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THE ISSUE OF MALE DOMINATION IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S PLAY
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Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the most popular and leading Indian playwright, television and movie writer, literary essayist, social commentator and political journalist in Marathi. His works deal with the current social issues that were prevailed in the society. Vijay Tendulkar is such a writer who commands the attention of his reader as well as audience. He is known as the most turbulent and controversial dramatist among the modern Marathi playwrights. He did not indulge in painting superficial conflicts in bright colour. He took the stand against the established values of a fundamentally orthodox society. He is called the pioneer who not only changed the external framework of the Marathi drama but also the limits of the picture of life. He has not only written plays but also inspired the young talented individuals to become dramatists. His plays deals with the theme of exploitation of women, man-woman relationship, gender issues, violence and so much more. He deals with harsh realities of society. Tendulkar has not the uniformity of theme adopted in all his plays. He did not use similar technique in all his plays. There is a variety in his theme and ways of presentation. The present paper deals with the issue of male domination in Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder*.

Keywords: male domination, violence, exploitation, patriarchy

Introduction

Male domination is one of the most widespread forms of inequality in Indian society. Indian society often consider man as superior and woman as inferior. Indian society is patriarchal one. The patriarchal system in the family and society have always shown a preference for male child. Men are regarded as a means of social security and women remained under male domination. Due to her subordinate position, women have suffered marginalization, subjugation, discrimination, and

exploitation. The issue of male domination can be clearly seen in the literature of India and in this case Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder* is the best example of male domination and violence.

The play *Sakharam Binder* revolves around three characters- Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa. Sakharam does not believe in the institution of marriage. The central character of the play Sakharam Binder is a man of strong appetite and rugged nature and he declares himself:

"Everything comes to an end. So where's the point in getting involved? And involved with what? As long as one manages to be happy, without doing anyone any harm, that's about all. But no dishonesty allowed. If you sin- you must be ready to slap your face and say, 'yes, I sinned.' You must be ready to take the rap."(CPT 130)

He picks up women who are abandoned by their husband and brings them home provides the necessities and lords over them in a despotic manner. He hates the married men who cannot look after their wives. He feels himself superior for retrieving the cast away women even though he exploits them for maintaining his house and satisfy his lust. He brings home, a meek and obedient woman, Laxmi, and treats her in a bad manner and throws her out when she complains about his tyrannical and oppressive behaviour. His cruel nature is seen when he uses his belt to beat Laxmi. He tells Laxmi the moment she enters his house: "This house is like me... it's Sakharam Binder's house... I'm the master here.... (CPT 125-126) The dialogue shows his male dominated nature and psyche.

Sakharam brings a new one Champa in her place who is very quarrelsome but his beauty infatuated him. Champa is totally opposite to Laxmi and makes him more sensuous and licentious. But still she has some kindness in her character that is why she asks Sakharam to bring back Laxmi to his house. Laxmi, who was driven away by her nephew, once again returns to the house of Sakharam. As a result, Laxmi, who was not wicked and vicious, conspires a plan to drive Champa away from house. She reveals Champa's illicit relation with Dawood to Sakharam and in his fit of anger; he strangles Champa with his hands and cries out "Murder! Murder." (CPT 196) Laxmi comes forward and takes the situation under her control.

The play projects a segment of society who belongs to lower middle class strata where life is lived on the edge of survival with desperation and insecurity often accompanied by violence and brutality. As for as Sakharam's life and activities are concerned he does not wish to whitewash anything

but openly admits that he has all the vices and weaknesses of ordinary man. This approach of Sakharam shows his male dominated nature that was prevailed in the Indian society. In Indian society, it is often seen that if a man is doing anything, he is right. He proudly accepts that he has some weaknesses in him. Just because he is a man, society allows him to live his life according to his own terms and condition. As we can see in the case of Sakharam. He dominates both the women and thinks it is his right to do such things. He never cares about the emotion and feeling of both the women.

The play is a reflection of the brute, degrading reality of life lived at the bottom level of society where the demands of the body have more importance and priority than the refinements of mind. Tendulkar is aware that individuals do not decide and make up their lives all the time but are born into a set of socio-economic determinants which pre-condition and shape their living and thinking process. As Arundhati Banerjee pointed out:

Tendulkar is highly realistic not only in the delineation of characters and human relationships but also in the depiction of the setting in which these characters enact the drama of their lives." (Banerjee xv)

Sakharam Binder is a most intensely naturalistic play. The play caused more hue and cry than any other plays of Tendulkar. Sakharam, the book-binder, is a Brahmin by caste. His actions and temperament are quite different from any member of that particular caste. He has been portrayed as crude, aggressive and a violent man. He has framed his own laws of personal morality and he follows them strictly and maintains his moral standards in all conditions.

Discussion

The central character of the play Sakharam is aggressive, violent, and egoistic man who has an insatiable appetite for female sex. He uses women as a tool for his pleasure and stays in a so called live-in-relationship with the women who discarded by men. He makes it clear that they have to do the duties of husband and wife. He has no value of

emotions and feelings of women. He uses them like a puppet and throws them when he gets bore. His violent and abusive nature can be seen when he plays *mridanga*, after having his heart fill with *ganja*. N.S.Dharan in "Sakharam Binder: The importance Fury of a Male Masochist" comments on his aggressive nature by saying that: "He tries to cover up his cowardice, helplessness and above all, his loneliness behind a mask of aggressive boastfulness and animal behaviour. (Dharan 71)

The habit of dominating and subjugating women is the part of his daily life. He expresses the rules of his house very clearly to each woman he picks up. His male centric thought is revealed when he says to Laxmi: "I like everything in order here. Won't put up with slipshod ways. If you are careless, I shall show the door.... I am the master here.... a house must be a home, you understand? (CPT 125) It shows how Sakharam wants Laxmi to behave. He makes the rules for Laxmi. He used to beat him. He makes a restriction to live indoors when the visitors comes. He does not allow her to speak to anyone and wants her to live in *purdaah*. Like marginalized woman, Laxmi has no choice except to follow the order of Sakharam. He dominates the life of Laxmi in such a way that she has no choice of his own. She follows each and every rule like an obedient woman still Sakharam used to beat him mercilessly. She suddenly bursts out and says:

"...How much more can a person bear? It is 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; all the time. You torture me whole day, you torture me at night. I'll drop dead one of these days and that will be the end." (CPT 146)

He controls her life completely and throws her away when he finds another woman Champa

Champa is totally opposite to Laxmi. She is brave enough to face his master Sakharam. She knows how to face such situation. She is bold and has the glimpse of independent woman who knows how to live her life according to her own way. She does not easily submitted herself to Sakharam. She is tough and always ready to fight. It is Champa who

dominates Sakharam by making fun of the rules imposed by Sakharam. She comments: "Rule! Is this a school or a court or something?" (CPT 168) She allows Laxmi to live with her in the house which shows her kind nature. Champa gets bore with Sakharam and accuses him of impotence especially after Laxmi's arrival. It arouse anger in Sakharam and he beats Champa brutally. His male dominated nature does not allow him to see Champa violating his rules. He makes sexual relationship by force after taking liquor. At the end of the play Sakharam strangled her with his hand after Laxmi told him to Champa's secret of having an affair with his friend Dawood Miyan. Shailaja B. Wadikar in "Vijay Tendulkar: A pioneer Playwright" explores: "Both Sakharam and Laxmi are extremely selfish, lustful, and dominating.... (Wadikar 17)

Conclusion

To sum up, Tendulkar's plays make the anatomy of society in a very realistic way with the help of some hard and concrete images and symbols. He presents before us the male dominated approach to see the harsh realities of life. Through the character of Sakharam, Tendulkar reveals that this domination is not only physical but also mental. Sakharam wants to controls Laxmi and Champa not only physically but also mentally by making the rules regarding to his house. Thus, Tendulkar took a stand against the established values of a fundamentally orthodox society. He deals with existence of human being, his psychology, and his minds through his plays.

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