

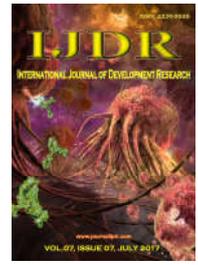


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ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION IN THE WORKS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR

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ABSTRACT

In the Post-Independence era, the patterns of Indian English Drama underwent a drastic change. Theatrical activities were organized and it accumulated a new force with the lively contribution of the dramatists like trio of Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad. Vijay Tendulkar made his place as a Marathi writer but he had modified the shape of Indian Drama with the Power of his pen to represent the issues that are temporal as well as timeless. He is almost fascinated by the interplay and functioning of various forms of violence as an essential need of humanity in all forms of social relations. Tendulkar's drama highlights the complexity of human relationships and contains a latent critique of modern Indian society, Tendulkar's plays like Shakespeare's plays are neither moral, no immoral in tone but may rather be seen a moral. Tendulkar's take on violence is matter-of-fact. Gender violence of 'Sakharam', gave way to political violence. Political form of violence depicted in his most noted play 'Ghashiram Kotwal'. A political satire, created as a musical drama set in 18th century Poona. Vijay Tendulkar's plays, not only revolutionized the regional theatre but they have also opened fresh vistas for experimentation in Indian English Drama through the translated versions. He shows the position of women in contemporary Indian society through his woman characters. In this play, he depicts women as loyal, docile, hardworking, and tenderhearted. He deals with the existence of human being, human mind, human psychology and human relationship through his plays. The issues of violence, sex, illicit human relationships, power, stability in the society and social issues point out in all his plays in English translation.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Post-Independence era, the patterns of Indian English Drama underwent a drastic change. Theatrical activities were organized and it accumulated a new force with the lively contribution of the dramatists like trio of Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad. Indian English Drama saw the new light of humanism and realism against the philosophical creed of Tagore and Sir Aurobindo. Vijay Tendulkar made his place as a Marathi writer but he had modified the shape of Indian Drama with the Power of his pen to represent the issues that are temporal as well as timeless. Vijay Tendulkar has been one of the most renowned playwrights of India. Like any litterateur, Tendulkar is also a product of his upbringing and his environment.

Most of his plays derive inspiration from real-life incidents or societal upheavals. The political, Social, Economical cultural power structures of caste, class, gender and religious domination was his main area of exploration. He is almost fascinated by the interplay and functioning of various forms of violence as an essential need of humanity in all forms of social relations. Tendulkar's drama highlights the complexity of human relationships and contains a latent critique of modern Indian society, Tendulkar's plays like Shakespeare's plays are neither moral, no immoral in tone but may rather be seen a moral. Tendulkar's take on violence is matter-of-fact. He feels that man is part of the animal kingdom and despite the veneer of culture; basic animal instincts are a part of his nature. As a writer, he is interested in the human tendencies and frailties that can change people almost overnight. He more than any

other writer, read the pulse of society and foresaw the way in which violence rules us. Vijay Tendulkar considers violence as a basic need of human life. According to him sex is also one side of a coin and violence is the other side. We find different forms and different layers of violence and sex everywhere in his works naturally for example the characters of “Shantata Court Chalu Ahe” belong to middle class works who are educated so-called civilized people they are refined and sophisticated by compulsion. Hence there is a sort of microscopic and sugar coated forms of violence beneath cruelty. All character committed the crime on mental level. This play brings before us not only pain, agony and misery of a woman entrapped knowingly or unknowingly in the net of violence. The play is about sexual hunger, desire, ambition, exposes hypocrisy, snobbery, pretences, prevalent in our society. It shows us how cruel and violent our male dominated society is towards a modern woman having free and modern personality. It is a heartrending satire on the age-old traditional tendency to suppress and exploit a woman. Contrary to this violence moves from verbal to physical forms in such plays as “Gidhade”, ‘Sakharam Binder’, “Ghashiram Kotwal”, “Baby” etc.

As Jabbar Patel says in an interview

“He first depicted violence in his earlier work, 'Shrimant', that way 'Gidhade' turned out to be a turning point. For the first time Tendulkar came into his own terms and projects his explicit writing style through his characters for the first time” It disturbs shocks and stuns the spectators witness violence against women characters so openly and aggressively presented through language and physical actions. The same type of violence can be found in racial forms in “Kanyadaan” as practiced by Arun Athawale against Jyoti Through his aggressive and cruel behavior. Yet the basic conflict is that of revenge and dominance which underlies its background. In the same way it reflects in the play ‘Baby’. The female protagonist becomes victim of great uncommon, inhuman mental torture because her brother has been declared insane and she has been forced to bark like a bitch, forced to drink liquor and raped by Shivappa. This Journey of a pious, dignified woman confining her to be only an ordinary helpless lady is a great blot on human society. Violence and cruelty towards women in the form of abuses, harsh thrashing and beating and killing exist without any difference in the characters of the play. Whatever social classes they represent but they belong to the same class of violent behavior. Tendulkar firmly believes that plays do not help much to rise into revolt bit can create a new consciousness at least, can awaken people and that is why the play write aims at stimulating the spectators to think on their own and to react spontaneously. Here the character is free enough to live and behave the way he or she likes to in human and natural manner.

According to N.S. Dharan

“Tendulkar’s creative genius sharpened by his keen observation and seasoned by journalistic experience, found expression in his plays.”

In the play Sakharam Binder, Tendulkar once again as in ‘Vultures’ explores violence and sexual lust, deep-rooted in human nature, while projecting the complexity of human nature and human character. Each character in the play is the combination of strength and weakness, good and evil.

Sakharam, the protagonist of the play appears crude, aggressive, and violent. But, in his association with Laxmi, he displays tendencies of having been a religious and family loving man.

Tendulkar also deals with themes that unravel the violence in human relationships. In an introduction by Arundhati Banerjee in *Collection of Five Plays*, Tendulkar noted: “...the basic urge (to write) has always been to let out my concerns as I perceive it.”(p. x)

It is obvious that a writer like Tendulkar deals with many complexities of life, but here the motto is to slice up the elements of sex and violence depicted in his work. Sex is the one side of coin and the other side of coin is violence. Tendulkar deals with the vibrant issues of the so called civilized society in his major plays but focus of the study is on three major plays which deal with different types of violence. These plays are Shantata Court Chalu Ahe, ‘Sakharam Binder’, and ‘Ghashiram Kotwal’. Violence is deeply rooted in hippocratic society. ‘Sakharam Binder’ is related to gender violence. The inter relationship of Sakharam-Laxmi-Champa is curious. ‘Ghashiram Kotwal’ is partially based on the story of Nana Phadnavis of Maratha dynasty. Tendulkar skillfully weaved the element of Tamasha and other two traditional theatre forms into this play. The issue of power in politics is a core thread of the play. Once a human is oppressed by someone he may an oppressor in future. It is a constant process of transformation.

The Issue of Power and Violence continued to occupy the dramatist’s psyche when Tendulkar wrote “*Sakharam Binder*” (1972). The dramatist sheds ample light on Physical lust and Violence in a human being.

Gender violence of 'Sakharam', gave way to political violence. Political form of violence depicted in his most noted play ‘Ghashiram Kotwal’. A political satire, created as a musical drama set in 18th century Poona. This play consist elements of traditional Marathi folk forms with contemporary theatre techniques. It was a new presentation style in Marathi theatre as well as Indian theatre. He travelled across the country to understand the reasons of the rising violence in the country. Amar Nath Prasad and Satish Barbuddhe aptly write: “He was not satisfied with the ‘second hand’ information which he got, while sitting in the newspaper office. In his study tours he got ‘first hand’ information of the outside world. Tendulkar tries to conquer the limitations of his bookish knowledge and ignorance. He observes the social problems and the oppression of the poor and the subjugated peoples. Through his plays he tries to sensitize the reader-audience to these matters. His explorations of anger and violence also showed up in his screenplays of films like Nishant (1974), Aakrosh (1980) and Ardha Satya (1984). In all, he has written eleven films in Hindi and eight in Marathi, including 'Samana' (Confrontation, 1975), 'Simhasan' (Throne, 1979), and Umbartha (The Threshold) (1981), a revolutionary feature film on women's activism in India, starring Smita Patil and Girish Karnad, and directed by Jabbar Patel. Most of his plays derive inspiration from real-life incidents or societal upheavals. The political, Social, Economical cultural power structures of caste, class, gender and religious domination was his main area of exploration. He is almost fascinated by the interplay and functioning of various forms of violence as an essential need of humanity in all forms of social relations. A quest for the

harmonious and organized society for the human being is prominent in his works. Here the quest is in the centre not the findings. It may be his purpose to explain 'man' with his basic rights. This sensitive writer is very much wounded by the social disorder.

He has been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in Marathi, the principal language of the state of Maharashtra, which has had a continuous literary history since the end of the classical period in India and has nearly seventy-five million speakers today. Even the aristocratic society is not an exception in inflicting pain on others, lust and violence, these snobs can bend down to any mean level. On the other hand we find a criminal full of humanity. As Vasant Davatar says:

"In Vijay Tendulkar's dramas we find humanity with the blending of the embarrassing emotions spread out from the dialogues. Tendulkar does not praise or condemn any way of living but putting it in an ironic position. He portrays the nervous tension fantastically in the ways of living."

Conclusion

To sum up, the plays of Tendulkar explore effectively the themes of love, sex, sensuality, lust for power, violence, man-woman relationship, matrimonial relationship, human relationship, and exploitation and oppression of women in the society. Vijay Tendulkar's plays, not only revolutionized the regional theatre but they have also opened fresh vistas for experimentation in Indian English Drama through the translated versions. He shows the position of women in contemporary Indian society through his woman characters. In this play, he depicts women as loyal, docile, hardworking, and

tenderhearted. He deals with the existence of human being, human mind, human psychology and human relationship through his plays. The issues of violence, sex, illicit human relationships, power, stability in the society and social issues point out in all his plays in English translation. In this context, C.Coelho rightly points out: "In his portrayal of human relations and tensions, Tendulkar depicts the violent tendency of egotistical man and equally self-centered society. He liberated Marathi stage from the tyranny of conventional theatre with its mild doses of social and political satire for purpose of pure entertainment."(34)

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