explores the status of women in the modern Indian society. He shows that even in the modern circumstances the educated woman remains striver to the man supremacy as a daughter,

wife and mother. The man-woman relationship becomes more complex and constant which can be clearly seen through Tendulkar's select plays: *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan*.

The second chapter 'Psychological Trauma of Leela Benare' deals with the idea of oppression of women in Indian society for several years which makes them to burst out freeing themselves from the influencing power in any way or by any chance. The very title of the play indicates the silence imposed on women in Indian society.

Tendulkar makes a protest against the oppression and marginalization of women through the character Miss Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*. She becomes a victim to the partial ill-treatment of the tradition based and male dominated Indian society on the ground of gender discrimination. She stands apart and alienated by the society and is hailed as a slur on the face of the society. In her search for individuality she faces only treachery, hypocrisy, shallowness and vanity of the people.

But Leela is remarkable and revolutionary character to break the Indian traditional in order to eradicate the social evil of gender discrimination and for the formation of a new and changed society in India. The societal norms and conventions prove the women should not be given the freedom or independence.

The third chapter 'Exploitation and Enslavement of Kamala' deals with the idea of the plight of woman as a slave in the family. It is sad to know that almost all his women meekly submit to the injustice, violence and harassment done to them. The play *Kamala* evidently delineates the woman as an object of commodity, which can be purchased, bartered, sold and also can be kept as a slave, by her husband. Through the play, this chapter highlights the power and violence executed on women. Always the

society considers women as secondary or weaker sex and it uses them for any cause.

Sarita realizes her position in her house as a slave only at the presence of Kamala and so starts to fight back against her deprived state. Sarita, a modern educated woman wants to identify herself when she finds her husband treating her as a slave and as a subject to obey him. They seem to be helpless and have no other alternative but to go through the way that life has chosen for them. Both, Sarita as an educated woman and Kamala as an illiterate are under the quest of identity crisis and seek to free themselves from the clutches.

The fourth chapter 'Victimization of Jyoti' deals with the idea of the social upliftment underlying the chaotic consequences that disturb the existing social equation. In this play the female protagonist shows the triumph of reactionary and revisionist values. Man as a dominating power for a long time has changed a little in the name of father but not as a husband, who remains same as in the beginning. All the efforts that a woman takes to free herself from the social restrictions against herself stand as an obstacle to reach her identity. Jyoti, the central character of the play *Kanyadaan*, decides to marry a dalit, though she is from upper caste, but he proves to be a violent husband. As a pregnant woman she is beaten by her husband, which weakens her strength. The sense of quiet resignation, altogether unmixed with a sense of cynicism, a woman tends to suggest the essential futility and meaninglessness of life.

The fifth chapter "Conclusion" deals with the concluding idea of second, third and fourth chapter that it is the habitual thing of the Indian mind to think of the women always as an object that the male community always preferred in the society. The society always blindly supports male although he does sins and crime. He exposes the

mendaciousness of the male dominance and attacks the facetious moral standards of the so called civilized urban middle class society of 20th century.

The play throws light on the aspect of man-woman relationship. In the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*, one is husband-wife relationship – Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, a middle class couple with the usual male hegemony; the other is man-woman relationship between employer and employee. Nanasaheb, the chairman of the education society is the employer and Benare who is working as a schoolteacher is an employee. The employer exploits the female employee physically, mentally, psychologically and sexually. The employer victimizes Benare.

Vijay Tendulkar presents the idea of how Power is used as an instrument of the mechanism of oppression or cruelty. In *Kamala*, the relationship between man and woman proceeds as a master-slave. Jaisingh Jadhav presents himself master as well as dominant figure with an inherent Indian mindset. As a husband he treats Sarita as a slave for doing his granted works. Other hand Kamala considers him as her master waiting for master's order to do. When he asks her to attend the press meet with the raged dress, without a word she does so. As an exploiter he does not care for mindset and emotions of the women whom he uses, but just wants to attain his decisions through them.

In the next play *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar exposes the man-woman relationship in a distinct way as exploit-exploiter relationship. In Jyoti's life, though as a father he supports his daughter in her love marriage, in the real sense he wants to make an experiment of inter-caste marriage as a socialist. He uses her life to experiment his idealism which blinds him in analyzing Arun as a right suitor for Jyoti. On other hand

Arun, as a dalit, utilizes her in revenging the upper caste society. He is free to show his avenger towards her.

The select plays evidently show the condition of modern Indian women and their sufferings at the hands of the exploiters. He gives importance to female characters in his plays and brings the actions in women's point of view. Through his plays he wants to break the silence of the Indian women and gives them hope and courage to fight back. Apart from a writer, through his plays he depicts himself more as a human, a voice of an individual against the social issues of violence on women, and female exploitation.