



THE DEPRIVATION OF MORAL AND ETHICS IN THE MALE CHARACTERS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR

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Abstract

Present paper deals with Vijay Tendulkar's plays *Kamala*, *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *The Vultures*, *Sakharam*, *Kanyadaan*, *Encounter in Umbugland* and *His Fifth Woman* with respect to the male characters, and, their unrespectable issues like hollowness, cruelty, inhumanity, follies, unsocialism. The scholar has reviewed all these plays and found that the male characters of Vijay Tendulkar are totally deprived of humanism, morality and ethics. Their attitude towards society is bitter and their merciless behaviour to women is beyond the proper limit. Tendulkar has employed the fundamental themes of oppressive attitude of male members to the Indian society. In these plays there runs unconventional theme of inhumanism which has been dealt with compassion and understanding. This paper also takes into account various unexplored issues related to queer identity. This study explores how these plays raise the issue of oppressive rights of man to the female, poor, helpless and down-trodden people in modern Indian society. The main aim of this research article is to throw light upon the degradation of male characters with respect to moral issues and values.

Keywords: moral, ethics, humanism, socialism, respect.

Vijay Tendulkar has created memorable characters who belong to the middle class families. They are all real life human beings, live in Indian society. Tendulkar exposes the hypocrisy of the male chauvinists and severely attacks the sham moral standards of the so-called civilized urban middle class society post-Independence India. Frustrated male members try to subjugate woman to prove their power in social hierarchy. The woman desperately fight their battle against the oppressive power structure. It shows how the so called modern society gangs up on these down-trodden women. There is no sympathy, no help from the people of theatre group, but a sadist tendency to hurt them to somehow feel good about their own failures.

In his play *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar portrays the agents of patriarchy as embodiments of hypocrisy, selfishness and treachery. Men like Kashikar, Sukhatme, Ponshe and Karnik are deprived of their moral and ethics. Their words and deeds expose their inherent malice and hypocrisy. A deep psychological study of the characters reveals the reasons for their behaviour. They are men so they convict Benare who is having a child out of wedlock. They lash out against Benare in the most ruthless and inhumane manner. The court of law, the magistrate and the judge who are supposed to be honourable men, protectors and guardians of law and justice, fail in their duty to protect the innocent girls rather, convict them. They never condemn Prof. Damle who is the responsible

of Benare's wretched condition, but accuses Benare as her only fault. Thus except Samant, all the members try to exercise their power on Benare. As it is clear in the words of Kashikar who is judge and punishes Benare : "The crimes you have committed are most terrible. There is no pardon for them. You must pay for your sins. Irresponsibility must be chained down..... It is the firm opinion of this court that your behaviour puts you beyond mercy." ¹

In his play *Kamala* Tendulkar portrays another character of Jaisingh Jadhav who has lost his moral values completely. He is career oriented and high paced journalist who is singularly focused on his promotion and does not care about humanity or any of its values. He tries to sensationalize his news to gain more recognition. Sarita and Kamala are two characters who are used as pawns and objects to be used for his enhancement in status and comfort. Sarita, his wife is an educated woman who looks after the household. She takes care that everything Jaisingh needs is ready. But Jaisingh has no respect for Sarita's servility and brings Kamala as merely for sexually objects from flesh market.

Jaisingh is known as a modern liberal husband who lets his wife drink alcohol, but on the deeper level, Sarita is just an object of pleasure and a servant to him. She is not an equal. When he takes Kamala to the Press Conference, he does not even allow her to wash herself. It is his much cruelty on Kamala, when he returns home in drinking condition with Jain, he misbehaves with her by saying that he has seen these "adivasis clawed to the bone by bears – coming to the Missionary Hospital on their own two feet....operate on them without an aesthetics....they have got natural *endurance*"². Later when he gets into trouble with the police, he does not hesitate in sending Kamala away from his home. He does not think a little what will happen to her if police gets her. He talks of the "moral rot" in the society and considers himself who "up holds moral principles, moral norms, moral *values*" ³.

Tendulkar's *Kayandaan* reveals a Dalit poet's psychological, physical and verbal violence, which exists in his ethos, familial background, and caste – consciousness. The play depicts the want of

morality and ethics in the inter-caste marriage of a Brahmin girl and a Dalit boy.

Arun Athavale is another character. He persuades a high-caste girl Jyoti by showing his poetic talent and succeeds to marry her in spite of some social and domestic restrictions. But Arun always remains conscious of his lower class origin and inflicts on Jyoti inhumane cruelties. Constant awareness of the suffering which Dalit have undergone such as eating stale, stinking bread, flesh of dead animals etc., renders him violent. Arun's consciousness of Jyoti's upper-class origin makes him feel inferior and restless. He wants to get rid of his inferiority complex and to show his manliness, he drinks the wine and beats Jyoti mercilessly. After drinking wine, he forgets everything. He becomes so inhumane and so merciless that even he kicks on her belly when she is pregnant. This merciless behavior of Arun really affects one's heart that how can one become so much cruel to his pregnant wife? He is a graduate as well as a poet. Having these poetic qualities, he does it all merely because he wants to take revenge from the high-caste people, for the ill-treatment with his ancestors, married life is on verge of destroying. When Jyoti's mother asks Arun, "Why do you beat Jyoti?" He replies : "What am I but the son of scavengers. We don't know the non-violent ways of Brahmin like you. We drink and beat our wives....we make love to them but the beating is what gets *publicized* ..."⁴

Arun calls barbarism his traditional way of life. He is not ready to change. He is very stubborn. His haughtily and orthodox views can be seen when he says "I am what I am and shall remain exactly that". Thus Tendulkar's Arun is proved to be another moral less character.

Tendulkar's Ramakant and Umakant are another two male characters portrayed in Tendulkar's play *Vultures*. They all form a family of vultures. They are ready to cheat one another and even do not hesitate to kill one another for money. In this play they are not called by their own real names but wolves and vultures. The audience are not only surprised but truly shocked to hear such names.

Ramakant and Umakant are the two sons of Hari Pitale who cheats his own brother Sakharam in business and prospers. Ramakant and Umakant inherit their culture of selfishness and greed. They frequently frighten even their father for money which they spend on liquor and luxuries. They both blackmail Raja of honour who is in love with their sister and to prevent her from disclosing their plan to him, they break her leg and Ramakant becomes so cruel that he kicks her belly. Rama is vexed with her husband who becomes important with excessive drinking and yields to Rajaninath and becomes pregnant. Unmaking informs about Ram's adultery with Rajaninath. He aborts the fetus of his wife with physical violence.

Ghasiram and Nana are two another characters who lose all their good ways of life. Gashiram is revengeful while Nana is sexual. One is Brahmin and another is Peshwa. Gashiram Savaldas is a poor Brahmin from Kanauj. He comes to Poona with his wife and daughter for livelihood. He gets a job of servant in Gulabi's house. There he visits Nana Phadnavis who is a chief minister of Poona.

When Nana sees Gauri, the daughter of Gashiram, he wishes to have physical pleasure from her but she steals away. Then Nana calls his servant and says: "What a lovely figure! Did you see? Erect! Young! Tender! Ah! Ho ho! We've seen so many, handled so many, but none like that one. None her equal. We wonder who *she is*." ⁵

First, Ghasiram feels some anger over Nana but after sometimes he is tempted by Nana to make him Kotwal of Poona then he agrees to sacrifice his daughter's maidenhood to Nana. On one side, being Kotwal, Ghasiram tortures, arrests and punishes the innocent people on a mere suspicion while on the other hand Nana makes his daughter pregnant. When Gauri's dies in the attempt of her abortion Nana marries another girl. At this Ghasiram is greatly infuriated, but he cannot do anything against Nana. So he starts murdering people on the slightest suspicion. Seeing this, the Brahmins complain to Nana then he orders for the death of Ghasiram. The angry crowd beats him, shaves his head and kills him.

Conclusion

Thus Tendulkar's all male characters are found moralless. They are all unsocial human beings. They are the vices of the society like hypocrisy, vulgarity, barbarism, corruption, narrow mindedness etc. They have feudal values in place of real moral values. Pro. Damle forgets his value of a professor, makes Benare pregnant and also thrusts her into the court. Arun, being a Dalit poet, kicks on the belly of Jyoti who is pregnant. Jaisingh is a reputed Journalist but he chooses a trade of buying and selling girls in the flesh market. Sakharam is a binder whose sexual desires are fulfilled not with one but seven-seven girls and Gasiram who is kotwal of Poona gives his own daughter Gauri to Nana merely for his promotion of Kotwal.

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