

**Portrayal of Women in Select Works of Vijay Tendulkar: *Silence! The Court  
is in Session, Kamala and Sakharam Binder***

By

M. Dharanikabharathi

(15PEN002)

A thesis submitted to

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education

for Women, Coimbatore – 641043

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master's Degree in English.

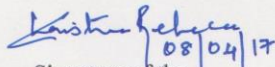
April 2017

**Portrayal of Women in Select Works of Vijay Tendulkar: *Silence! The Court  
is in Session, Kamala and Sakharam Binder***

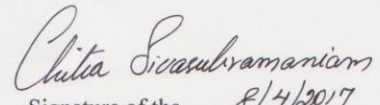
By  
M. Dharanikabharathi  
(15PEN002)

A thesis submitted to  
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education  
for Women, Coimbatore – 641043  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Master's Degree in English.

April 2017

  
Signature of the

Head of the Department (i/c)

  
Signature of the

Supervisor

## **Acknowledgement**

I submit my humble gratitude at the holy feet of the Lord Almighty for giving me enough strength to complete this thesis successfully.

I thank Padmashri Dr. P. R. Krishnakumar, Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore and Dr. (Mrs.) Premavathy Vijayan, Vice-Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for having given me the opportunity to present the thesis.

I would like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) S. Kowsalya, Registrar, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her support.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) P. Ambiga Devi, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her encouragement and support.

I extend my gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) S. Christina Rebecca, Head (i/c), Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her guidance.

I am deeply indebted to my mentor, Dr. (Mrs.) Chitra Sivasubramaniam, Assistant Professor (SG), Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her invaluable guidance and constant supervision as well as for providing necessary information regarding the thesis and also for her support in completing the thesis.

I express my profound sense of gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) Saroja Prabakaran, Director, Hall of Residence, Avinashilingam Education Trust Hostel, Coimbatore, for her constant encouragement and support.

With regard to the material collected, I am grateful for the help rendered by the librarians of the Library and Information Centre of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore.

I owe a special thanks to my beloved parents Mr. R. Manicka Velan and Mrs. M. Latha and my friends for their continuous encouragement and support.

## Table of Contents

S.No.	Contents	Pg No.
1	Introduction	1
2	Women as Victims in the Patriarchal Society in <i>Silence! The Court is in Session</i>	18
3	Exploitation of Women in <i>Kamala</i>	33
4	Man-Woman relationship in <i>Sakharam Binder</i>	48
5	Conclusion	64
6	Works Cited	78

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Drama is as old as customs practised from the Vedic era and it is the collective spirit of the four Vedas. So it is considered as 'fifth Veda'. Drama is the most influential, effective and a powerful genre in literature like fiction and poetry. It starts its journey from the development of Sanskrit language and flourishes in ancient India. It has a close connection with Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra*. But soon it lost its fame due to the fall of Sanskrit language. Supriya Shukla in the article "Indian English Drama: An Introduction" pointed out that, "Drama is a mimetic representation of life combining in itself the real and the fictional, art and reality and representing the events and characters within a dimension of space and time. It combines the qualities of narrative poetry with those of visual arts. It is a narrative made visible" (3).

Drama has a long traditional history in India. Ancient Hindus developed drama 2000 years before Greek drama. Bharata Muni advocated the theory of drama and the stage craft in his famous treatise '*Natyashastra*,' which deals with all aspects of drama. The most notable ancient dramatists are Ashwagosh, Bhasa, Shudraka, Kalidasa, Harsha, Bhavbhuti, and Vishakhadatta. Tragedy like *Urubhanga*, romance play like *Abhijnana-Sakuntalam*, historical play like *Mudrarakshas*, is the most notable works in the Vedic era. In the book *Indian English Drama* Saryug Yadav says that, "Drama in Sanskrit literature is covered under the broad umbrella of 'rupaka' which means depiction of life in its various aspects represented in 'forms' by actors, who assume various roles" (2). Thus drama is a form that can be experienced only by seeing.

Though Drama has its beginning from the Vedic period, it has its real development only in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century because of the advent of British people. Drama started its journey by the publication of Krishna Mohan Banerjee's, *The Persecuted* in 1813. It is a social play, which

portrays the conflict between East and West. But drama gained popularity through the arrival of Madhusudan Dutt's *Is This Called Civilization* in 1871. Then Rankinoo Dutt published *Manipura Tragedy* in 1893. Indian Drama has its enormous growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, especially in the Pre-Independence era. The playwrights got strength by the western plays and from playwrights such as Shakespeare, Ibsen and others.

The Pre-Independence playwrights mainly concentrated on the poetical excellence, thematic variety, symbolism and morality. During this period, dramas in the theatres encouraged to perform Historical plays. Then they changed the nature of drama which showed culture, tradition and propagating freedom among the readers. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, drama influenced the minds of the readers. A new renaissance is also created with the influence of western civilization. During 1943-44 Indian People's Theatre Association brought life to theatres. Many significant playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, T. P. Kailasam, A. S. P. Ayyar, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Bharati Sarabhai emerged as successful playwrights during this period.

Among them Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya are called as the 'big three' in Pre-Independence era. Tagore is a Nobel Prize winner; his works are in Bengali. They are translated into English by Tagore himself and by some other writers. Among his English translation, the best known works are *Chitra* (1913), *Sacrifice* (1917), *The Post Office* (1912), *Muktadhara* (1922), *The Cycle of Spring* (1923) and *The King of the Dark Chambers* (1910). His works are the combination of Indian and western literary traditions which is present to synthesise the East and the West and they are based on the expressions of the soul's quest for beauty and truth. In his plays, he uses suggestive and meaningful techniques which are used by the famous Irish playwright W. B. Yeats.

Aurobindo Ghosh presents a variety of periods and places in his plays. His themes explore the idea of human evolution and love. His plays are steeped in poetry and romance. His plays are modelled exclusively on the late Victorian pastiches of Shakespearean drama and his characters are somewhat similar to Elizabethan personages in Indian garb. His notable works are *Perseus the Deliverer* (1955), *The Viziers of Bassora* (1953), *Prince of Edur* (1950), *Eric* (1960), *Vavadutta* (1965) and *Savitri* (1954). In his plays, he uses ancient legends in order to highlight the urge for freedom and bondage in the contemporary society. His characters are filled with a strong romantic impulse, which is the driving force behind all his plays.

Last person in the big three is Harindranath Chattopadhyaya has the genre drama, he created a new dimension. He is highly influenced by Mulk Raj Anand and sympathizes with the underdogs. His social plays highlight the social protest and the ideas of revolution. He presents social problems and evils through symbols. He presents his characters and situations in sharp contrast to one another. His concentration on a single topic is an important feature of a short play. He is less influenced by the western dramas regarding the depiction of the lives of the saints.

Beside these writers, there are some minor writers in this period. They are K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, R. K. Narayan, Kamala Das, V. K. Gokak and Manohar Malgonkar. Thus the Pre-Independence era gives a large number of writers, who write short plays by comparing the full length plays. They widely adopt the Elizabethan model particularly. Even though they produced more works, they find it difficult to write in English language. They tried a lot to succeed in drama but the language comes as an obstacle for their success.

In the Post-Independence era huge efforts are made to gain a little progress in the field of drama. The Five year plans has encouraged performing arts. To enrich drama, National School of

Drama has been established in Delhi and many Institutions for training in dramatic art are founded in many cities as well as the Department of Drama is also founded in Universities. National Drama Festival is started in Delhi by Sangeet Natak Akademi. They gained popularity only in regional languages and not in English. A Theatre group in Bombay and a few other agencies also did stage drama, but they failed to gain popularity to Indian English Drama, since the outcome of the plays in regional languages dominated all over the country. Many people started to write plays for the purpose of staging.

After freedom, the dramas portrayed the socio-political and economic life of the country. The study of drama is a mixture of literary and sociological aspects. Though the plays are good enough to perform, there is lack of theatre. Writers like Nissim Ezekiel, Girish Karnad, Pritish Nandi, Pratap Sharma, Murali Das Melwani and Vijay Tendulkar are the most important contributors to Indian Theatre in the Post-Independence era. Nissim Ezekiel contribution is through his plays such as *Nalini* (1969) and *Don't call it Suicide* (1993). The content of his works projects the cross-section of contemporary society. He does not give importance to the development of the plot.

Next contributor is the living playwright Girish Karnad, who is the recipient of Jnanpith Award. He is a successful actor, playwright and recognised as a national and international artist. His famous plays are *Tuglaq* (1972), *Hayavadana* (1971), *Nagamandala* (1990), *The Fire and the Rain* (1998), and *Tale-Danda* (1990). The play *Tuglaq* has been translated into German and Hungarian languages. In his plays, he initiated existentialist issues like identity, split-personality, ideological break-ups and dichotomy of life. The women characters in his plays lead their life towards alienation when they start their quest for completeness. He gives more importance than others to women characters. Through his women characters, Karnad presents his modern and

democratic view on the problems related to women in traditional Indian families which have patriarchal system.

Pratap Sharma is also a great dramatist. His notable works are *A Touch of Brightness* (1968) and *The Professor* (1970). Plays which are written after independence are in the form of prose but they did not forget poetic form in the Post-colonial era. Sidhartha Sawant reiterates the words of M. K. Naik in the article “Changing Scenario of Indian English Drama” who rightly says that, “The Tagore-Aurobindo-Kailasam tradition of poetic drama continues, but with a difference in the hands of Manjari Isvaran, G. V. Desani, Lakhan Deb and Pritish Nandy” (Sawant).

Vijay Tendulkar is next contributor who has his base in Marathi, the precursor of modern Indian English Drama. In his works, he focuses on the conflict between individual and society. The angry and frustrated protagonists of the play are the victims of harsh circumstances of life. He shows the ugly side of the society and the themes of his plays are supremacy of male, violence, exploitation of women and rejection of social norms. He presented only violence and sensuality in his plays rather than love and relations.

Writers like R. Raja Rao, T. S. Gill, V. D. Trivedi and Gieve Patel have written many one-act plays in this period. The advancement in drama has made new changes which added more dimensions. Thus the Post-Independence plays show that they are influenced by the Western tradition than the Pre-Independence era, but the regional plays gained more attention in this period also. Writers consider that writing in English language does not have any emotion in the plot, so they started to write in their regional languages. Like the regional languages, English did not gain more popularity among the audience as it is not treated equally with other languages. Indian English Drama fails to create an impact in the audience. Supriya Shukla in the

article “Indian English Drama: An Introduction” says that, “English, as Raja Rao pointed out nearly half a century, is a language of our intellectual makeup and not of our emotional makeup”(9).

The contemporary writers like Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Habib Tanvir, Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan have worked hard for English drama till its maturity. Marathi theatres that are founded then in Pune and Bombay did not gain much popularity in Indian English Drama. They are influenced by the western plays. Playwrights like Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, G. V. Desani and Lakhan Deb have given lively contribution to the Indian English Drama. Only through the efforts of these writers Indian English drama gained its popularity.

In 1970, the art of translating the plays is introduced. The works of the writers like Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani are translated from regional languages to English and other languages. Thus the plays are translated from regional languages to English and the art of translation started. In this way, translation started to create a bond between East and West, North and South.

Dramatists feel that the real success of the play is tested only on the stage and they need a living theatre to evaluate their work. They wrote plays mainly to stage their creation. The last decade playwrights are the Uma Parameswaran, Manjula Padmanabhan, Kamala Subramaniam, and Arati Nagarwalla. Thus the genre, drama is trying to gain popularity till the present day. While centring on the idea of women writers, they say that they tried to erase myth which tried to prove that women cannot create excellent pieces of Drama through their writings. Their focus in presenting the tone, theme, and characterisation are in a serious way. They are long to bring change through their plays.

When concentrating on the portrayal of women in the plays, the Pre-Independence and the Post-Independence dramatists have contributed equally. The Pre-Independence dramatist Rabindranath Tagore compares the status of women in Bengali and London. He gives priority to women and says women are influenced by the English education and the Western culture. His women characters are emancipated and empowered to transform themselves. He uses his heroines as a vehicle for the attack of male-domination, advocacy of women's education and the cause of emancipation of women. His matured heroines did not hesitate to voice their feelings openly against the ills of the society, like widow remarriage, caste system and religious hypocrisy. Tagore writes about the role of female characters, as well as their sufferings, inner strength and their change in the society; but it was not talked by the people.

Karnad's works are based on myth, history, tradition, and folklore. His women characters are presented as the voice of wisdom and they counterpart male to understand it. In *The Fire and the Rain* (1998), he says that death is due to jealousy, rivalry and violence but could have been averted, if the man listened to the woman. In *Hayavadana*, Padmini is portrayed as an ambitious woman and she search for the completeness which leads to death. In *Bali-The Sacrifice* (1980), Queen Amritmati strives to archive her quest for completeness. Thus Karnad shows a strong image of women and also their miserable position. The problem related to Indian traditional family and the patriarchal system is portrayed through his women characters.

In Mahesh Dattani's plays, women are the sufferers of patriarchal authority who are also sensitive human beings to identify their sufferings and retaliate to it. As a writer, she represents images of women, who struggle from a silent and submissive to aggressive and violent women and register their protest against oppression and injustice. Thus Dattani's plays portray women and their sufferings and their struggle for their rights in a clear way.

Vijay Tendulkar's plays explore 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 the society. As characters Tendulkar's women are among the most convincing in Indian theatre. He depicts women as being equal underneath their socio-economic ideas. In his works women resemble each other in the ultimate truth of being commanded by men, for their pleasure and their under laws.

The four important playwrights in different regions are Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Girish Karnad in Kannada, Badal Sircar in Bengali and Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, who have produced a number of stage-worthy plays and gave a new life to Indian Drama. Chandrasekhar Kambar discovered new themes and introduced the folk-form and language theatre. In his plays, myth, history, folk-legend, religio-centric occupies the central part of the play. The instrument for the handling of the play is the introduction of the socio-ethnic changes. The tradition of having romantic and fanciful themes in the plays is converted as social problems.

Among the other dramatist Vijay Tendulkar occupies an important place. Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar is a Marathi playwright who started his career as a journalist. He was born in a Brahmin family on 7 July 1928. The men in Tendulkar's place are mostly shop-keepers but he is crowded with lower middle-class communities. His father is a head clerk at a British Publishing Firm and he starts a publishing business, which encourages Tendulkar to take up writing. As a Journalist, he witnesses corruption, violence, injustice and loss of moral values in society. He works as a sub-editor in the dailies such as *Navabharat*, *Maratha* and *Loksatta*. When he worked in *Navabharat*, he is encouraged to write one-act plays. He has varied professional experiences, so he knows everything about people of all classes and writes many

plays. They include more dialogue than narrative, so he changes his writing to one-act plays and full-length plays. He is interested in fighting for cultural freedom.

As a writer, director and actor of some Marathi plays, Tendulkar's father takes him to the rehearsals of his plays. Young Vijay Tendulkar often takes leave to school and watches Western English movies and plays; the rest of the time he goes to the library. Thus the Western plays influence him to become a writer. He had two-role models that influenced him much. In his eleventh age, he writes, directs and acts in his first play. He acts as a child artist in two Marathi plays. Then writing becomes his profession. Though he starts his career as a writer, his early works are not intended for publication.

Tendulkar's first play is written during his school days. The plays such as *Chimanicha Ghar Hote Menache* (1960), *Ek Halti Mulgi* (1967), *Kalijanchi Shalai* (1968) were written on the power of oppression. His ten plays are translated into English. His most important plays are *Gruhastha (Householder)* (1947), *Shrimant (The Rich)* (1956), *Manoos Nawache Bet (An Island Named 'Man')* (1958), *Gidhade (The Vultures)* (1961), *Patlachya Poriche Lagin (Marriage of a Village Mayor's Daughter)* (1965), *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe (Silence! The Court is in Session)* (1967), *Sakharam Binder (Sakharam, the Book-Binder)* (1972), *Kamala (Kamala)* (1982), *Kanyadaan (Giving Away of a Daughter in Marriage)* (1983), *Dambadwicha Mukabala (Encounter in Umbugland)*, *The Masseur* (2001), *Mitrachi Goshta (A Friend's Story)* (2001) and *His Fifth Woman* (in English) (2004).

Tendulkar plays are mostly about levity and seriousness, family in modern life, capitulation to conservatism and patriarchy created by women. He breaks the three-act conversation. In his plays, most of his characters are convinced and they come from the middle class to which he belongs. His works such as *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Kamala* are

written on the basis of gender. In the work *Sakharam Binder*, he portrays the human violence. *Kanyadaan* is based on the emotion of a family and it depicts the domestic violence and exposes the Dalit psyche. *A Friend's Story* is of lesbian trend. Karnad's *Tuglaq* and Mohan Rakesh's *Aadhe Adhure* (1975) are translated by him. He wrote twenty-eight full length plays, twenty-four one-act plays, several articles, editorials and eleven plays for children. From his first play *Grihasth* (1955) to *Safar* (1992), he has contributed a lot of valuable works and they are based on the contemporary socio-political violence.

Tendulkar's plots have been changed according to the modern Marathi Theatre in 1950s and 1960s. He writes plays mostly for the Rangayan. Subsequently his friends Sulabha Deshpande, Mohan Agashe and Shriram Lagoo give new realism to Tendulkar's plays, which helped to bring new ideas in Marathi theatre. In his early 20s, Tendulkar publishes the play *Amcyavar Kon Prem Kamar* (Who will love us?) and the work *Grihasth* (The Householder), which did not receive much recognition among the audience. But his play *Srimant* in 1956, establishes him as a good writer. It is about a young unmarried woman who decides not to deliver the child. At the same time, her father tries to buy her a husband to save his societal status. In 1961, he writes the play *Gidhade* (*The Vultures*), which is the turning point in his writings that establishes his own unique style. The play is put in an honourably collapsed family structure and violence becomes its theme. He searches for violence in various forms such as domestic, sexual, communal and political.

In 1967, Tendulkar writes the famous play *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe* (*Silence! The Court is in Session*). It is presented on the stage in 1967 and in the form of movie in 1971 with the association of Tendulkar as a screenplay writer. The play originates from the real-life incidents. It is about Miss. Leela Benare, who becomes the victim in the mock-trial. The mock-

trial becomes more than a game. When the play is staged, Tendulkar becomes a red-eyed man and is nick named as ‘the angry young man of Marathi theatre.’ It combines the social criticism with the tragedy of an individual.

In 1972, Tendulkar writes *Sakharam Binder (Sakharam, the Binder)*. In this play, he deals about the domination of the male gender over the female. The main character Sakharam, is a book binder and is a man devoid of ethics and morality and agrees that he does not think about the useless social policies and the marriage. He uses the society for his own pleasure. In this play, he regularly gives shelter to abandon wives and uses them for sexual gratification. Some women who are enslaved by Sakharam madly want freedom from their enslavement. But Sakharam is finally shocked by Champa, who is equal to him in her behaviour.

Tendulkar writes another much-admired play *Ghashiram Kotwal (Officer Ghashiram)* (1972). The play deals with the political violence. It is a political satire created as a musical drama set in 18<sup>th</sup> century, Pune. This play demonstrates the deep study of psychology in Tendulkar. It is one of the longest running plays in the history of the Indian theatre. The rise of Shiv Sena in Maharashtra in the 1970 is reflected in this play.

In 1981, Tendulkar writes *Kamala*, a play about the flesh trade, which is still functioning in the rural parts of India. The play tells about the three women characters such as Kamala, Sarita and Kamalabai. They are treated as slaves by their master Jaisingh Jadav, who is a self-seeking journalist.

Tendulkar’s work *Manus Navache Bet* is staged in the year 1956. This is based on the tradition to social reality. Tendulkar and Karnad demolish the three-acts and create a new form of play. He receives many prestigious awards such as Sangeet Natak Academy Award (1970), Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award (1970), Padma Bhushan (1989), Saraswathi Samman

(1993), Kalidas Samman (1999), and Film Fare best story Award for *Aakrosh* (1981) and Best screen play award for the movie *Ardh Satya* (1983). He considers that the acceptance of torture becomes a part of life, which is not eradicated in the society. His work *Chim Anicha Ghar Hote Menace* (1960) portrays the farcical elements. *Kalayanchi Shala* (1963) consists of farcical elements and a mixture of middle-class ambition. His two or more works *Madhalya Bhinti* (1958), *Ek Hatti Mulyi* (1967) are considered as family drama.

Tendulkar was a 'Chronicler of Violence' because of the screenplays written for the movies *Nishant* (1974), *Akrosh* (The Cry) (1980) and *Ardh Satya* (The Half-truth) (1983). He has written eleven movies in Hindi and eight movies in Marathi. He wrote screen plays for the film based on women's activism in India. He writes metaphorical plays *Safar* (1991) and *The Massuer* (2001).

The play *Silence! The Court is in Session* shows the rebel against the values of the fundamental orthodox society. The title itself tells us that the court is not in silence mode. The theatre in this play comes to a suburban village of Bombay to stage a play which is a miniature cross-section of the middle-class society. The members of the group are the representatives of its sub-strata. The spiteful attitude of the other characters towards Miss. Leela Benare, the central character of the play reflects their malicious and spiteful attitude towards their fellow beings. A well-targeted conspiracy is hatched out against her and in the name of mock-trial. They expose and dissect her personal life and blight her psyche. Their attitude towards her reveals the basic hypocrisy and double standards of the society. The play exposes the vulnerability of women in Indian society. In this play, he uses pirandellesque effect. The troupe starts the trial as a pass time device but it goes more than a game. The characters are the real identities. The male and female

characters in the play equally capture the emotion of the readers. The final soliloquy of Miss. Benare tells us about the worst situation she faces in the play.

*Kamala* is another play written in a naturalistic mode. He writes this play, which is inspired by the real life incidents like the other plays. He writes this play based on the incident published in the daily Indian Express exposed by Ashwin Sarin, who actually brings a girl from a flesh market and presents at the press conference. The character Jadav treats the woman whom he purchases from the flesh market as an object that can buy him promotion in his job and a reputation in his professional life. His mind goes in a single-track, who pursues his goal single-mindedly. Tendulkar talks about the modern concept of the investigative journalism, which stresses on the damaged mind of the victim.

The next play *Sakharam, the Binder* was a naturalistic play. The play revolves around the central character Sakharam, a book-binder. Though he is a Brahmin, he is an antithesis and does not believe in the outdated social codes and the conventional marriage of that caste. The play is about the domination of the male over the female. Tendulkar presents the manifestation of lust and violence in man. Sakharam uses the society for his own pleasure. He continuously gives shelter to the abandoned wives who remain silent to the emotional and moral suggestion of his use for his sexual gratification. He justifies all his acts through claims of modern, unconventional thinking and finally comes up with the argument to enslave women. But some of the women who are enslaved by Sakharam badly want freedom from their enslavement. All kinds of morals and judgements are avoided. Thus Tendulkar's characters are the combination of good and evil, weakness and strength. Though Sakharam is a rude person, he has his own ideas and personalities. He is honest and frank. This personality becomes the hypocrite of the middle-class people.

While analyzing the portrayal of women characters in the plays of Tendulkar, they are innocent. His women characters are not romanticized, idealized or forced to live by their creator's symbolic purposes. They are the first and foremost human beings of flesh and blood, who draw their features from the wildest range of observed examples. They are allowed to inhabit the entire spectrum from the unbelievably gullible to the clever, from the malleable to the stubborn, from the conservative to the rebellious and from self-sacrificing to the grasping.

In some of his most significant plays, Tendulkar presents women in pairs. They are quite different from each other in behavioural traits, class and characters; but underneath these superficial differences lie in the lives that resemble each other in the ultimate truth of being commanded by men, for their pleasure and under their laws. The earliest image of woman that history provides is that of the food-gathering, breeding, feeding female who is both protected and victimized by the brute strength of the male, who gains a brief respite as mother-goddess and matriarch and then loses all claims to power and status as man invents the plough and takes over farming.

In most of his plays, Tendulkar projects women as victims. The plays highlight the gender stereotyping that is forced upon them. 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 and 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 'family values' which are presumed to be her responsibility and not the male. A woman is expected to be meek, submissive, and patient; she should unselfishly subordinate her will and desire to those of the male. Such

sustained sociological conditioning inhibits and restricts the full development of a woman's personality.

It is saddening to know that almost all his women characters meekly submit to the injustice, violence and harassment done to them. They seem to be helpless and have no other alternative but to go through the way that life is chosen for them. But probably the question does not end there. It appears to the reader that Tendulkar gives fatalistic twist to a woman's suffering in a social context and interprets it accordingly.

In the case of his women characters, Tendulkar always shows the triumph of reactionary and revisionist values. It is interesting to speculate about the origin of this dictionary in Tendulkar's psychic values of life whether positive or negative and is of course related to the society in which they operate. The sense of quiet resignation, not altogether unmixed with a sense of cynicism that one finds in most of Tendulkar's women trends, suggest the essential futility and meaninglessness of life. One wonders if it is because, the dramatist himself turns his back on the vital relationship between the value system and the social structure. This is a frightening thought in as much as it forecloses the very possibility of amelioration. He has of course put before the world the frightening truth about life but what disturbs the reader is that, there is no escape from this frightening reality. According to Vijay Tendulkar, human violence is something ugly. Tendulkar portrays violence as an important issue and innate human nature. Also he elaborates his theory of violence in his project 'Emerging pattern of violence'.

Thus Tendulkar's plays concentrate on the different aspects of human relationship and they all score the complexity of human relationship. In all of them, women play key roles in the plot. But they all focus on the sufferings of the female characters in the plays. The men in the plays have used them only for their self-advancement. All the plays contain a subtle critique of

middle-class and lower middle-class Indian society and he presents them in different aspects. In spite of these similarities, thematically they have some variations also. There are two noticeable elements in his works. They are sense of humour and his intense compassion because of their undetectable quality.

The present study entitled “Portrayal of Women in Select Works of Vijay Tendulkar: *Silence! The Court is in Session, Kamala and Sakharam Binder*”. The chapters are about how women are portrayed in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. The first chapter “Introduction” is about the origin of Drama and the development of Indian English drama in the Pre-Independence and the Post-Independence periods. This also tells about the contemporary dramatists who give importance to their women characters. There is also an Introduction about Vijay Tendulkar, which tells about how the women characters are portrayed in his plays. The chapter ends with the summary of the selected plays such as *Silence! The Court is in Session, Kamala and Sakharam Binder*.

The second chapter “Women as Victims in the Patriarchal Society in *Silence! The Court is in Session*,” deals about the position of women in the patriarchal society and how they are victimized by the male chauvinists. It is also about how the women characters are portrayed in the plays of Tendulkar and the position of the women characters in the play. The relationship between the women characters with their male counterparts is also mentioned.

The third chapter “Exploitation of Women in *Kamala*,” is about how women who are exploited by men. In addition to that it tells about the women characters, Sarita and Kamala who are used as objects by their master, Jaisingh Jadav. This is an evidence to prove that the flesh trade is functioning in some parts of India. It is also about the character of Sarita, who is transformed from a submissive wife to a new woman.

The fourth chapter “Man-Woman relationship in *Sakharam Binder*,” tells about the two characters Laxmi and Champa and their relationship with the male characters such as Sakharam, Dawood and Fouzdar Shinde. It also deals with the relationship between Laxmi and her husband. Then Laxmi and Champa are compared to Sarita and kamala in the play *Kamala*.

The fifth chapter “Conclusion” is the summation of all the other chapters and says about the actual status of women in the society. It gives some suggestion regarding the improvement of the status of women in the society.

## Chapter 2

### Women as Victims in the Patriarchal Society in *Silence! The Court is in Session*

A patriarchal society consists of male-dominance everywhere, that is, in an individual relationship and in an organized society. Women are supposed to bear everything created by men because they are the victims. If they fail to obey the predetermined norms, they are considered as evil and punished severely. Sometimes men are behind every sin committed by women, but only women are punished. So a common belief around the world is that women should be submissive and should not raise their head as well as their voice. This has been taken as a subject by most of the dramatists. The most notable person is Vijay Tendulkar who focusses his writings on the middle-class society.

The purpose is to study about how women are victimized in this patriarchal society in Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session*. The play is based on Friedrich Durrenmatt's story *Die Panne* in 1956. It is originally written in Marathi and translated into English by Priya Adarkar. The play deals with the pitiable condition of women who are crushed under the patriarchal system. This play also represents the asymmetrical relationship of power between men and women, and between married and unmarried women. Women characters in the play capture imagination in the minds of the readers. The play has ordinary people as its characters and it has the technique of 'play within the play'.

Tendulkar maintains the balance between individual freedom, social values and moral standards which are given not to miss the lop-side justice, one for man and other for woman. He projects the status of women, who are crushed and suffered under the patriarchal system. A woman does not have identity which has to be kept as their own. The women characters in the play are brutally mistreated by the men. Especially Miss. Leela Benare, a young spinster is

trapped like an animal by her team members because she wanted to live her own life. N. S. Dharan in the book *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar* says that, “In most of Tendulkar’s plays, generally women are at the centre ... around women that most of the action revolves. The roles that Tendulkar’s female protagonists play eclipse those played by the men figuring in them” (28).

*Silence! The Court is in Session* is the first major play of Tendulkar. The play is based on the real incident. Overhearing a conversation of an amateur group, results in the creation of the play. The women characters in the play are Miss. Leela Benare, Mrs. Kashikar and sister-in-law of Samant who does not appear in the play.

Miss. Leela Benare is a thirty year old spinster. She is portrayed as a self-assertive, frank, bold and a rebellious woman. As a teacher, she dedicates herself completely to her job. During the eight years in teaching job, she is very punctual, never disapproved anybody and never hurt others and is a free minded woman. Though she is good in her job, the management wants to dismiss her, as she has an illegal relationship with a married man named Professor Damle. So she is very much worried about her illegitimate child in the womb. But she maintains her cool attitude in front of others. She always has a lust to live the life on her own and for this reason, she ignores all the norms of the society. She wants to live with complete freedom, so she rejects all the traditions and taboos, which restrict her freedom. She claims independence from this patriarchal society. This made others to see her as a sinful woman. Benare is able to laugh at foibles and eccentricities of varied members in the group. The spirit of individualism makes her to take a bold decision such as getting pregnant without marriage by whom she loves.

Benare’s relations with the members of her group do not seem to be cordial. She expresses her contempt for them through her sarcastic comments to Samant. After the arrival of

the team members, Benare begins to make fun of them. An interesting thing to note is that her colleagues are failures in their respective professions and in some cases, even in their lives. They appear to be jealous of Benare who is quite successful in her career. They also do not like the way Benare makes fun of them. They are looking for an opportunity to discipline her as they do not approve of her unconventional behaviour. The mock-trial gives them an opportunity to settle their scores with Benare. They gang up against her and hurt her feelings deeply by making her private affairs public.

At first she is the victim of betrayal of love. Her life is filled with sorrow. When she is just fifteen, she falls in love with her maternal uncle who praises her bloom every day. In her strict home, no one is there to praise her; it is her uncle who comes close to her. He gives her love and affection. She insists on marrying him so that she can live a happy life. But her relatives including her mother are against her proposal. Her maternal uncle does not utter a word about their marriage and does not have courage to marry her. He spoils young Benare's life and leaves her. So she attempts to commit suicide, but it fails. Thus her life becomes a tragedy at an early age.

After her first failure in love, she decides to be careful in love affair when she grows up. But unfortunately her life is completely surrounded by grief. She studies well and becomes a successful teacher after which she meets a married man, Prof. Damle. She falls in love with him even without the thought that, he is a married man. She respects and loves him because of his intelligence in his profession, but Damle adores only her body and made her pregnant. To prove this Benare says, "He didn't want my mind, or my devotion-he didn't care about them" (118). As a family man with children, he did not want to marry and accept Benare as his wife. She does not worry about the society and she does not feel sad for unmarried motherhood. But this makes the

others in the team as well as the society to consider her as a sinner. There is no fault in Benare because she loves her uncle and Damle sincerely but they see her only as a flesh and not a human being with emotions. In this society, it is Miss. Benare who is badly treated by men.

Though Benare is filled with sorrow, she does not show it to others when the team goes to the suburban village. She wants to be happy at all times. When she enters into the hall where the play is to be enacted, she becomes close to Samant, a local villager. She sings a song which shows us her loving nature:

Oh, I've got a sweetheart  
 Who carries all my books,  
 He plays in my doll house  
 And says he likes my looks... (59)

On the day of performance their team member Rawte fails to attend the performance. To fill the place of Rawte, Mrs. Kashikar suggests Samant, who is a local villager and he guides the team to the hall, where the trial is to take place. He is unaware of the activities done in court, so the team members plan to enact a mock-trial in the court, where they take the life of Miss. Benare.

When Benare returns from washing her face, she is accused of infanticide and unmarried motherhood under Indian Penal Code without her conscious. All her co-artists gang up against her. They start the trial against her. Sukhatme takes the role as public prosecutor and accused Benare. He praises motherhood by saying, "Motherhood is pure. Moreover, there is a . . . great nobility in our concept of motherhood" (79) and speaks about its significance. Mr. Kashikar too praises motherhood as Mr. Kashikar says that, "Motherhood must be sacred and pure." (118). But they trap a woman without mercy and give the judgement to kill an unborn child. Sukhatme argues that the character of the accused is against morality and she has humiliated all social and

moral values of the society. The accused has to be considered as a public enemy. If she is left free, she will ruin the culture of the society.

In the society, unmarried motherhood is considered as a great sin which is against the Hindu tradition. Sukhatme argues with this point to consider Benare as a sinner and should be punished. He also adds that if it is encouraged, the dream of the society, which is presided over by the tradition will be destroyed. He calls Ponkshe, a scientist, who fails in his profession as the first witness. Ponkshe says about Benare's secret love affair with Prof. Damle. Ponkshe makes Benare's private life into a public one. As a witness, he says that one day Benare sent a letter through a girl with the message that she wants to meet him. Benare meets Ponkshe and she requests him to marry her and be the father to her child. As she is pregnant, she also requests Ponkshe not to tell this to others. When he says this in the trial, Mr. Kashikar with great eager asks him to continue and tell them who the father of her child is? He voluntarily requests Sukhatme to call him to the witness-box. Ponkshe says that Miss. Benare always carries poison with her. This shows the male-dominance in the society. Male actors of the association present male-chauvinism who give no respect and importance to women. From the character of Professor Damle, one can easily know that he uses women as an object of sex. The suffering of a woman is mentioned in the article "Handling of Male Characters in Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session*" says that, "The play is about a woman targeted by men, placed in a situation where she can neither get sympathy nor legitimacy for her child" (Sharma).

The next person to witness Benare is Karnik. He points out Benare's suicide attempt. He says that he knew this through one of Benare's cousin. He tells everything about her love with her maternal uncle and the failure and also about her suicide. This makes the other members to be eager in exposing the private life of a woman. Mr. Kashikar as a judge orders Benare to be

‘Silent’ when she tries to defend the argument. This shows Miss. Benare wants to raise her head high before all the men but they make her to be silent in the name of law and order.

Another witness is Balu Rokde, who is the adopted son of Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar. He is an innocent man. When he feels reserved, he is encouraged by his mother to tell everything. He says that one day she behaved in an indecent manner. After a performance, Benare holds his hand and tries to seduce him. He says that this is not the proper way to behave and she asks him not to tell this to others. But he says that he would and also slaps her. From Karnik, one comes to know that it is Benare who slaps Rokde and asks him to marry her. In order to save his life, Mrs. Kashikar keeps Rokde under her control. He also adds that, one day he goes to Damle’s house and he finds Miss. Benare there. Prof. Damle tries to avoid him, so he assumes that something is going on between them. In this way, Rokde also wounds Benare and exposes her private life and paralyses her emotionally.

The local villager Samant is also considered as a witness. He tells more like Rokde’s story and Benare shouts at him to stop, as all the incidents uttered are lies. Samant too agrees that all the incidents are lies. He tells her that he reads everything from a book that he is holding in his hands. Unlike the other members in the troupe, Samant has some sympathy towards Benare.

All the male characters make their furious arguments on Benare’s life. There is no economic support, no job, no male protection and her future is deliberately miserable at the end of the play. In the name of safeguarding the moral and social norms of society, they ill-treat a woman. They expose her private life into public one by one like peeling an onion layer by layer. The judge always keeps her in silence and the other members derive a massive pleasure. Mrs. Kashikar is also a woman but she too joins with men and charges Benare. In the extreme of the trial, Sukhatme says that no mercy must be shown to Benare, and she must be punished severely

because she is a woman. He adds that a woman has to bear all these because she is responsible for building up the high values of society. But it is ruined by her now. Finally he says “Na stri swatantryamarhati” (115) which means women are not fit for independence. So he concludes his argument by demanding the court to give severe and greater punishment than ever to Benare.

Benare is portrayed as a frank and forthright woman. When her team members raise the charges continuously against her, she gives fitting reply to all. She says that she has all the rights to live a life of her own. She argues that she will decide what to do. She does not understand why others are very eager to make charge against a woman. She accepts that she has committed a sin. She falls in love with her maternal uncle because he gave her love when others were strict to her. As a woman, she does not get true love from Prof. Damle. So everyone in her life misuses her. But she is very sincere and dedicated to her profession. She never misses her class and teaches them with joy and purity. Benare, as Tendulkar has drawn her, never speaks directly. She needs so much efforts to hide the pain in her from the crass and insensitive world around her, that practically every remark she makes is tangential, devised to glance off the centre of her pain, to deflect attention from it.

Tendulkar portrays her as a loving mother. Benare shows more concern for her unborn child. She needs a father and security for her child. So she approaches Ponkshe and then Rokde to marry her. But both reject her. When she is alone with Samant in the beginning, she tries ineffectively to Samant. But her efforts are turned down by Mrs. and Mr. Kashikar and Sukhatme. Even the bolt in the door of that hall slips automatically when Benare tries to go out without tolerating the team members. The locked door denotes the absence of escape route to her and she is forced to continue with the trial. This shows the harsh condition of the lives of women. There are some questions on morality prescribed for a young woman.

Finally the verdicts given to Miss. Benare are equated with ‘criminals and sinners’. Judge Mr.Kashikar says the verdict in the case that, “Prisoner Miss Benare, pay the closest attention....the school officials have done a work of merit in deciding to remove you from your job....But the child in your womb shall be destroyed” (119). The given judgement is wrong because all the male characters in the play praised motherhood but they order to destroy the child in her womb. They do not have mercy on the child. When Mr. Kashikar gives the verdict, Benare is shocked and touches her stomach. This shows her unconditional love to her child. But the judgement did not punish Prof. Damle who is responsible to the sin committed. Prof. Damle is absent throughout the play but he is the real sinner. Benare is punished because she is a woman. All the wishes of women are ignored. This shows the double standards of the society which favours men.

The contemporary Indian society, with its roots grounded firmly in reactionary ideas cannot allow the birth of a child without wedlock. So Benare is accused of immorality, sin, promiscuity and over-sexuality. The situation of Miss Benare suggests that women are to be used, stained forever and then thrown away. The man responsible for it does not have the courage to accept the acts that he performs. He cannot bear the responsibility attached to romantic liaisons. The significant presence in the play is the absence of Damle. It is as though the woman has got pregnant all by herself. The male counterpart has no role, no responsibility in the matter.

The next woman character is Mrs. Kashikar. She is the wife of Mr. Kashikar. She is very talkative, quite uneducated, conventional and disapproving of ‘free’ woman like Benare. Mrs. Kashikar’s role is presented as proverbial better half of domineering and enjoying very low dignity. She is portrayed as a traditional bound and a submissive woman to her husband. She

brings the humiliation of typical Hindu Brahmin wife in an idolized family. The most important thing about her is that she is childless. Miss. Benare calls her as 'Hand-that-rocks-the-cradle'. Mrs. Kashikar wants to be with her husband at all times, so she becomes the financier of the amateur dramatic group. The couple has no children so they adopt Balu Rokde. Mrs. Kashikar wants to keep him under her control. She teases him every now and then.

When coming to Mrs. Kashikar married life she seems to be very happy. Mr. Kashikar buys garlands for Mrs. Kashikar and she buys a shirt for him. She always wants to show her happiness to all. She is very warm to Miss. Benare. When Sukhatme plans to stage the mock-trial, it is Mrs. Kashikar who suggests to change the accused. Her idea to change the accused works very well and the trial becomes very sensational and exciting. She is very keen in the trial and insists Samant to watch all the proceedings done in court. When Balu feels shy to be the witness, Mrs. Kashikar encourages him to come out of his statement. When Miss. Benare does not move to the dock, she drags her to it.

Mrs. Kashikar represents the traditional and orthodox married woman. She cannot encourage the idea of being unmarried by the young women. She says that it will be easier when a woman agrees to marry. She does not raise her head before her husband and other men. So she finds these kinds of mannerism missing in Miss. Benare. Even she charges against Benare and wants to punish her instead of punishing the sinner, Prof. Damle.

Mrs. Kashikar is very sensitive and criticizes people. She feels jealous of Benare because Mrs. Kashikar has to obey the orders of her husband and to take care of the family by ignoring her own wishes but Benare is free from all these. Benare is earns money and spends on her own but Mrs. Kashikar has to ask to her husband. She derives secret pleasure when the team members charges Benare with harsh words. She is brought up in a restricted family that makes her to react

violently towards Benare. Her very existence places a question mark against the emptiness of Mrs. Kashikar's life. That is why she offers her help with such alacrity when the men shy away from physically forcing Benare into the dock. They are all middle-class men who must not be seen to harass a woman.

Through the character of Mrs. Kashikar, one can understand the status of women in the nineties'. Mr. Kashikar insults his wife when the trial is going on and gives no regards to his wife. He gives reprimand when she starts to speak. Mrs. Kashikar just explains Samant about the activities done in court in order to avoid mistakes in the night trial; but he silences her. She is not only silenced by Mr. Kashikar in the trial but also in their home. This shows the male-domination in the society. Her role is the outset of providing nurture and secondary support as a housewife.

The use of married title Mrs and husband's surname represent her throughout the play. She has the identity associated with her husband which is not given for her own. Mr. Kashikar is always rude to her. Taking husband's name as theirs is the conventional practise followed all over the world. Some feminists voice against this practise. Their apprehensions about how these changes indicate the subservient status of a woman who occupies in contrast to husband. This includes the gradual erosion of female identity and selfhood. Mrs. Kashikar cannot have ever admitted, even to herself, that it is on account of the sacrosanct institution of marriage that she is open to Mr. Kashikar's constant insults and snubs. He has an automatic right to do so by virtue of being a man and her husband.

Mrs. Kashikar's cue to fall in silent shows the subservient role in marriage. This shows the status of women in nineteen forties and fifties which gives extensive education. Women in that period are trained to do housework and are married, ostensibly to run their husband's home.

Mr. Kashikar's action of buying garlands for his wife shows that he loves her. This action in public makes others to feel jealous of them. But Mrs. Kashikar shows her humanitarian face to Miss. Benare in the end. When Benare sits immoveable by the outcome of the court proceedings, she consoles her and encourages her to get ready for the performance.

There are some contrasts between the women characters in the play. The women characters are Miss. Leela Benare and Mrs. Kashikar. Mrs. Kashikar is an uneducated woman and lives with her husband, but Benare is educated and employed and her response signifies her rejection of courtship ritual. Mrs. Kashikar is shy about buying flowers from her husband but Benare declares her economic independence and announces never to buy garland nor desires them. Mrs. Kashikar is dependent on her husband but Benare is free from family and economic conditions. Miss. Benare wants to hold her head high and wants to live her own life but Mrs. Kashikar is a dependent woman that is evident through her name. She is also snubbed by her husband. The Indian society insults her for not bearing a child.

Women are surviving due to the onslaughts of institutional power. The fake court is made as a real one. Amar Nath Prasad reiterates the words of Arundhati Banerjee in the article "Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session: A Play of Plight and Plunder*" who rightly says that, "the accusation brought against Benare at the beginning of the trial turns into verdict in last because contemporary Indian society, with its roots grounded firmly in reactionary ideas, cannot allow the birth of a child out of wedlock" (170). Women are disrupted to do certain things in the world freely. Misfortune lies on the head of Benare throughout the play. Men ruin the society but women are always trapped in the eyes of the harsh society. In the end Benare feels like a caged bird. This is proved through her final soliloquy:

The parrot to the sparrow said,  
 ‘Why, oh why, are your eyes so red?’  
 ‘Oh my dear friend, what shall I say?  
 Someone has stolen my nest away.’  
 Sparrow, sparrow, poor little sparrow...  
 ‘Oh, brother crow, oh, brother crow,  
 Were you there? Did you see it go?’  
 ‘No, I don’t know. I didn’t see.  
 What are your troubles to do with me?’  
 O sparrow, sparrow, poor little sparrow... (121)

The judge and the lawyer are the guardians of law and justice but fail to protect the life a girl.

Even the more experienced wise man, Mr. Kashikar does not help Benare, but gangs up.

Some movements have started to establish the rights of women within the Indian society. Benare is self-sufficient, modern, independent and a free-thinker too. She is frustrated by the male members of the society. She fights alone in the battle of trial which has tyrannical power structure. The other members of the troupe do not have sympathy and does not offer help to the victim. The person who are accusing Benare, have failed to achieve something in their own life. The word ‘Silence’ in the play gives various meanings. One is mentioning the order of the Judge and the other is the metaphorical meaning which is silencing the pleas for justice of the opposite sex. Benare’s character uproots the patriarchal society and longs to transfer everything. Benare wants to live her own life and not for the society. She is used and thrown out by the victimisers of the society. She sees the facts of life at a young age.

Tendulkar's women characters have to undergo serious sufferings and face many problems. He is not against the rights given to women. He portrays the pathetic condition of women. Mrs. Kashikar never misses the chance to criticize Benare during the trial. The portrayal of relationship between men and women is clear. Miss. Benare's relationship with men, such as, her love for her maternal uncle in the young age and with Prof. Damle as a grown woman makes an unforgettable remark in her mind. She longs for love and care and so she falls in love with them. But she is victimized badly by both of them. Then her team members Sukhatme, Pongshe, Rokde, Karnik and Mr. Kashikar started a mock-trial for fun but they severely hurt Benare. They expose all her private life into public to get pleasure. The court pins the victim of love but the victimiser is scot-free. But she tries to defend herself through her soliloquy. Generally there is no right to other people to interfere into one's private life. Instead of solving the problems in her life they hold an enquiry against her. Thus the relationship of Miss. Benare with men is a tragic one which makes her numb. Then Mrs. Kashikar's relationship with men is an oppressed one. As a wife, she is very submissive to her husband and ignores all her wishes of her husband. As a mother to her adopted son Balu Rokde, she is inferior to him. When Miss. Benare proposes her wish to marry him, he is worried about Mrs. Kashikar.

Benare is unprepared for the mock-trial but she is accosted by Mr. Kashikar. There is no choice left to her than to speak and she is charged with terrible crime. When she is surrounded with the box she is stunned for a moment. The play is skilfully handled with its intrigue, suspicion, crime and recrimination. In order to have a security for her future child she approaches men in a pathetic way. This is the only crime done by Benare. She enjoys a happy life only for a short period of time. Benare's song shows how she suffered due to the mock-trial.

The reason for the trial is the failures, unfulfilled dreams and disappointments of the characters in their real life, which make them as wicked and to gain pleasure through the mock-trial. The characters show dual perspectives with the social issue especially on women. The play explores the male psyche that denies the freedom and choices of women in motherhood, profession and creativity. The society suppresses the conscience of women which remains as one of the charming utterances. In the modern era, women do not hesitate to remain unmarried, as they do not want to lose their freedom. The sufferings of Indian women are portrayed through the characters of Tendulkar in the play.

Ratan Chandra Das in the article, "Gender Discrimination, Sexism and Violence: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar's Selected Plays" says that,

The women characters in Tendulkar's dramas suffer a lot as the victims of the hegemonic power structure. The female body as an object of male sexual fantasy and desire is theatrically presented by Tendulkar. All women characters in his plays are marginalized objects in interlocking system of sexual politics and power politics. (107)

A common belief in the society about women is that they are created only for doing the household activities and child rearing. They are not allowed to come out and express their views. Only women are punished for every crime and men are left free. Women who are considered as sinners are abandoned and their needs are ignored. They are killed physically and psychologically. The play represents plight, ponderings and problems of the middle class Indian women. The society does not allow and accept women who want to hold their head high. They want them to be submissive and inferior to men. The new unconventional ways created by women are not accepted by the society.

Tendulkar has made Mrs. Kashikar ridiculous and dangerous in an insidious way. But he has also makes it possible for us to sympathize with her. He has not idealized Benare, but forces us to sympathize with her. The exalted construction of women as mothers is part of history of a nationalist movement and a period preceding it wherein woman identities were fixed within the domestic procreative space and are mythologized around notions of motherhood. A woman without child will not be held in high esteem and does not deal with any mother like figure. The double standards of the society such as women holding their head high to face the social humiliation and the sadistic members who are cornering women and torturing them are still alive in our independent society. Still women are like puppets in the hands of male members in the society.

Thus *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a powerful satire on the modern society. Benare tries to make fun of the failures faced by the characters in their real life. The troupe praises motherhood but destroys the life of an infant. The only thing that is going to speak for her is her child. The play reflects the serious actualities of life and tries to reawaken an awareness of the unchangeable realities of the contemporary Indian life. For men, love is just an episode in their life but for women, it is the life itself.

## Chapter 3

### Exploitation of Women in *Kamala*

Most of the plays of Tendulkar portray women as sufferers, victims and how they are exploited by men. In all his plays women characters are taken from real life situation. The play *Kamala* is a naturalistic play, which is based on a real incident. This play clearly portrays the status of women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century India. This also shows how women are ruled by men in the name of traditional practise. This is an attempt to study about how the unfortunate women Kamala, Sarita and Kamalabai are portrayed, and the thoughts that awaken Sarita to grow as a strong woman to fight against the brutal exploitation of women by her husband, Jaisingh.

The play is based on the real life incident. ‘*The Indian Express*’ correspondent Ashwin Sarin buys a woman named Kamla for Rs.2300/- from a village in Madhya Pradesh. According to the Indian Penal Code, selling and buying of human is a punishable crime. In order to get more fame, Sarin exposes Kamla in the press conference. After the conference Sarin sends her to an orphanage. He uses her as a use and throw object. This inspires Tendulkar to produce a naturalistic play.

In *Kamala*, Sarita, Kamala and Kamalabai are the women characters. All the three characters represent the three dimensions of womanhood. What remains common in the reactions of the three is that, a woman can be passive and indifferent but cannot be a non-living entity. From Kamala’s practical suggestion and the analytical approach to her life conditions, it is clear that even in a state of marginalized existence, she retains her humanity and intellectual richness. Her character becomes a foil both to Sarita and Jaisingh.

These characters are portrayed as sincere, innocent, generous and devoted to their master. Through these characters, Tendulkar presents the actual Indian society where women are

exploited and the flesh trade, which is still in practise. This play is about the life of a tribal woman who is used by a male chauvinist as an object which brings promotion in his job; and Sarita, who is the wife of Jaisingh, an educated woman unaware about her status. When Jaisingh brings Kamala to his home, Kamala becomes the eye opener of Sarita where she realizes her status. In the end Sarita argues with Jaisingh and accuses him for keeping her as a slave and for exploiting her. Tendulkar uses media as an instrument of the mechanization of power that can impose greater torture on the marginalized society. Beena Agrawal in the book *Dramatic World of Vijay Tendulkar: Explorations and Experiments* says that, “Every human being is equally gifted for nurturing, controlling and rationalizing the issues specific to his gender” (46).

Like Ashwin Sarin, Jaisingh Jadav is a self-seeking journalist in the play. He buys Kamala from a rural flesh market in Luhardaga bazaar of Bihar. He buys Kamala just for Rs.250/-. About that, he says a buffalo costs more than the price of a woman in Bihar. This is clear through his speech to Sarita. To quote his words:

J AISINGH. I bought her-in the Luhardaga bazaar in Bihar....

J AISINGH. .... For two hundred and fifty rupees. Even a bullock costs more than that.

[*Sarita is stunned.*]

[*Brightening as he notices her reaction.*] They sell human beings at this bazaar at Luhardaga beyond Ranchi.... (14)

This shows that women are treated more badly and cruelly than an animal. Life of this tribal woman is not given importance by others. Even Jaisingh too buys her for his own purpose — to get a promotion in his job and a high status in the society. Jaisingh brings Kamala in a very pathetic condition to his home. He introduces her to Sarita and tells her that he is going to

present her in the press conference which is arranged by him. Sarita is shocked when she knows the plan of her husband. She feels pity on her. He orders Sarita not to tell anything about Kamala to others; because he says, "...It's important that no one should know about it..." (14). He is not even interested to tell this to his friend, Jain.

Tendulkar portrays Kamala as an innocent woman unaware of anything. She is portrayed as a submissive woman, who wants to serve under her master. When Jaisingh brings her home, Kamala wears a white untidy sari which is torn. She covers her face with the torn sari and enters into the house in a humble way carrying a small cloth bundle. By mistake she does not utter even a single word not only to Jaisingh but also to others. Because she says that Jaisingh paid money to buy her, so he is the master and she should not speak in front of her master. When Jaisingh orders her to get ready for the conference she says that, "I'm your servant master..." (20).

Kamala feels like entering into a palace when she enters into the house of her master. By seeing the appearance of Kamala, Kamalabai a maid-servant of that house raises her voice and says that if Kamala is going to stay there she will go out of the house. Kamala advises her not to raise her voice because servants do not have the rights to raise their voice in front of their master. Kamalabai says this to Sarita, "...Servants shouldn't raise their head and answer back. They should be grateful for their daily bread" (25). This shows the innocent nature of Kamala. While entering into the house, she is unaware that she is going to be the awakening star of Sarita's conscious to grow as a strong woman.

Sarita sees Kamala and has some sympathy on her. Sarita asks permission from Jaisingh for Kamala to take bath and to wear a new sari. But Jaisingh orders Sarita not to give her anything except food. If Sarita wants to give anything, she has to ask his permission. Sarita asks Jaisingh's permission to give a new dress to Kamala. When Kamala asks her, Jaisingh gets angry

and shouts at her by raising his voice as, “I know, I know! You don’t have to tell me, understand? I have a very good idea of all that. I want her to look just as she is at the press conference” (22).

Sarita feels pity on Kamala when she is brought home by Jaisingh. Kamala enters the house in a very pathetic condition. She covers her face and enters more respectfully. When Kamala asks a sari for her, she asks permission from Jaisingh to lend a sari to Kamala. Kamala wonders Sarita by seeing her kindness. But the heartless Jaisingh shouts at her for her advice to Kamala to take bath. It is because Jaisingh’s plan will be spoilt if she does so. If Kamala appears in the press conference in her original status everyone will appreciate him for exposing the bad condition of women in our country. Sarita strongly opposes her husband for his cruel behaviour. After the press conference, Sarita enquires about the conference. Her husband repeats the questions asked to Kamala in the conference with amusement. This makes Sarita to understand her husband’s cruel character.

This is the plan of Jaisingh. When Kamala looks in an ugly way, a more sensational environment is created. Everyone expresses their sympathy on her and Jaisingh gains more popularity by doing this heartless action. Actually Jaisingh does not have any idea to reform the aimless life of Kamala. She is used as an object by her master to raise his level in his job; after the conference she is a worthless creature in the eyes of Jaisingh. He plans to send Kamala to an orphanage. His selfish activity makes him as a heartless and loveless man.

This cruel behaviour of Jaisingh shows us how the male society exploited women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, women are misused and sold in an illegal way. Ashwin Sarin’s activity clearly shows us that these flesh markets are still functioning in the villages of

India. Women are forced to accept the slavery and they are tortured like animals if they go against their masters. But such auctions are not stopped and questioned by the authorities.

Kamala thinks that Sarita and Kamalabai are also bought by Jaisingh from the market. So she asks her. "How much did he buy you for?" (34). This question is repeated to the servant Kamalabai also, "... how much did they hire you for?" (25). Though Kamala is an illiterate woman, she clearly understands the situation and sufferings of Sarita. After getting to know the childlessness in the home she gave some ideas to Sarita. She says ideas to improve the economic status of her master as well as for the child birth. She says that she will work hard to make her master happy and earn some money out of it. She says that Sarita can take care of her master Jaisingh. Since there is no child she will take the responsibility of producing an heir. This idea makes Sarita happy.

When Kamala is in the auction of the flesh market, she accepts this without having knowledge. She accepts these actions as the destiny of every woman. Till the end she does not know that she is used by Jaisingh as an object which brings him popularity. Kamala is more sincere and dedicated to her master. But the heartless master does not consider her as a human being. He takes Kamala to the press conference and the people ask inhuman questions to her. She is not interested in it but she is forced to answer the questions asked in the interview. They are "... what are your opinions about the economic exploitation of the tribals?" (28), then they asked immoral question like, "...what do you do with the illegitimate children?" (29). She does not know English so she smiles but did not remove her sari from her head. When she is asked to sit in the conference, she sits on the floor. This is to give respect to her master.

Atlast Jaisingh is happy with the press conference and takes her to the orphanage immediately after the conference. Kamala is not interested to go out of the house and to live in

an orphanage; it is Jaisingh who compels Kamala. To obey the words of her master, she goes away silently with Jaisingh. But that silent storm created a great impact on Sarita. Thus Kamala is used like a pawn in the chess game played by Jaisingh Jadav.

The next woman character in the play is Sarita who is trapped between tradition and modern society. She is portrayed as a modern educated woman of Indian society and a 'lovely bonded labour' of Jaisingh. She is from an urban society but submissive to her husband. Without knowing her original status, Sarita acts like a pawn in the hands of Jaisingh. Her husband reduces her to the slave-like existence. Moreover she does all the works ordered by her husband. Sarita does every possible thing to Jaisingh in his absence too. She sees Kamala with sympathy and does not know that she is the eye-opener of her inner thought. She understands the idea of Jaisingh. She is seen by him as an object which accompany in the society as his wife and as a caretaker of the house. He is using her as an object of enjoyment.

As a wife, she is very submissive and kind to her husband. She considers serving her husband as sharing the joys as well as sorrows of her husband as a sacred duty. She always supports her husband when her uncle Kakasaheb criticises Jaisingh. Sometimes, she feels irritated of her husband's over-confidence, dominant nature and over-enthusiasm. Everytime she is very alert and orders her maid-servant to keep the house neat and clean, because untidy place is not liked by her husband.

In the beginning of the play, Sarita is very busy in answering the calls of her husband. This portrays her as an obedient wife to Jaisingh even in his absence. To all the calls she introduces herself as 'Mrs. Jadav'. This shows that she is preserving the respect of Jaisingh. Kakasaheb asks her the reason for noting down everything about the callers. She says if the details of the caller are not marked properly, her husband will get angry on her. She says that,

SARITA. I have to write down each phone call.

. . . If I say they didn't tell me their names he gets angry with me for not asking. (3)

Sarita satisfies all the needs of Jaisingh. She accompanies him to the parties and adds more dignity to him in the society. But she is used as an object which gives respect to him in the society.

In addition to that she is used as a living being which provides him food and satisfies his sexual pleasure. Her feelings are not taken into the minds of her husband. In the name of marriage, Jaisingh bought her from a family. When Sarita defends Jaisingh's plan to send kamala to an orphanage, he burst into uncontrollable anger and says that he is the master and she has to obey all the words of Jaisingh. This shows the inhuman nature of Jaisingh. This shows that Jaisingh uses not only Kamala as an object but also uses Sarita as an object in his home.

Sarita is exploited and used as a slave by Jaisingh. The darkness mentioned by the author in the stage symbolizes the darkness surrounded in the life of Sarita as well as her inner conflict. When Jaisingh's friend Jain speaks to Sarita, he says,

JAIN. . . This warrior against exploitation in the country is exploiting you. He's made a drudge out of a horse-riding independent girl from a princely house. . . . Shame on you! Hero of anti-exploitation campaigns makes slave of wife! . . . lovely bonded labour. . . . (17)

This is an evidence for the subjugation of Sarita. She realizes her own identity when her husband brings Kamala home.

When Kamala asks Sarita, "How much did he buy you for?" (34). She replies as, "For seven hundred" (34). This innocent question of Kamala makes Sarita to know that she is kept as

a slave like Kamala by her husband. There is no difference between Sarita and Kamala. Sarita is purchased legally by Jaisingh in the name of marriage in front of others but Kamala is purchased from a rural flesh market where women are sold against the law. Kamala says that she will take the responsibility of the house from Sarita. Her innocence makes her to say that she will work hard to improve the financial status of the house and Sarita will go out with Jaisingh as his wife in the society. While seeing the childless home, she says it is her responsibility to bear a child. Sarita and she will be with the master fifteen days each. Kamala explains:

KAMALA. ... if you won't misunderstand, I'll tell you. The master bought you; he bought me, too. He spent a lot of money on the two of us.... So, memsahib, both of us must stay here together like sisters. We'll keep the master happy. We'll make him prosperous. The master will have children. I'll do the hard work, and I'll bring forth the children. I'll bring them up. You are an educated woman. You keep the accounts and run the house. Put on lovely clothes and make merry with master. Go out with him on holidays and feast-days. Like today. I can't manage all that. And we must have land of our own. Don't worry about it, that's my responsibility. Fifteen days of the month, you sleep with the master; the other fifteen, I'll sleep with him... (35)

Sarita too agrees for the plan of Kamala and shows a sign of staying in that home with her. But Sarita's husband is against this. After finishing his work, he plans to send Kamala to an orphanage, because it is illegal to purchase a woman and give shelter to her. Jaisingh is worried that the police will arrest him if Kamala stays in the house. But Sarita argues with him and says that she will not allow him to take Kamala to the orphanage. She stands against his will for the first time. The real character of Jaisingh as a male chauvinist and a dictator has been exposed

when he shouts at Sarita. He says that, “It’s I who takes decisions in this house, and no one else” (42). Although she tries to stop her husband, she fails in her attempt. Jaisingh takes Kamala to an orphanage. This makes Sarita to realize her position and to turn against Jaisingh.

After this Tendulkar portrays Sarita as a new woman whose character is grown from a submissive woman to a proactive woman. Sarita decides not to stand in favour of Jaisingh when he fails to understand the feelings of his wife. She wants Jaisingh to bring back Kamala to their home as well as she needs self-respect from her husband. After her husband’s departure, she expresses her anger to Kakasaheb. She is going to meet everyone in the press conference and to tell about the man who is keeping a woman as a slave in his home in a metropolitan city like Delhi; but he is reforming the society as a man against anti-exploitation by exposing an innocent woman in public. She says that,

I am going to present a man .... Jaisingh Jadav ... a great advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave and exploits her. He doesn’t consider a slave a human being-just a useful object. One you can use and throw away.... He bought the slave Kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free-not just free-the slave’s father shelled out the money-a big sum. (46)

Sarita’s uncontrollable anger shows that she is no more a slave of Jaisingh. She adds more about her; Jaisingh buys her in the name of marriage whose father gave huge money to him. She is kept as a slave by Jaisingh for a long time and she becomes conscious after the arrival of Kamala. Kakasaheb tries to convince her by saying that this is the character of all men. Even he too behaves like a conceited man to his wife. Sarita says, serving to the master and to dance to his whim is not the character of a woman. They have more capabilities to achieve the

highest position in the world. This is usual to men in the world and this is not changed by anyone. Sarita asks Kakasaheb lots of questions which are unanswerable. Her questions are:

SARITA. If a man becomes great, why doesn't he stay a great man? Why does he become a master?

SARITA. Why? Why can't men limp behind? 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)

No one can find answers. These questions asked by Sarita are not ignored simply. They are cardinal questions asked regarding the value system of a modern success oriented generation who are ready to sacrifice human values in the name of humanity in a success oriented male-dominated society.

After dropping Kamala in an orphanage, Jaisingh comes home and orders Sarita to get ready for the party. Sarita rebels against him; she is filled with anger and shows her disinterest to attend the party. Not only the party but to all other places where he calls her to preserve his respect in the society. Even she refuses to go upstairs when Jaisingh calls her. He brings women to his home and uses them as slaves and exploits them. He uses women only to satisfy his dreadful needs like attaining popularity and to show himself as a respectable family man in society.

The development of Sarita's character, her self-realization and awakening stunned everyone in the house. Due to the severe attack on the government authorities, Jaisingh is dismissed from his job. She feels sorry for her husband and protects him. This shows that eventhough Sarita speaks like a modern woman; she behaves like a perfect Indian wife who does

all the work to her husband. But she is aware that no one is going to rule her. She says she will do whatever she wishes and is ready to pay for it. Sarita says, "But a day will come...when I will stop being a slave. I'll no longer be an object to be used and thrown away. I'll do what I wish... And I'll pay whatever price I have to pay for it" (52). At last Sarita comes out from slavery and becomes a dynamic woman. At the end of the play, one can hope that Sarita will definitely get independence in her future.

The minor woman character in the play is Kamalabai. She is the maid-servant in Sarita's house who plays a significant role in the play. She is portrayed as a courageous woman who expresses her thoughts boldly to her master. She is working in Sarita's house since her marriage, and before that she worked in Sarita's parent's house. So she is trustworthy and a sincere servant. Jaisingh makes her to work very hard. In front of Sarita, she expresses her desire of returning to her native place. She is also treated as a slave in the house of the exploiter, Jaisingh. When Jaisingh returns home from his trip, he scolds Kamalabai for not doing things properly and for not arranging the newspapers.

Kamalabai is also exploited by Jaisingh by ordering more works to her. Even she shows her displeasure in one way or the other and threatens them as she is going to leave the house. When Kamala is brought by Jaisingh, she says, "... if she's going to stay here, I'm going back to Phaltan! I won't stay here one day" (25). But she is not able to do so. When Kamala enters the house, she shows her disinterest on Kamala. She does not feel sympathy towards Kamala. When Kamala insists her not to raise her head and voice to her master, she gets irritated and decides to return to her native place.

Both Kamala and Sarita are the givers till the end; they always please their masters without having power in their hands. The total power is given to the master. Sarita tries to

change Jaisingh's decision of sending Kamala to an orphanage. But it has been ignored. The mirror self of Kamala underlines Sarita's marginalisation within marriage and it is as if through a single, powerful leap of consciousness, she crosses over to the new ground of reality. Nishi Upadhyaya in the article "Vulnerable Victims: Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*" says that, "The wish to have children is symbolic of creating a space for themselves by the two women. Children will give a meaning and purpose to their lives" (249). They converse that,

KAMALA. Children.

SARITA. We don't have any [*Kamala falls silent.*] Why? Why are you silent?

KAMALA. No reason. [*Pauses.*] God's ways are strange, such a big house . . .  
and . . .

SARITA [*Theatrically, enjoying herself*]. Yes, Kamala. The house . . . it devours  
us. It's so empty. . . . (34)

This is the only scene, which brings the two women physically and emotionally together and establishes a female bonding between the two of them. Kamalabai starts to work because of her low economic status but she is badly treated by Jaisingh. Likewise Kamala is a low society woman and is sold in the bazaar for money.

This play is the evaluation of the role of Indian women in the society. In one way or the other all the three female characters are exploited by a dominant male ruler named Jaisingh Jadav. This shows that women are still the mere slaves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century democratic society. This is also considered as the satire where Tendulkar narrates the incidents through his characters. In this democratic society, women are allowed to study so that they become the educated slaves in their home. The flesh trade is functioning in India where women are sold

without their permission. They are compelled to do such immoral activities. This situation has to be changed.

In Jaisingh's passion for sensational journalism, he rules over Kamala but he possesses his own insecurity and finds himself feeble to face the society. Sarita is also voiceless and it is only the instigation of Kamala that makes Sarita to redefine her identity. Sarita's last move to support Jaisingh subduing her resentment, is not a sign of the weakness of character of Sarita but it is her affirmation of those values in life that have been the dreams of Indian thinkers.

Thus the first half of the play is an exposition of the idea with elaborate description of the nature of different characters. Next half is the crisis that comes in the form of the presence of Kamala in the family of Jaisingh and the ultimate catastrophe flourishes in the form of the termination of Jaisingh.

Tendulkar suggests that women have a better realization only with their fellow woman. Kamala is amazed to see the big house but in this house Sarita has no sense of belongingness. Sarita shares her loneliness with Kamala. She ironically comments on the ignorance of Kamala. The emptiness of the house becomes an objective correlative of the conditions existing within the consciousness of Sarita. Kamala expresses her sympathy on the bareness of Sarita. In the article "Vijay Tendulkar's Kamala: A Gyno-centric Stance" Kamala's innocence is described as, "Although Kamala is illiterate and quite simple believing in her jungle deity, she can understand how a woman suffers a lot in her married life by her mother-in-law, a husband and society" (Pawar). In her silence and extreme submissiveness, one finds Sarita no better than a bond.

In the play *Kamala*, women are used as slaves. Slavery is illegal but it is still in practise in our country in the name of a societal phenomenon. In that way Sarita is legally purchased by Jaisingh. Women are always bound by restrictions; their identity is not recognized. Whenever a

woman is seen the question asked to her is 'to whom she belongs to'; they do not question what a woman does and what she has achieved. They are always seen as an object which do all their works. They are not commodities and use and throw objects. Women can survive in all places; they completely devote themselves to their husbands but that is not their weakness. They must be treated equally in the society.

The only real bondage in the life of human beings is marriage. The only difference is that, in some cases the bondage is defined by the religion. Women are considered as inferior to men and the overpowering need is to have a separate set of rights altogether for women. Even in Veda, it is said that a wife, obedient to her husband, renowned, light-footed, eloquent in speech, sympathetic to the patients, attains happiness when she lives peacefully with her husband. Woman is always bound by restrictions imposed by the society.

Orthodox attitudes and practices in Indian society such as castigation of the female for male impotency, the stigma attached to the 'barren woman' blamed for not upholding male honour and family pride by bearing child, and hypocrisy within the patriarchal institution of marriage are developed within the middle-class family structure of Tendulkar's *Kamala*.

In India, the participation of women in the freedom struggle is huge. The amendment in the Indian constitution gives equal importance to women in the society. But this is not followed in the society. In some parts, they are not even allowed to come out of their house. Like the character, Sarita, the educated women are made ignorant by the male chauvinists and are not allowed to speak or to take their own decisions. They are married just to go out and parade as their wives in the parties. N. S. Dharan in the book *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar* says that, "Sarita to him, is, again, an object to be paraded as a wife at parties, to enhance his status as a successful journalist. In essence, he is the typical Indian husband, who has no time to spare for

his wife assuring her of his affection for her. In short, it is the husband-wife relationship that has come under increasing threat in metropolitan cities like Bombay which has been the butt of satire in *Kamala*” (57). This attitude must change and the flesh markets are to be abolished; only then the society will gain to be richer than ever.

## Chapter 4

### Man-Woman relationship in *Sakharam Binder*

In this world, relationship between a man and a woman is a common thing. When there is joy, faithfulness, encouragement and security, the relationship will last forever in a positive way. In most of his plays, Tendulkar portrays the actual status of women in India. His play *Sakharam Binder* created a great impact in the history of drama. The characters in the play are taken from the middle class society like his other plays. Tendulkar's play explores the depth of human mind in the society which always reacts in a violent manner. The play shows the disharmony of the characters than harmony.

The relationship between men and women in the play *Sakharam Binder* is presented here. The two women characters portrayed in the play are Laxmi and Champa. The relationship between the characters such as Laxmi and Sakharam, Sakharam and Champa, Champa with her husband Fouzdar Shinde and later with Dawood Miyan are also portrayed. Laxmi and Champa are contradictory to each other and it presents one as traditional and submissive and other as violent and superfluous.

Sakharam is a book binder whose world is entirely different from an ordinary man. He is an atheist and an outspoken man. He is from a Brahmin family by birth and calls himself as, "a Mahar, a dirty scavenger" (127), but does not follow any Hindu practices. E. Renuka in the article "Casanova as the Saviour: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder*" comments Sakharam's character as that, "He works as a binder in a printing press and is confident of living by doing other jobs even if he loses the present one" (31). He acts as a master for his little home and exploits women brutally. He says that, "... I'm a rascal, a womanizer, a pauper. Why maybe? I am all that. And I drink. But I must be respected in my own house. I am the master

here” (126). He does not believe in marriage and man-woman relationship, so he does not marry. Instead of marriage, he gives shelter to abandoned women and satisfies all his needs through them. He uses them as slave to do all his household activities and to satisfy his sexual pleasure whenever he is in need. A woman who is in need of food and shelter agrees to his demand.

Sakharam’s idea is to live happily without harming others; but he is destroying the lives of many women. But his life has been changed completely with the arrival of his seventh and eighth women Laxmi and Champa respectively. Sakharam’s relationship with Laxmi is an unforgettable episode. He is transformed as a man after the arrival of Laxmi. But he turns into a murderer by Champa.

Laxmi is portrayed as a traditional, dutiful and submissive wife to her husband. She is neglected by her husband for not bearing a child. This shows the violent nature of her husband. She is picked by Sakharam in an abandoned state. He thinks that he is the only master of his little house. When they enter into the house of Sakharam, there is an agreement between the two about her behaviour in the house. Sakharam says that, “... It’s Sakharam Binder’s house.... I’m not rich but I pull on. You’ll get two square meals. Two saris to start with and then one every year. And not a fancy one at that. I won’t hear any complaints later. I like everything in order here...” (125).

Sakharam says that he will give her two meals per day and two saris to start her life in that house and one sari every year. She has a safe shelter in that house. She is not allowed to ask the question ‘why’ to him. She is not allowed to appear and speak with the stranger. She has to fulfill his desire at any time. She has no other option, so she decides to stay in the house of Sakharam. Laxmi searches the pictures of God when she enters into the house. This is mentioned

as, "... She has ferreted out two or three pictures of the gods. She has wiped off the dust from the frames and arranged them in order" (131). This shows that she is a traditional woman.

Laxmi is a surprising character, because she is the secret friend of insects. Every day she feeds the ants and crows. Ants climb on her and collect sugar crystals from her; she starts giggling at that time. She speaks with the insects regularly. But this is not liked by Sakharam. He always scolds Laxmi for feeding the insects. This makes Sakharam to feel jealous of her and to shouts at her as, "I don't want to hear this sort of thing again, I'm warning you" (137). He tortures her to laugh like that when making love with her. He feels jealous of Laxmi when she feeds the insects. He makes her to laugh as the same when she laughs with the ants. These are the evidences for his cruel behaviour. But she is not able to do that. So Sakharam gets angry to an extreme level and beats Laxmi with a belt. She tolerates this cruel attitude of Sakharam because of a roof over her head. This is evident through the scene,

SAKHARAM. First laugh. . . . Laugh like you did. . . .

LAXMI. What do you mean? Like what? God, [. . .]

SAKHARAM. Sleep later. Laugh first. Laugh . . . the way you laughed when the ant was crawling on you. [...]

SAKHARAM. You laugh for the ant. But you won't laugh when I ask you to. I'll twist that foot of yours, you get me? Now sit up. You're not to sleep.

Wake up. (141)

While she is sent out of Sakharam's house, she bid good-bye to all of them. Thus she is a good, traditional and innocent woman. Even she considers Sakharam as her husband and wears a mangal-sutra which contains his name and she hides it from him. But the relationship between

Sakharam and Laxmi is not good. Thus she is portrayed as a dutiful, kind-hearted and a submissive woman to her husband.

Laxmi is considered just as a sexual object in the eyes of Sakharam. It is her duty to tolerate, please, entertain, and flatter and to satisfy his sexual needs. She has to accept the vicissitudes and to tolerate everything. Sakharam is the only saviour for her and his place is the safe for her to survive. The god-fearing nature of Laxmi made Sakharam to be a good man. Six women who stay in Sakharam's house do not change him a little. After the arrival of Laxmi, Sakharam wears good and washed clothes and reduces the level of taking liquor. Even he starts worshipping gods and suggests Dawood also to worship. During the Ganesh chaturthi festival, Laxmi asks him to worship god. When Dawood enters, Sakharam asks him to get the blessings of God. But this is not liked by Laxmi. So she stands against Dawood and does not allow Dawood to worship. He enquires Dawood, "Who told you? [*Turns to Laxmi.*]" (143). She says that Dawood is a Muslim so he cannot worship a Hindu deity. Laxmi says that, "Because-he's a Muslim, isn't he? . . . He's a Muslim-and we-we're Hindus" (144). This makes Sakharam to beat her. Laxmi is a victim in the hands of Sakharam, who has a strange behaviour. Only later she comes to know the real character of Sakharam as a rude and a choleric person. He is abusive, rude, brutal, drunkard and a sadist.

The reason for his crude behaviour is that she is not able to satisfy his desire. In the absence of Laxmi, he praises her and says that he changed his behaviour according to Laxmi's wish and he is worshipping God regularly. Life of Laxmi with Sakharam is an unforgettable memory, but she does not pay attention to him. Laxmi is expected to behave like a typical Indian traditional wife; to do all the household activities and fulfill the desires of her husband. But the continuous torture of Sakharam makes Laxmi to hate him. She tolerates everything about a year

and one day she speaks against him, “You think I am afraid to tell you? How much more can a person bear? It’s a year now since I entered this house. I haven’t had a single day’s rest. Whether I’m sick or whether it’s a festal day. Nothing but work, work; work all the time. You torture me the whole day, you torture me at night. I’ll drop dead one of these days and that will be the end” (146), and asks Sakharam to book the tickets to go to Amalner where her nephew stays.

Sakharam’s relationship with Laxmi is soon fed up and he sends her to her nephew’s house.

Laxmi is sent out by her nephew on the charge of stealing. So she comes back to Sakharam’s house to stay with him. When she comes back after some days, she is shocked by seeing Champa with Sakharam. But she tolerates this and decides to stay with him. When Sakharam sees Laxmi’s arrival, he bursts out in anger and beats Laxmi to death. She is not allowed to stay with him, because Sakharam brings a new woman to his home. The eighth woman brought by him is opposite to Laxmi. But the new woman Champa rescues Laxmi when she is mercilessly beaten by Sakharam.

Champa plans to keep Laxmi to do all the household works for the reason that Champa does not work in the house. Champa soon transfers her mind towards Dawood, so she calls Sakharam as an impotent man. He becomes a weak man after the arrival of Laxmi. This makes Sakharam angry and he beats Laxmi and calls her again and again as, “You shameless bitch! You leech. . .” (183). She pleads him to leave her to die in his lap. This shows that she is a traditional and chaste woman, who is loyal to her husband. According to Sakharam, Laxmi is a good traditional woman.

When Laxmi is allowed to enter into the house by Sakharam, Champa gives the idea to Laxmi that she will stay with them and do all the household works and Champa will take care of Sakharam. Laxmi also agrees to this condition and she starts her regular work. Whenever Laxmi

appears in front of Sakharam, he scolds and beats her for making him an impotent. But she accepts and tolerates everything for him. At first, Laxmi is kind to Champa but she turns against her, because she considers Champa's relationship with Dawood, who is Sakharam's friend as an illicit one. Laxmi decides to punish Champa for her immoral conduct.

Laxmi secretly has friendship with Shinde who is the husband of Champa and reveals everything about Champa to Sakharam. Sakharam believes Laxmi when takes an oath in front of him. To quote their words:

LAXMI. She's unfaithful to you. . . .

SAKHARAM. I don't want to hear it from you. Clear out.

LAXMI. She-she goes to that Muslim-everyday.

SAKHARAM. What? Muslim? Which Muslim?

LAXMI. Dawood. To Dawood. [...]

LAXMI. I saw it-with my own eyes-I swear to God (195)

Sakharam is so furious in his attacks that it causes the death of Champa. Sakharam is scared and remains as a statue but Laxmi gives him the idea to bury the lifeless Champa in their house, only to save Sakharam. She says,

She'll go to hell. Not you. I've been a virtuous woman. . . . Now don't be afraid.

We'll-we'll bury her. Where do you think? Not out there-no. Somewhere here.

Inside. . . . Let's get started. Get the shovel from the garden. I'll clear some space in the kitchen. Don't waste time. Once it is light we won't be able to do a thing. . . .

she left her husband. She was unfaithful to you. You are a good man. God will

forgive you. I'll tell him. He listens to me. Wait. I'll go and get the shovel. . . .

(196-97)

After that Laxmi starts to dig herself in the kitchen to bury lifeless Champa. After Sakharam's violent behaviour, he stands like a statue without knowing what has happened. It is Laxmi who gives the idea of burying Champa inside the house. He remains silent and does not follow the instructions given by Laxmi; so she takes the responsibility of digging to bury Champa. For the first time in his life he is incapable of dealing with the situation. This is described as, "Sakharam stares speechlessly at the lifeless Champa. . ." (197). He dominates everyone but he is cheated by a woman whom he saved. In this way the relationship between Champa and Sakharam goes on. Their relationship starts with sympathy and ends with a violent murder.

Finally, innocent Laxmi has been turned as a violent woman. This makes her to win the attention of Sakharam towards her. Geeta Kumar praises Laxmi in the article "Portrayal of Women in Tendulkar's *Shantata Court Chalu Aahe* and *Sakharam Binder*" by saying that, "In a dramatic reversal of roles it is Laxmi, who is to emerge the winner. She provides vital information to Sakharam regarding Champa's daily afternoon rendezvous with Dawood in Sakharam's absence" (27). In a fantastic turn-about of Laxmi's character that a woman who has been squatting at Sakharam's doorstep and cowering with terror, is the one who gathers up courage. Thus the relationship between Laxmi and Sakharam is more like a traditional husband and wife. She takes lots of care on him and treats him as her husband. She is quite in nature but she turns into violent woman because of Champa's attitude of cheating her husband, Sakharam. She gives him ideas clearly.

Veena Noble Dass in the article "Women Characters in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar," praises Tendulkar for portraying the character like Laxmi, when she says that, "Tendulkar in the character of Laxmi has portrayed a woman belonging to lower middle class and living the life of

a prostitute as one capable of having morals and is capable of protecting herself as well as her lover” (13).

Laxmi is compared to Savitri in the *Mahabharata*. Mohan R. Limaye in the article “The Archetypal Identity of Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder*” comments Laxmi as follows, “Laxmi, one of its main characters, represents the archetypal figure of Savitri, the heroine of a mythical episode in the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*” (135). While closely examining the character of Laxmi, one understands that she is thrown out by her husband by deliberately snapping her wedding necklace which is considered as a spiritual object. But she considers Sakharam as her husband, because he saves her when she is in the streets. It is interesting to note that there is a connection between Savitri and Laxmi in the incident. When Sakharam sends her out, she comes back after some days. When Sakharam murders Champa, Laxmi says, “I’ll die with my head on your lap” (196-97). This proves that she is an ideal and a chaste wife, because a Hindu woman will be more truthful to her husband. Laxmi saves Sakharam from the punishment for murdering Champa. This is similar to Savitri’s act of saving her husband from Yema.

Laxmi is then compared to a woman character in Tendulkar’s *Kamala*. Laxmi is compared to Sarita, who is very dutiful to her husband. Eventhough Sarita is aware of her husband’s cruel behaviour, she is submissive to him. Likewise Laxmi too accepts the tortures of Sakharam and acts as his wife. Both Laxmi and Sarita are exploited by their masters and are used as objects which will do all their household activities and satisfy their physical pleasures. Besides these, they rescue their masters from their trouble in the end.

Laxmi maintains a genuine relationship with Dawood. He acts as a brother-in-law and gives respect to her. But she does not allow him to worship Lord Ganesha. The reason she says is that, he is a Muslim. But his relationship with Champa is revealed to Sakharam by Laxmi. The

next person is Shinde, who is the husband of Champa. Laxmi does not like Champa for beating her husband and not giving respect to him. So she plans to reveal the secret relationship of Champa with the help of Shinde. She does not cross her limit with Shinde, so she is considered as a chaste woman.

Next woman character in the play is Champa. She is younger, slightly plumper and more attractive than Laxmi. She is addicted to tea, tobacco, pan and cheap liquor. She is called as a tramp by Laxmi. She is married to a police officer named Fouzdar Shinde. She comes out from her husband's home, because of the tortures given by her husband. She is then rescued by Sakharam and gives her a place to stay. She refuses to work in Sakharam's house; so she supports Laxmi when she comes back to Sakharam's house. She plans to do all the household works using Laxmi. She cheats Sakharam and has illicit relationship with Dawood. At last she is murdered by Sakharam unconsciously for cheating him.

As a daughter, Champa is too good. She stays with her parents and sells tobacco with her mother. Her father does all the household activities. About her childhood days she says, ". . . mother used to sit in the tobacco shop. We did good business. . . . we used to sell liquor too" (158). Champa sits in the shop with her mother and to sell liquor. Though she does an illegal business, she behaves well. When Champa's family is arrested during the police raid, she is forced to marry Shinde. She says to Sakharam, "He came to raid the place and he raided something else instead. Then he kept dropping in. He kept on saying, 'Marry me, marry me'" (158). In spite of her tender age, she marries him. Her physical appearance makes Shinde to marry her. She has no other way to escape. That is the starting point for her to learn all the bad characteristics.

As a wife, Champa does not have a smooth relationship with her husband, Shinde. He inflicts Champa to learn the foul language and transforms her to an aggressive woman. After her marriage, she is tortured brutally by her husband. Shinde inflicts inhuman and physical tortures to her. She says that, “He brought me from my mother even before I’d become a woman. He married me when I didn’t even know what marriage meant. He’d torture me at night. He branded me, and struck needles into me and made me do awful, filthy things. . .” (167). All these actions make a good natured girl turn into a frigid and violent woman. She leaves her husband and comes out of her home to escape from these tortures. Thus Champa’s relationship with her husband is not good.

When Champa comes out of the house, she is taken care by Sakharam. After her separation from her husband, she does not have a peaceful life. Her husband Shinde follows her to Sakharam’s house and pleases her to come back to live a peaceful life. But she scolds him using foul language and beats him to death. Everyone in the house including Sakharam is shocked by seeing the violent behaviour of Champa. Shinde says to Champa that, “I’ve come. Beat me-Champa. Today I’ve come here to die. I won’t go from here alive. Death at your hands. I’ll drop off. . .” (188). After this tragedy, Shinde comes back again and requests her to live with him. When Laxmi comes to know about the dishonest action of Champa, she seeks the help of Shinde to prove it. Without knowing the death of Champa, he comes back to the doors of Sakharam to see her.

Thus the relationship between Champa and her former husband Shinde is not smooth. From the words of Dawood one can know that a woman is a bird who is kept in a cage of her husband. Induleka Roy Burman in the article “Man-Woman Relationship in the *Sakharam Binder*” says that, “Marriage puts the woman, the bird, in cage symbolized by her husband. Even

if the bird flies, the cage chases her” (165). Though she leaves her husband, her fate drags Shinde to Sakharam’s house. It is Shinde, who is responsible for transforming a young innocent girl into a violent and frigid one. He is responsible for the death of Champa. It is the behaviour of a person that makes the other to be good or bad.

Champa is saved by Sakharam, who gives shelter to abandoned women. Champa is the eighth woman. Sakharam is attracted by her physical appearance. Like Laxmi, Champa is also instructed by Sakharam about her behaviours in the house. Champa keenly observes the instructions of Sakharam but Sakharam scrutinizes her appearance. She does not like the house of Sakharam but there is no other place to go. She is more than a match to Sakharam. Sakharam says exactly the same words that he spoke to Laxmi. But she is a contrast to Laxmi both in appearance and character.

When Sakharam asks her for a cup of coffee, she says that she will not do any household work. Even in her home, an old man prepares coffee, cooks and does all the household works. In her husband’s home, her mother-in-law does all the works. She says, “In my husband’s house my mother-in-law used to make it and, at home, my old man used to make the tea and cook the food” (158). She justifies by saying that she does not know how to do the household works properly. She orders Sakharam to prepare coffee for both of them. Besides this she orders Sakharam regularly to buy pan and tobacco for her. He is not interested to follow her instructions but he does everything, because her appearance drove him to immense pleasure.

Whenever Dawood comes to Sakharam’s house, she orders both of them to bring something for her. Champa praises him in front of Sakharam as, “He’s nice!” (159). This makes Sakharam to feel jealous on Dawood and he gets angry when she adjusts her dress in front of Dawood. As a result of it, Sakharam asks Dawood to meet him in his shop or somewhere else

and not at home. Both of them are totally infatuated by her physical appearance. They drool over her appearance and cannot take their eyes off from her.

Sakharam eagerly waits to possess Champa. Champa does not pay any attention to him. Champa is too fond of sleeping and Sakharam tries to wake her up but she flies in a rage. Instead she says that she is not an immoral woman to have a strange person as her husband. Champa's weakness is that she is addicted to pan, tobacco and liquor. So she drinks heavily to satisfy the lust of Sakharam. It seems that she completely loses her senses when she is intoxicated. This fatal attraction of Champa makes Sakharam weak. He always stays with Champa and makes her to drink more. Of course it is Sakharam, who makes her to drink and forces to surrender her to him. In this way Sakharam tortures Champa.

When Laxmi is in the house, she makes Sakharam to be a good man. But Champa makes him a dirty man. He drinks all the time and does not worship God. Champa consumes alcohol during the festivals like Dassera, he admonishes her severely. This act of Champa seems to be putting an end to the religious faith of Sakharam. He plays his musical instrument Mridanga and cleans up the framed images of God which are left by Laxmi in the house. Soon Champa become sick with Sakharam and decides to avoid him. She accuses him for being impotent and insults him especially after the arrival of Laxmi.

Laxmi supports Champa, because she makes Laxmi to stay with them. But all her hope has been lost when she comes to know that Champa is cheating Sakharam. She provides vital information to Sakharam regarding Champa's afternoon meeting with Dawood. In an uncontrollable anger, he turns into a beast and beats sleeping Champa to death without asking the truth. He has no patience to enquire the facts from Champa who acts either independently or by other's instruction.

Sakharam does not give shelter only because of sympathy but also with selfishness. He is fed up with Laxmi so he wants another woman to do his works and to satisfy his desire. For Champa, she needs a place to protect herself from the strangers. So she decides to go with Sakharam but she faces her end because of her immoral action.

Champa's relationship with Dawood is merely a cheated one. Dawood is a close friend of Sakharam whom he trusted. Champa is admired by Dawood at her first sight. She often praises Dawood in front of Sakharam. This makes him to get more angry than before. She orders Dawood to buy some pan for her, "Be a pet and go get me a nice *pan*. With tobacco, . . ." (159). He does all the works said by Champa. She adjusts her dress in front of Dawood though Sakharam is there. She praises Dawood saying that he is a nice man. Dawood is attracted by the physical appearance of Champa. He does not take his eyes from her. Both Champa and Dawood does not consider their relationship as a sinful one.

Champa considers Dawood as a man of calm nature, a 'nice' substitute and a surrogate lover. By having an illegal relationship with Champa, Dawood becomes disloyal to his friend Sakharam. They meet secretly in the afternoon when Sakharam is not at home. This cheating comes to an end when Laxmi finds this. All the secrets are revealed to Sakharam and Champa loses her life. Through the comments and observations of Dawood, Tendulkar brings out society's critical attitude and disapproval towards Sakharam's unconventional lifestyle. The relationship between Champa and Dawood ends in a tragic way.

The two women characters Laxmi and Champa play a different role in the play. They are the most unconventional and controversial characters in the Marathi plays. They are the representatives of women who are exploited by men. The characters like Sakharam and Champa are bold enough to express their ideas without any hindrances. The triangular relationship

between the characters shows how Tendulkar presents his opinion about the society. Sakharam does not have faith in religion and does not believe in the traditional practices. But he worships god after the arrival of Laxmi. He asks her to behave as a perfect traditional wife to him.

While comparing the characters of Laxmi and Champa, one can find lots of differences than similarities. Both are contrasting characters; Laxmi appears as a traditional woman whereas Champa is rebellious and is more superfluous. Laxmi appears as a conventional traditional woman. In the beginning, she appears as a door-mat type woman but she proves to be a bold and a violent one. She is more practical and successful in her objectives. She gets what she wants. She has a hasty retreat when she is thrown out by Sakharam but she comes back to stay with Sakharam at any cost.

On the other hand, Champa appears to be more stern and ruthless than Laxmi. She is similar to Sakharam in many aspects and is called as female Sakharam. She is not loyal to him. She does not believe in traditional aspects and drinks even in the festival days like Dassera. She faces her tragic end because of her immoral conduct.

Laxmi is sent out by her husband because she is not able to bear a child. When Laxmi comes to Sakharam's house, she first traces the framed images of God. This shows that she is a dutiful person, whereas Champa keenly listens to Sakharam's instructions without knowing what she is going to do. Laxmi's arrival makes Sakharam to wear clean clothes and to worship God but Champa's presence makes him to lose faith in God and to forget all his duties.

Laxmi is more faithful to Sakharam and accepts him as her husband but Champa cheats him by having a secret relationship with his friend Dawood. Laxmi wears a mangal-sutra with Sakharam's name on it and she hides it from him. But Champa cheats her rescuer. Lazy Champa agrees to have Laxmi with her after coming back because she does not want to do any household

works. So she suggests Laxmi to do all the household chores without fail and she will take care of Sakharam and satisfy all his desires. Laxmi is happy to stay with Sakharam as a labourer.

The suggestion of Champa in this play reminds about Kamala's idea to Sarita in the play *Kamala*. Kamala gives the idea that she will work hard in the house to improve her master's status and insisted Sarita to take care of Jaisingh who is Sarita's husband and the master of Kamala. Likewise in this play Champa suggests Laxmi to do the domestic works and she will be with Sakharam. The characters are similar in their activities but differ in their character. Till witnessing the immoral act of Champa, Laxmi tolerates her. But when she comes to know about Champa, she turns into a violent woman. Her sudden change is an unbelievable one. In full control of her wits and situations, she rises to the occasion admirably.

In the end Sakharam's pride has been shattered. Sakharam criticises marriage as an institution but he himself proves to be a puny male chauvinist. Sakharam proves to be no better than other men. He makes sarcastic remarks about the wives' loyalty to their despotic husbands but he himself demands utmost obedience from his mistresses. He represents the double standards of patriarchy. By 'helping' the women in distress, this pseudo-misogynist indirectly subjected them to a kind of prostitution. The myth of his working class secularism is exploded as the sexual jealousy in him and it wells up only when Champa shares her bed with Dawood.

The transformation of Laxmi, within the very territory of the patriarchal framework, from a meek to a murderous lady who performs religious rites and homicide with considerable self-confidence, deflates the ego-centric male-power in the play. It seems that the sex-oriented patriarch gives way to a meticulous and conservative matriarch to rule little 'philanthropic', polygamous monarchy. Ratan Chandra Das in the article "Gender Discrimination, Sexism and Violence: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar's Selected Plays" says that, "Champa and Laxmi are not

individuals but the representative of entire women community who exploited under the utopian opium of family and marriage” (105). The characters of Tendulkar are unique in their personality and they are transformed from a weak person to a powerful one. They are not fictional characters but they clearly prove the intricacies of human mind.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the finest playwrights in Indian theatre. He expresses his deep concern for the society. All his works are based on the real life incidents and not written for commercial success. But all his plays lead to a great success. He deals with the themes that genuinely interested him and most of them are about the ills of the society. He makes us impatient and urges us to think about the problems in a frank and an objective way. He wants his audience to think about the problems of the society. The vision of the disintegration of contemporary society with an unflinching realism is given only by Tendulkar. He does not hide anything while portraying the real situation. He has expressed his innermost feelings and sincere reactions to the contemporary society, which mirrors the life of man in the society.

Tendulkar improves the status of the Marathi drama to its highest position with his thought-provoking and socially significant plays. He appears in the Marathi theatre in the mid-1950s. The Marathi theatre witnesses the decline of poetic drama and the prose drama stepped its foot after 1920. Tendulkar begins his dramatic career as a playwright in this period. As a voracious reader, he starts reading lots of books in his early age. Tendulkar is aware of the social problems and the tribulations of life at a young age. He is aware about the violence and vice inherent in human nature. These things have shaped his life and created a proper idea about life. He closely watched the people around him and finds various defects in them. All these incidents are later reflected in his plays.

During his career as a journalist, Tendulkar gets an extensive knowledge about society and human life. He travels around the various parts of India and observes the social problems and the oppression of the poor and the down-trodden from close quarters. His observations and

experiences of life find expression in his plays. Writers like G. B. Deval, K. P. Khadilkar and R. G. Gadkari deal with the contemporary social issues in some of their plays. These writers are considered as the predecessors of Tendulkar. The Post-Independence playwrights mostly write farces and melodrama in order to entertain the audience. Tendulkar's politically and socially significant plays revolutionize the Marathi drama, which is entrapped in a melodramatic mode. He forces the readers-audiences to confront the brutalities of life through his portrayal of society and human life with all its ugliness and vulgarity.

Through the plays of Tendulkar, one comes to know how women are portrayed in his plays and the society's oppression of an individual who violates its tradition, the effects of power on human nature, the immense lust, greed, violence and the desire for wealth and popularity, which leads to a disastrous position, traditional and superfluous nature of women, submissiveness of an educated women and their plight, the position of women in the present society and the relationship between men and women under a male-dominated society.

Tendulkar's plays bring a light to the fact that he makes the audience to face the brutalities of life through his women characters. His play *Silence! The Court is in Session* portrays women as the victims in the patriarchal society where women are treated badly by their male counterparts. While handling the social problem of unwed pregnancy, like Leela Benare, she is brutally victimised by the male chauvinists under the name of tradition in the patriarchal society. But she is brave, punctual and does her job with full sincerity and dedication. The society is hostile towards her as she refuses to follow its conventions. The play also draws our attention towards the gender discrimination in our society, which allows a man to go scot-free, whereas a woman gets punishment for having committed the same act of immorality and having extramarital relations.

In order to express his themes and motives in an effective way, Tendulkar supplements the conventional dramatic techniques with modern innovations. He chooses different forms of presentation in his plays on the basis of their ability to deliver his message to the readers and audience effectively. The medium of theatre has been used to its fullest form by manipulating all the component parts in his plays in a skilful manner. In his plays, the meaning not only emerges through the dialogues but through what is shown on the stage. With regard to his intention, he gives detailed stage directions to avoid ambiguity.

In Tendulkar's plays, there are some valuable instructions given in the brackets that are immensely helpful for the readers as well as the actors to grasp the play in a better way. The dramatic pauses and the spells of silence during the dialogue are the strong points of Tendulkar's style. The devices of indirect satire to evoke scorn and contempt in the minds of the readers over the evil of his wicked characters are employed by him. He succeeds in avoiding the reader's identification with the characters and situations by bringing about the distancing effects in his plays. In this way, he has given a new direction to modern Indian theatre through his innovative experimentation with forms and techniques of drama.

Tendulkar is considered as the 'angry young man' of the Marathi theatre due to his rebellious writing against the established values of a snobbishly orthodox society. He defies the traditions and violates the taboos throughout his dramatic career. In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar exposes the cruelty and latent violence in the middle class through the inhuman mental torture of Miss. Benare by her colleagues during the mock-trial conducted against her. This shows a favour to the accused Damle who is set scot-free. He also attacks the institution of marriage through the eponymous character of his play *Sakharam Binder* who practises contractual co-habitation with his mistresses. In *Kamala*, Tendulkar shows that the

position of an Indian house wife is no better than that of a slave. Jaisingh's utter indifference to the feelings of Sarita, his wife and her servile attitude towards him justify Tendulkar's stand.

In the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*, the other woman character is Mrs. Kashikar who has her husband's name as her surname. She is a typical Hindu woman who follows all the norms of the religion. She is an uneducated woman and she is not respected by her husband. She is nicknamed by Miss. Benare for not bearing a child. She is muted by her husband during the trial when she opens her mouth to speak about Miss. Benare. This shows that women are the sufferers in the male-dominated society. Though she is a woman, she does not show mercy on Benare when she is accused by the team members.

Tendulkar's play *Kamala* reveals his keen insight into the pitiable status of women and how they are exploited in the male-dominated society. The playwright exposes the hypocrisy of Jaisingh Jadav, a journalist, who purchases a woman named Kamala from a flesh market to prove the going-on of the flesh-trade. Kamala is brought by him to gain popularity and money, which will not be erased easily. The women characters such as Sarita, Kamala and Kamalabai are exploited by Jaisingh in the name of master. Sarita is portrayed as an educated woman who is kind enough to others but submissive to her husband. She parades as a wife in the public but is used as an object by her husband Jaisingh, and to fulfil his desires at home. Kamala's innocent speech awakens Sarita from her submissiveness and transforms her into a new woman.

Both the characters Sarita and Kamala are used by Jaisingh just as use and throw objects. Kamala is thrown out by him when his press conference is over. The character Kamalabai is also exploited by Jaisingh as a master who always orders her to arrange things properly and to do all the household chores. In this way, women are portrayed as the innocent characters who are exploited by their masters.

There is an extraordinary portrayal of women in Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder*. The relationship between man and woman is portrayed in a clear way. The immense capacity of lust and violence inherent in human beings through the character of Sakharam is portrayed.

Sakharam gives shelter to the abandoned women and uses them for his desire and pleasure. He thinks that he behaves in a good way but he treats women more cruelly than their husbands. The dramatist projects the man-woman relationship in *Sakharam Binder*.

The women characters in *Sakharam Binder* are Laxmi and Champa. They are portrayed as traditional, violent and superfluous respectively. The relationship of Laxmi with the notable male characters such as her husband, Sakharam and Fouzdar Shinde tells about her true and innocent nature. She considers Sakharam as her rescuer because he gives her shelter when she is thrown out by her husband. Even in the end of the play, she rescues Sakharam from the punishment of murdering Champa. Champa is also called as female Sakharam is Champa because of her boldness. She beats her husband in front of others to death. Her immoral conduct of cheating Sakharam is the cause for her death. The relationship clearly explains the status of women in the society. She is considered as a traditional and chaste woman in the play. The violent woman Champa is the eighth woman rescued by Sakharam. Her relationship with men is a notable one. She cheats Sakharam and has an illicit relationship with his friend Dawood. Her immoral conduct towards Sakharam makes Laxmi to reveal all the secrets about Champa's visit to Dawood's house in the afternoon. This makes Sakharam to kill her. This is the reason to call Champa as a violent woman and a cheat.

Tendulkar has given a graphic and vivid picture of the middle class society in Maharashtra through the varied characters that he has created in his plays. He has explored many areas of human experiences through them. The female protagonists in Tendulkar's plays such as

Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Sarita in *Kamala* and Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder* are bound by the common thread of innocence, assertive, kind, submissive and bold enough to face the miserable situations. They are not taken into consideration by their male counterparts as a human being.

In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, women suffer a lot in their life. Miss. Leela Benare is trapped into the witness box as she is accused on the charge of unmarried motherhood and for having an illegal relationship with a married man. During the mock-trial, she is caught by the brutal male people and tortured who her by asking immoral questions. They go to an extreme level, ordering her to abort the child in her foetus and suggest that she should be dismissed from the teaching job. The female character Mrs. Kashikar is often called as 'Hand-that-rocks-the-cradle' by Miss. Benare. She is not able to bear a child. Being a woman she does not support Benare during the trial; instead she gives points to accuse Benare. She is often ordered by her husband to be quite in the hall. She is not allowed to utter a word even by mistake. She is given no freedom to speak.

In the play *Kamala*, Sarita and Kamala are used by their master as a use and throw object. They are not treated as women by Jaisingh, a self-seeking journalist. He buys a woman for his act of gaining popularity. He does not give respect to his wife even as a human being. He does not have an idea of reforming the destroyed life of Kamala. In order to become popular, he does all these things. Finally, Sarita grows as a bold woman to speak against her husband who ill-treats her all the time. It is Kamala who is the eye opener of Sarita from her immense slavery. The submissive women characters are exploited by their master.

There is no exception in the plays of Tendulkar in depicting his female characters. It is evident from the character Miss. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Sarita in *Kamala*

and Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder* as the abject victims of male-domination and their unscrupulousness. Miss. Benare and Sarita revolt against the traditions and conventions of the society, whereas Laxmi bows down meekly to the hostile societal forces. Both the conformist as well as non-conformist women characters are crushed by the society and end up as defeated individuals. Thus Tendulkar exposes the pitiable condition of women as well as society's lack of concern to their misery.

Tendulkar sheds light on the exploitative and oppressive nature of society through the constant switching of roles between the victims and victimisers. His characters such as Mrs. Kashikar in *silence! The Court is in Session*, Sarita in *Kamala* and Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder* are themselves victims of exploitation. Instead of showing kindness to other unfortunate beings who are in a similar situation, they take their hidden anger out on these persons for the exploitation which they have suffered in the past. When there is a chance for them, the victims prey on others with great ardour. Thus exploitation has been shown as an inexorable fact of life by the playwright.

Tendulkar has exposed the society's hostile attitude towards inhuman oppression of women who do not conform to the traditional image expected of them through his character, Miss. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*. By portraying the victimisation of Miss. Benare due to the violation of the patriarchal norms, the playwright gives voice to the gender discrimination in society and the resultant plight of women. Tendulkar shows that even the sensitive and liberal men are the exploiters of women. In the play *Kamala*, Tendulkar exposes Kakasaheb's biased attitude towards women through his justification of Jaisingh's ill-treatment of Sarita, his wife. Kakasaheb criticises Jaisingh's exploitative journalism, but turns a blind eye

to his oppressive treatment to Sarita. Thus the playwright highlights the deep-rooted gender discrimination in society.

By showing the meek submission of his women characters to the injustice and violence inflicted upon them and their sorrowful fate, Tendulkar implies that women should be more courageous and determined in dealing with their problems. Thus the playwright has played his part in the movement for women's emancipation by urging them to change their conservative mind-sets.

The subjects of Tendulkar's plays are mostly about the bitter experiences of human beings. Most of his women characters have been portrayed as sufferers. The person who put up a good fight against the hostile circumstances wins the sympathy and admiration of the playwright. He has an ability to make his characters bare their inmost personality through their speech. Through the long speeches of his characters such as Miss. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Sarita in *Kamala*, the playwright gives voice to their distress and hopelessness. The playwright makes the readers conscious of the utter helplessness of his characters and the severe conflict that goes on in their minds through their speeches. Thus the loneliness of an individual arising out of his conflict with society appears to be one of the recurring ideas of Tendulkar.

Tendulkar has endeavoured to understand life with all its conflicts, pains and contradictions. He struggles to describe it through his plays. He presents a true picture of life incorporating interplay of both the positive as well as the negative aspects of life. Though he has painted life in dark and gloomy colours most of the time, his commitment to human values and his love of humanity is unquestionable. The virtuous and tender-hearted characters in Tendulkar's plays such as Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Sarita in *Kamala* and Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder* suffer due to their association with the vicious characters such as

Prof. Damle, Jaisingh and Sakharam respectively. In addition to his penetrating insight, Tendulkar brings a touch of tenderness to the depiction of these characters who suffer for no fault of theirs. Through this, the humanistic attitude of the playwright comes to light.

Tendulkar display an acute awareness on the loss of traditional values and the resultant tendency towards the cruelty and violence in modern times. The reader finds the lowest level of human behaviour, which is like beastly actions of the evil characters in his plays. The shocking incidents in the selected plays such as accusing Leela Benare and charging her with unmarried motherhood and immoral relationship with a married man; as a result of it giving judgement as to abort the foetus in her womb and to dismiss her from the job in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, the act of buying a woman called Kamala from a rural flesh market in Bihar and exposing her in the press conference in an inhuman way by Jaisingh Jadav in *Kamala* and Sakharam's strangulation of Champa in *Sakharam Binder* are not different from the incidents which one reads in the newspapers. It seems that Tendulkar has guessed the directions in a right way in which the society is moving and tries to give a sensible warning through his plays.

This appears to suggest that the condition of the society cannot be improved unless the people get rid of the inborn tendencies in the human nature such as selfishness, violence and lust. Patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women's advancement and development. So it is necessary to understand the system, which keeps women dominated and subordinate, and to unravel its workings in order to work for women's development in a systematic way. In the modern world where women go ahead by their merit, patriarchy creates obstacles for women to move forward in society, as a result patriarchal institutions and social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women. Patriarchal society gives absolute priority to men and to some extent limits women's human rights also.

The commitment for the betterment of the society and the sympathy for the oppressed people are revealed through the plays of Tendulkar. It seems that through his plays, Tendulkar is conveying that the exploitation, social inequality, slavery and oppression which exist since ancient period are continued without any downfall till now. Through his plays, Tendulkar tries to reawaken the change in attitude. He tries to bring a change in the minds of people by attacking the economic, political and gender discrimination in society.

There is a distinguishing feature in Tendulkar's plays, that is his preoccupation with the portrayal of the dark side of life. He is forced to accept the realities which are considered as unpleasant one by human existence by giving a gloomy picture of the unsuccessful human efforts to gain happiness. An atmosphere of violence and cruelty particularly against women characterises Tendulkar's plays. He believes that there is a permanent presence of animal in man along with all the basic animal character. It is evident through his plays that human beings behave like animals due to the impact of greed, lust and self-interest. Man's beastly cruelty to woman and his malicious and revengeful attitude towards his fellow beings are brought out through his plays. The portrayal of the evil activities towards women by men which are rampant in human nature is profoundly thought provoking and almost disturbing. These plays remind us that man is unable to conquer the beast inside himself in spite of having progressed from barbarism to civilization. Thus the playwright gives a new way of looking at the self and the society.

Tendulkar displays an extraordinary sensitivity to the sufferings of women which are prominent in his plays. In his plays, most of his women characters end up on the losing side in the battles which they face in their lives. Miss. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* undergoes inhuman mental torture given by her colleagues, the eponymous character of

Sakharam in *Sakharam Binder* becomes a frightened and dependent creature to Laxmi after murdering violent Champa in a fit of anger and Kamala in *Kamala* who is brought by Jaisingh from the flesh market really do not know what they want in their lives. The playwright seems to suggest the futility of a person's efforts to become happy, if they face with evil. The suffering of these defeated individuals results from a combination of their sordid environment as well as the wrong decisions taken by them in their lives. Thus it is implied that in some cases human beings are responsible for their misery and they should be extremely careful in deciding the course of their lives.

The miseries and despairs of women resulting from either their submissiveness with the hostile society or their own failure to come out of their slavery is portrayed well through the women characters. Most of Tendulkar's women protagonists admit to be slaves to their male counterparts without knowing that they are treated as slaves and used just as use and throw objects. They face failures in their life. But in the end they try to come out of their slavery and sufferings to have an equal position in their life with men. The struggle of Tendulkar's women characters, improves their status and they do not end up as losers in the struggle of life. His women characters have enough courage to live a life without the help of their partner.

The ills which are faced by women in their daily life are brought out acutely with the purpose of making the people aware about the prevailing problems in society. Women are not able to overcome their maladies in society to have a better feature on their own. Instead of giving solutions to the problems faced by the women, it is better to awaken their conscience and to create awareness about the defects of the society and the right way to improve their status in the civilized world. An ideal society which is free from exploitation and oppression will be created when women are treated equally by all men.

The only way for women to be safe and free is when they get equal rights and freedom in the society. There are some places which treat women equally with men. But still there are many places where women are treated badly. Like the auction in the play, *Kamala*, there are many places in the rural parts of India where the flesh trade is still functioning. The status of women is improved not only by giving education to women but also improved by giving freedom, financial independence and equal rights. The best example is Sarita who is an educated woman and lives an urban life but remains submissive to her husband. She does not know that she is corrupted by her husband. Beside education, respect and rights, it is more important for them to get a better position in their life.

The world is now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but still women suffer by the cruel acts such as abduction and abuse. The double standard and hypocrisy in the society should be abolished completely. Women are the backbone of the society to bring strength, harmony, co-operation, and humanity and to transform the society. They must be given opportunities to explore themselves in the world to prove their capabilities.

In India, crime against women has increased and this should be avoided through punishments. Rules and regulations should be adopted to improve the status of women in each and every state which will result in the overall development of the country. The nation has to be a safe place and provide social security to all women.

The characters in Tendulkar's plays like Sarita and Laxmi are married but they are treated brutally by their husbands, Sarita is kept as a slave in her home and exploited by her husband and Laxmi is sent out from her home by her husband for not bearing a child. This is the status of women in major parts of India. These are eradicated when they have economic independence, internalisation of conceptions of freedom and dignity, education, law for equal opportunity,

enforcement of law and order and the power to lead India. Bedabati Mohanty in the book *Violence against Women: An Analysis of Contemporary Realities* says about the importance of economic development of women that, “Women’s economic empowerment is essential for raising their status in the society. . . . The women’s status as a wife did not give her control over the family income” (13). It is believed that good education will make them to have economic independence; internalising the concept of freedom in order to get dignity both at work and at home which will advance the level of India. A law for equal opportunity in the public sectors and the security through this law will change the status of women and they will have the ability to lead India in a right way.

Even today, there are victims like Benare, Sarita, Kamala and Laxmi in the society. At the same time, there are also male chauvinists like Jaisingh Jadav and Sakharam in the society who dominate and do not lose the quality of overpowering others. A sick society with decaying standards of morality cannot hope to prosper and flourish. Sapna Chaturvedi and Semme Mahmood in the article “Female Status, Their roles and the Psychological situation as Depicted in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar” rightly comment about the developments of women in the society that,

Society is changing a lot in terms of acceptance of the many roles of women as professionals, as bread-earners in families and as independent thinking individuals. Women have proved themselves as equals in many professions as well as proved themselves even better suited than men in other. The situation for the changing role of women is improving fast. (151)

Thus the obstructive forces, which stand in the way of a healthy growth and development of human life must be eradicated. It is an effort to create an ideal society, which has equal rights, opportunities and dignity to all.

## Works Cited

### Primary Source:

Tendulkar, Vijay. "Kamala." Trans. Priya Adarkar. *Collected Plays in Translation*. New Delhi:

Oxford University Press, 2011. 1-52. Print.

---. "Sakharam Binder." Trans. Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhale. *Collected Plays in*

*Translation*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011. 124-98. Print.

---. "Silence! The Court is in Session." Trans. Priya Adarkar. *Collected Plays in Translation*.

New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011. 53-121. Print.

### Secondary Source:

Agrawal, Beena. *Dramatic World of Vijay Tendulkar: Explorations and Experiments*. Jaipur:

Aadi Publications, 2010. Print.

Burman, Induleka Roy. "Man-Woman Relationship in the *Sakharam Binder*." *Perspectives*

*and Challenges in Indian English Drama*. Ed. Neeru Tandon. New Delhi: Atlantic

Publishers, 2012. 163-67. Print.

Chaturvedi, Sapna and Seeme Mahmood. "Female status, Their roles and the Psychological situation as Depicted in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar." *Indian Theatre in English and*

*Literary Feminism*. Ed. Arvind Nawale and Nibedita Mukherjee. New Delhi: Authors

Press, 2013. 151-66. Print.

Das, Ratan Chandra. "Gender Discrimination, Sexism and Violence: A Study of Vijay

Tendulkar's Selected Plays." *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science*

*Studies* 2.2 (Sept. 2015): 102-08. Print.

- Dass, Veena Noble. "Women Characters in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar." *New Directions in Indian Drama*. Ed. Sudhakar Pandey and Freya Barua. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. 9-15. Print.
- Dharan, N. S. *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1994. Print.
- Kumar, Geeta. "Portrayal of Women in Tendulkar's *Shantata Court Chalu Aahe* and *Sakharam Binder*." *New Directions in Indian Drama*. Ed. Sudhakar Pandey and Freya Barua. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. 16-30. Print.
- Limaye, Mohan R. "The Archetypal Identity of Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder*." *Modern Asian Studies* 12.1(1978): 135-43. Print.
- Mohanty, Bedabati. *Violence Against Women: An Analysis of Contemporary Realities*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2005. Print.
- Pawar, Pramod Ambadasrao. "Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*: A Gyno-centric Stance." *Epitome Journals* 1.8 (Dec. 2015): n. pag. Web. 25 Nov. 2016.
- Prasad, Amar Nath. "Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session*: A Play of Plight and Plunder." *Critical Essays on Commonwealth Literature*. Ed. K. Balachandran. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2006. 168-75. Print.
- Renuka, E. "Casanova as the Saviour: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder*." *New Directions in Indian Drama*. Ed. Sudhakar Pandey and Freya Barua. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. 31-36. Print.
- Sawant, Sidhartha. "Changing Scenario of Indian English Drama." *Indian Streams Research Journal* 1.4 (May 2011): n. pag. Web. 7 Oct. 2016.
- Sharma, Vinod Bala. "Handling of Male Characters in Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session*." N. p (Oct. 2015): n. pag. Web. 22 June 2016.

Shukla, Supriya. "Indian English Drama: An Introduction." *Perspectives and Challenges in Indian English Drama*. Ed. Neeru Tandon. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2012. 3-10. Print.

Upadhyaya, Nishi. "Vulnerable Victims: Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*." *Contemporary Indian Drama*. Ed. Urmil Talwar and Bandana Chakrabarty. Jaipur: Rawat Publication, 2005. 245-52. Print.

Yadav, Saryug. *Indian English Drama*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2010. Print.