

Women in Vijay Tendulkar Select Plays

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Abstract:

Kamala is realistic play in which the condition of woman in traditional Indian society is portrayed by Vijay Tendulkar in a peculiar way. Kamala is a victim of flesh business. Like Kamala and Silence! The Court is in Session is also a play that illustrates the pathetic plight of a young urban educated woman of thirty four years named Benare. The both female characters feel that they are slaves in their own way. They get exploited in the plays and cannot rebel against the patriarchal society. The plays glimpse over the harsh reality of women in Indian society. The roles of women are underestimated in all walks of life in the male-controlled society. The playwright focuses on the projection of female characters. The play can be seen from feminist's perspective.

Keywords: Exploitation, Patriarchy, Gender, Subordinate,

Introduction

In the history of Indian English drama, playwrights like T.P.Kailasam, Chattophadyaya, Rabindranath Tagore have recorded their viewpoints through their plays that depict the ideological, philosophical and realistic facts of life. In the next period, playwrights like Fyzee-Rahman, Lobo Prabhu go a step ahead and start to write dramas that hold social values and present a satiric view on society. Vijay Tendulkar was also one of the famous and leading contemporary playwrights of Asif Currimbhoy. He was a versatile Indian Marathi playwright who wrote twenty eight plays in Marathi and contributed to Marathi theatre.

He has also written eleven children plays and twenty four one-act plays. He is not only a playwright but has also rendered his contribution to literature through writing literary essays, political journalism. Moreover he is a translator, novelist, and also short story writer. In general, the plays of Vijay Tendulkar portray the evil behavior of men and women within their houses and outside the houses. The adoption to the feudal values is the cause of the dominative, oppressive and exploitative nature of the Indian Society. The man's adoption to feudal values

and norms develops the dominating and male chauvinistic attitudes in him. Hence Vijay Tendulkar tries to break up the conventional forms and makes the plays that are not only unconventional but a new one.

The select plays written by Vijay Tendulkar for this article are *Kamala* and *Silence! The court is in Session* which has won him the fame as a dramatist for his skillful and heart moving depiction of the oppressed women in the male dominant society. Vijay Tendulkar conveys that women are treated as the objects of pleasure and objects that can be bought for money and as machines that do household works. The portrayal of women as above mentioned can be seen in his plays like *Kamala* and *Silence! The Court is in Session*.

Kamala is a realistic play that is baked out of a real life story. The story is about the woman named Kamala who is sold in a flesh market as a victim of sexual slavery in the male dominant world. The play deals with the issue of buying and selling tribal woman. It represents the pitiable plight of the Indian middle class women who are treated as sexual slaves by inhuman and animalistic men. In the play, the readers can see Kamala being bought for Rs.250/- by Jaisingh and Sarita for Rs.700/- in the market. In the Indian Society, the poor people go to the extent of selling their own girl children when they come of age to cope with their economic and financial problem.

Kamala: can I ask you something? You won't be angry?

Sarita: no. Go on

Kamala: How much did he buy you for? (Sarita is confused at first)

Sarita: what?

Kamala: I said how much did he buy you for?

Sarita: (recovering). Me? Look here, Kamala. (Changes her mind, and sits down beside her) For seven hundred.

Kamala: My god! Seven hundred?

Sarita: why? Was it too little? Kamala: [pauses]. it was an expensive bargain, memsahib. If you pay seven hundred, and there are no children ... (Sarita assumes a sad expression) Then he has to pay for clothes, and for food. He must be very unhappy really. (*Kamala*, 34)

Both women are treated as the objects for pleasure and as servants to do household works and to look after him and fulfill his needs and keep him refreshed always. Thus one can see that the women characters suffering as victims in the hegemonic power structure. Women in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar are presented as marginalised objects. The playwright is of the view that the female body is looked upon as an object of male sexual desires and fantasy.

The patriarchal society in the play is very much common in particularly in Indian cultural. Though the male is characterless, or without any great achievements, the wife or women have to listen and obey to male. It is the sad reality which has been depicted through Sarita, Tendulkar trying to prove the feminist perspective in Indian society.

Kamla: Can I ask you something? You won't be angry?

Sarita: No. go on Kamla: how much did he buy you for? [Kamla, 34]

Like *Kamala* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* is also a play that illustrates the pathetic plight of a young urban educated woman of thirty four years named Benare who is a

school teacher suffering in the male dominated society and its cruel conventional interrogations about her pregnancy before marriage which is considered to be a sin. Benare is the fated victim of the oppression of men though she is educated in the middle class men society. M.P.Ganesan points out: "Tendulkar's male characters are self-centered and custom conscious only when it helps them"(162). Vijay Tendulkar depicts the reluctance of the male dominated middle class society to any social change. Vijay Tendulkar feels very bad because in that society women do not even have the freedom to live their life as they wish. Even at certain time, women themselves have become villains and join hands with men in dominating and insulting woman. Mrs. Kashikar is an example for this type of character in the play. *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a play within a play and in the play and a mock trial scene at court is practiced by a drama group of Benare in which she plays the role of the accused and undergoes all the sufferings and for given men in the domineered middle class society. She express her feelings thus:

Benare: But I don't see why one should go around all the time with a long face. Or a square face! Like that Ponkshe! We should laugh, we should play, we should sing! If we can and if they will let us, we should dance too. Shouldn't have any false modesty or dignity. Or care for anyone! When your life is over, do you think anyone will give you a bit of theirs? (*Silence!* 60-61)

Thus the readers can see the depiction of the women characters as the victims and sexual objects of male fantasy and desires and as the robotic machines that do household work without any rest, by Vijay Tendulkar. Though he presents his women characters as a suffering lot, towards the end the readers can visualise a sort of growth and development in them since they start to rebel against the oppression and male dominance and it is evident through the character of Sarita in *Kamala* who gets rid of her master (husband) Jaisingh to lead an independent life according to her own wish.

Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* does not seem to have people to show true loves for her. In such a situation, her uncle loves her and the poor Benare trusts that love as true and real one allows him to have sex with her and later realized that he has loved only her physical beauty. Benare's attempt is to lead an independent life. But she has been frustrated by the group of men surrounding her during the course of the mock-trial. She feels that her freedom has been mercilessly crushed. She Argues: "Don't you think that maturity comes to a person only with experience? And experience comes with age, with a unusual way of life."(62)

Vijay Tendulkar project light on the circumstances that serve as a foil to this culture and how woman are victimized and fated to be the objects of sex, pleasure and money in the male dominated patriarchal society. B. Charanya observes:

Womanhood has two different images in the society. She is equated with "Shakthi", the goddess Durga and Kali. On the other hand, she is forced to be a dependent, under the male governed & defined social tradition and culture and she is looked upon as a sexual object or a property to be possessed and passed on from one to the other. These are the traditional images of women in the society. (90)

Conclusion

Vijay Tendulkar insist their readers to find a permanent solution for the sufferings of women and all the men in India have to follow the oath of treating all the Indians as brothers and sisters except their wives. Vijay Tendulkar can be called as the mirrors of the society that reflect the status, and position of the women in the contemporary period. Aundhati Banerjee states: The evaluation of the role of an Indian woman within the institution called marriage, considered to be the holiest of holy in our society, definitely provides a completely novel point of view that women are still mere slaves to their male owners in Indian society in the latter half of the 20th century (*Tendulkar/ Adarkar/ 1992: xviii*)

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