

## VIJAY TENDULKAR'S PLAYS : A PRESENTATION OF OPTIMISTIC STREAKS IN FEMININE FRAILITY

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### Abstract

As a revolutionary playwright, unlike Karnad, Tendulkar's area of interest lies in violent representation of stark, naked and painful realities of life. He is more charmed by feminine fraility, female rebellion against the conventional roles assigned to her. She rebels against the exploitative and oppressive nature of man but unripe, immature rash rebellion amidst hostilities created for her lead her to oblivion, none the less, she strikes compromise in the end and her woman like virtues yield optimism to her for instance, Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in session*, despite deception from her male counterpart, finds happiness in the fact that her body has been the witness of her love. Laxmi in *Sakhram Binder* finds solace thinking that her husband will realize her worth after her death. Rama in *The Vultures* endures disgrace gracefully with the hope that one fine day she will have her own child.

Sarita in *Kamala* stays with her husband cherishing the hope that she will earn a good future with the passage of time. All these female protagonists are realistic, optimistic and embrace their undue agony gracefully. Verbal, physical and psychological kinds of violence perpetrated on women offer the best subject to Tendulkar.

Undoubtedly, the thematic importance of Tendulkar's plays lies in presentation of shock, agitation and arousal of female protagonists but how women fight out and carve out a niche for themselves is presented collaterally.

Negation of conventions and social restriction in women is also concomitant with Tendulkar's plays and objective presentation yield charm to the plays.

## INTRODUCTION

Tendulkar is noted for his originality especially in terms of imaginative sensibility, intellectual consideration and creativity, very beautifully, artistically too Tendulkar maintains & manages subjectivity and objectivity; personal & impersonal elements; individual & general; social & cosmopolitan.

Tendulkar's first and foremost engagement, passion rather is for presentation of women and of social inequality to them, consequent angst and anguish of the victims, their disillusionment with relations in personal and social spheres. His plays are basically meant for show casing individuals versus society. His protagonist are very much demanding for individual freedom and individual space. His choice of characters or selection of personas for women highlights their pain, struggle negation and their marginalized role in personal and social spheres. His lens is not on graceful aspect of life rather his preferences lie in weaknesses, foibles and follies of people leading to dire & fatal consequences. He, like a physician, cautions them against their limitations and handicap secretly warn them against their gesture inviting social disapproval & covertly convinces them to mend their ways as exercise of freewill is not recommended in conservative societies.

Tendulkar picks up banal aspect of life and puts on them his dramatic guise.

Tendulkar never adopts the posture or gesture of a preacher to leave any explicit message for audience. His best intentions lie in portrayal of events, characters and circumstances leaving for audience to choose and pick whatever suits their choice and priorities. His idea is also not to provide an clue or solution to the problem – social or individual; he is highly individualistic & holds a confirmed opinion of individual application to challenges of life. Reality with its ugliest hood is naked & vulgar here as Tendulkar attempt to destroy outdate policies and streotyped beliefs.

If we probe into the plays we find :

The play *Silence / The court is in session* brings to discussion the problem of unwed motherhood. Here the women, Beware who ventures against social norms and embraces motherhood out of wed lock is ostracized by society, her innocence is ruthlessly crushed by cruel hands of society. She is a sinner as her sin is manifested in her pregnancy but the another & equal partner of sin who may have perpetrated sin on her either force or taking undue advantage of her innocence is beyond blame.

Two themes are concomitant with Tendulkar –

- (1) Feminine sensibility
- (2) Indian womanhood.

He also pays great attention to male-dominance & feminine fraility; exploitative nature of man & contributory nature of woman to plight of womenfolk. Tendulkar marvel at the mind set of woman, especially Indian whose endurance of this exploitation is so much ingrained in her psyche that even the thought of rebellion is alien to her. His women are endless victims and mute sufferer of torture hurled on them since time immemorial. Despite hostile circumstances the protagonist & other characters also are stubbornly remarkably optimistic.

Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* is cheated two times by her paramour but she finds some streaks of happiness in the fact that her body through polluted by sinners served as a sacred place of her love.

Leela Benare is a school teacher who commands love & respects in her profession. She joins a social group where Prof. Danile is also a member. Her illicit relationship with Prof. Danile is acted by co-actors & in a mock court she is summoned as an accused of pre-martial

pregnancy, Prof. Danile is not accused but a witness. She is held guilty of adultery & orders are issued to destroy her baby in pre-natal period but Benare maintains composure & goes through this ordeal of psychological turmoil with her chin up. She respects her love to her paramour & maintains dignity. Her optimism survives her at last.

In *vultures*, Rama having a drunkard, Ramakant as husband turns to Rajaninath & conceives a child from him who is aborted by her sister-in-law, she remains calm and silent as a stone, “*Empty of pain and empty of desires*” (206, *Vultures*).

She makes no objection, raises no hue and cry over her exploitation, ruin and loss of motherhood rather feels relaxed that storm is over & she can now think about himself.

Tendulkar juxtaposes the endurance of woman against violence of man; temptation thrown by man and women succumbing to it out of sheer frustration. In *Sakharam Binder* exploring complexities of human nature, he focuses on two women-Laxmi & Champa, each is a foil to the other. Laxmi despite torture from her husband tries her best to fulfil his every day needs. Laxmi’s optimism & positivities despite physical and psychological abuse at her husband’s hand brings good changes in life of the latter. He becomes religious and a responsible ‘family man’. In her presence in house he never assign any credit to Laxmi for her contribution to her life but in her absence when she leaves the house for good he confesses : “*There have been many women here, but this one left a mark before she went away.*” (153, Text) Sukharam himself praises Laxmi for her optimism as she longs for a death in lap of her husband, awaits the day when this so called husband. (They were not legally married, she was kept in house only) will accept her through religious retrievals and dedicates herself whole heartedly to his care and concern.

In *Kamala*, Sarita after being treated as an object doesn’t rebel but accepts her fate and optimistically engages herself in other positive things.

In *Ghashiram Kotwal* Lalita Gauri is misused by her father for his political gain. She sacrifices her honour, chastity and offers herself as a ladder to her father to climb on. She raises no voice against, obeys her father – a ruthless, barbaric character who uses her to settle score with the Brahmin of city. When Nana (Whom Gauri was sold) is fed up with her as she becomes pregnant, she is sent to Chandra, the midwife for abortion and there she suffers an ignominious death with no last rite, buried disgracefully.

Gauri by her optimism sustains the greatest ordeal of life, her worth is explained by her bidder in following words:

“Our grandeur is gone, if she is not had.” (19, Text).

In *Kamala* Jai Singh Jadhav fetches Kamala from rural flesh market but presents her as an object to garner benefits from her. She ceases to be a human but becomes a marketable commodity to earn reputation to Jadhav’s professional accomplishment. Kamala’s presentation at the press-conference in tattered clothes exposes the hypocrisy of elite world. Kamala maintain composure & with her positivity and optimism carves out a niche & considerable sympathy for her. The best with all Tendulkar’s heroine is that they all peacefully, patiently endure suffering, rebel in a decent way but wading through fire of test and suffering emerge dignified and graceful. Suffering purges them and adds to their credentials.

In *Kanyadan*, Jyoti, a daughter of socialist politician scarifies in pursuing her father’s ideals and maries a dalit youth despite warnings from her mother.

Her husband unleashes hell on her even in her pregnancy. She pays for all the kicks her forefathers hurled on low class people. Seva, her brother speaks mind of her husband :

“*In this way he is returning all the kicks which generations of his ancestors*

*received by men of high caste.” (544, text)*

Jyoti suffers because of his father’s choice & inferiority complex of her husband but positivity, stoicism and optimism let her sail through harsh realities of life.

Jyoti becomes a symbol & target of revenge of her husband on upper caste. He confesses:

*“What am I but the son of scavengers we don’t know the non-violent ways of Brahmins like you. We drink & beat our wives.” (540, text)*

*A friend’s Story’s* protagonist ‘Mitra’ tries to commit suicide when she learns that she can not be a man’s partner. Her bold experiments frustrate her. She, through negativity, gains strength & continues with her reckless ideals. ‘Bapu’ Mitra’s partner, optimistically expects that Mitra will strive one day to reform herself by mending her ways.

To conclude we can say that all his heroines endlessly & terribly suffer but suffering may go unnoticed but purifies them to register their identity and importance not only in life of man but also in eyes of society.

### **Workcited**

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