CHAPTER - I

Introduction

Civilization is the outcome of continuous and consistent efforts of human beings for the betterment of mankind. Man has the natural urge to control all the animate and inanimate things of his milieu which incites him to explore and invent various methods for the advance of human civilization. For that he takes the help of symbols to express and explain his feelings. He has coded all the symbols into language which enables him to carry out his wishes and to control his surroundings. Literature is the creation of man through which he expresses his experiences and thoughts. “Literature in its most general definition is a form of communication of imaginative experience through certain written organizations of words” (Raymond 16). Literature is of many types and drama is the most significant of all. Theatre is a two-way communication which differentiates the live theatre from film or television show. It is one of the most ancient and the most immediate of the arts. Play is a simulation of reality. Drama is for the wellbeing and development of man. Play activity is made up of mimesis, an imitation of real-life situations and behavioural patterns. Drama is linked to the basic human drives, essential for the survival of the individual as well as of the species. It is one of the most potent instruments of the process of instruction. Sociologists would call it the process by which individuals internalize their social roles. It helps in making the environment happy and amusing. The laughter which is produced by its efforts is a form of release for subconscious anxieties of the humans. Drama is used as a purifying element in the society which controls psychological and mental problems and helps them live fruitful life as well as it maintains social harmony. Drama is said to be a literary genre written either in prose or verse to be acted on the stage, its story is related with dialogue and action and with the help of gesture, costume, and scenery, is performed as an imitation of real life. It seems that the art, activity, human craving or instinct, which embodies itself in drama, is so deeply enmeshed in human nature itself that it is well nigh impossible to draw the exact dividing line between where one kind of more general activity stops and drama proper starts.
The Western ideas about drama are in many ways different from those in the East. Most of us have taken part in some form of drama in one way or the other, without realizing it. Many of the national or tribal dances performed in countries all over the world come very close to drama; so do many of the national and social ceremonies in which most of us take part at some time in our lives. The desire to imitate in this way is a deep instinct in man, and probably the commonest source of dramatic inspiration. Drama is something which can be both seen and heard. It is thought that there should be a conflict in drama. It is possible for a man to love himself, or hate himself; certainly this is true, and plays often show people doing this. Here the conflict is within the person himself. But drama depends essentially on the relationships between people, or between people and God, and events which rule their lives. This is the centre of drama, just as it is the centre of human life. Human lives are bound to live in society and are affected by our relations with one another. This is the natural state of human beings, and to make them isolated is a punishment, and one of the cruelest punishments is to force a man to live entirely on his own. So drama shows what happens when human beings come into contact or conflict with one another.

The development of drama through the ages has always been connected with the development of the theatre. Drama is a composite art-form, a mixture of literature and visual art; speech, movement; story and spectacle. It is not certain who wrote the first play and where it appeared. It is deduced that before the emergence of drama, music, dance, magic, etc. existed in the world. It is believed that primitive people worshipped Gods. The common element found in primitive drama traces its origin in religion. Drama is an audio-visual activity which includes dancing and singing and it becomes a distinct form of artistic expression. The Greek drama started in the open air. Their actors, singers and dancers performed within a circle at the foot of a hill, while all the spectators sat around the sides of the hill to watch. The general idea of this construction hardly changed. Certain changes took place according to the demands of time. Drama evolved with the progress of civilization:

The natural place for the choirs and dancers to choose to perform was in a hollow between hills, or at the foot of a hill where the hillside curved round
the performing area, so that as many people as possible could sit there, above the players, and watch the ceremony and festivities, which often lasted for several hours. The drama of European civilization is based on and influenced by the Greek drama. There are only examples of ancient classical Greek drama which have survived, but they are enough to show its greatness, and many of these plays are still performed today. (Clarke 8-9)

In the Hindu mythology and mindset, everything except God and the world has a beginning. Natyashastra is the scientific treatise on drama and dramaturgy, traced traditionally to Brahma, the All-creator. To Bharat, Drama has two beginnings, one in the divine and the other in the mortal world. Moreover, as the treatise deals with drama on the stage, the origin of drama means to him the first performance of the first drama. The origin of Indian drama is in Sanskrit language. Sanskrit belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. “The theatre or drama is as old as human civilization and the unwritten history of this art is the history of mankind. The art of theatre is concerned almost exclusively with live performance in which the action is planned to create a sense of drama” (Burdie 7). Indian English drama evolves from ancient classical Sanskrit drama, native tradition of regional drama and from the European and Western drama. Indian drama traced back to the Vedic period is said to be the fifth Veda as it takes its recitation from Rig Veda, imitation from Yajur Veda, melody from Sama Veda and aesthetic flavour from Atharva Veda. “Indian drama was meant to promote the fulfillment of all the four ‘purusharthas’ (aims of life), ‘dharma’ (the good), ‘artha’ (the useful), ‘kama’ (the beautiful), and ‘moksha’ (the true)” (Reddy and Dhawan 7). The dramatic tradition of Hindus is said to have been fully formed even before the Greeks. It is said that God Brahma orated the NatyaVed to Bharat Muni. “This is considered to be the first ideal of the beginnings of early drama in India, which later flowered into the Sanskrit drama and commenced with the writings of Asvaghosa, followed by Bhasa, Bhavabhuti, later on by Kalidasa’s works produced around the fifth century” (Diwakar 2).

Eminent playwrights like Bhasa, Kalidasa, Shudraka, Vishakadatta and Bhavabhuti contributed greatly through the dramatic pieces in Sanskrit. Their plays or plots are based on sources like the epics, history, folk tales and legends. Gesture, mime and movement are required for the visual presentation of theatre. The classical
theatre which is based on *Natyashastra* was much more sophisticated in its form and nature and totally urban oriented whereas the traditional theatre evolved out of rural roots. All the folk and traditional forms of theatre in northern India are mainly vocal i.e. singing and recitation–based like *Ramlila, Rasleela, Bhand, Nautanki* and *Swang* without any complicated gestures or movements. The glory of ancient Sanskrit drama ended with the first millennium. The medieval period witnessed the emergence of regional language theatres. Aristotle stresses the importance of plot. He considers the plot as the ‘soul of tragedy’. He writes that there can be tragedy without character but it is not possible without plot. The great sage, Bharat Muni, in his great treatise *Natyashastra* dictates, “Theater is life. There is no art, no life, no craft, no learning, and no action which cannot be seen in it” (Ghosh 2007).

The most renowned and talented dramatists of ancient India are Kalidasa, Asvaghosa, Bhavabhuti, Bhasa, Sudrak, Harsha, Bhavabhutti, Visha-Khadatta, Bhattanarayana, Murari and Rajeshkhora, who enriched Indian Theatre with their works like *Madhya-Mavyayoda, Urubhangam, Karnabharan, Mrichakatikam, Abhigyana shantukalam, Malankagnimitram, Uttar Rama charitam, Mudrarark, Shasa, Bhagavadajjukam, Mattivalasa* etc. They wrote immortal works of literature. They are a source of inspiration for their successor playwrights. Kironmoy Raha observes:

Creative involvement with Sanskrit drama, however, was confined to the elitist crust of society, and patronage for production of such plays to the princely courts and aristocracy. Classical Sanskrit drama, in any case, had declined by the end of the 7th century AD. After Muslim invasion, it ceased to have whatever little patronage it might have enjoyed earlier. The plays were doubtless read and recited by successive generation of students of Sanskrit but there is no evidence of their being performed with any regularity before any cloistered audiences. (1)

Indian Drama activity almost ceased due to foreign invasions on India and also because the Sanskrit language was spoken only by the upper classes, providing only a limited, aristocratic audience. Islamic rulers who controlled India forbid theatre. There were political reasons for the downfall and degradation of the Sanskrit and Greek theatres along with other. Same was the case in the similarities of evolution and
degradation of Greek and Sanskrit drama. Sanskrit drama after the tenth century started losing its ground. It strove no more through symbol and gesture to realize the truth of human experience. The glorious Medieval Literature was an era of devotional poetry. The reason behind the indifference to theatre was regarded as the Islamic taboo against theatre and drama remained in a state of oblivion. After the foreign invasions, drama found substantial development in the regional languages of India. Despite the foreign invasions and political changes, they persisted to exist as the potent tool of entertainment and enlightenment. In almost all the states of India regional drama is prevalent up to modern day. In Bengal, folk theatre is known as *Jatra*. The *jatra* theatre does not require any fixed platform or stage properties. The word *jatra* means a religious procession accompanied by dance, song, music, etc. In north India, it is known as *Ramlila* and *Kathakali* in Kerala. *Kathakali* represent the life of the Keralite people. In Bengal there is *Yatrakirtinaya*, *Paal*, *Gaan*, in Madhya Pradesh *Maach*, in Kashmir *Bhandya thar*, and in Gujarat it is *Bhavai Ramlila*; in northern India there existed the *Nautanki*, and *Bhand*, *Ramlila* and *Raslila*; in Maharashtra *Tamasa*; in Rajasthan *Raas* and *Jhoomer*; in Punjab *Bhangra* and *Swang*; while in Assam it is *Ahiyanat* and *Ankinaat*; in Bihar it was *Videshiya* and *Chaari* in West Bengal.

English drama came to India through East India Company. The Britishers staged drama for the entertainment of their English officers. Nand Kumar observes:

> With the emergence of the East India Company on the political horizons of India, English education began to take roots in this land. English schools and other institutions created an atmosphere of reading and writing in English. English education in India not only fostered the critical study of western drama and the classical Indian drama, but also gave rise to the English theatre in India. A glance at the development of theatre in India during and after the British Raj serves to illustrate the point. (10)

Drama took a new turn with the impact of Western literature in India. The Parsi theatre around 1850 started staging plays based on Indian mythology, history and legends. With its moving troupes, they travelled to different parts of the country and made a tremendous impact on their audience. Agha Hashr (1880-1931) was an important playwright of the Parsi theatre. Parsi plays were mostly commercial and
cheap. The European touring companies namely the Fair Clough Company, the Lewis Dramatic Company, Norville’s Our Boys Company, the Loftus Troupe, the Willard Opera Company and the Dave Carson Troupe visited and performed in Bombay during the latter half of the 19th century. Many amateur dramatic groups and clubs notably the Parsi Elphinstone Dramatic Society, the Kalidasa Elphinstone Society, the Shakespeare Society of Elphinstone College, the Bombay Amateur Dramatic club, the Thespian Club, the Orphean Dramatic Club, etc. also flourished during the 1860s and 1870s. The first play was staged in Calcutta in 1795 “through the enterprise of a Russian music director, Lebedoff … assisted by one Golaknath Das … the first Bengali drama performed, Chhadma-besh (was) adapted from an English drama called Disguise … It was not until 1832 that Prosonna Kumar Tagore … began to stage Bengali dramas adapted from some of the best Sanskrit plays. This continued … until 1851, to which can be traced one of the earliest original Bengali dramas, Kirtibilas, a social play by Pandit Jogendra Nath Gupta” (qtd. in Naik 153-154).

In 1866 C.S. Nazir wrote what is perhaps the earliest Indian verse play in English. The play titled The Persecuted or Dramatic Scenes illustrative of the Present State Hindu Society in Calcutta was written by Krishna Mohan Banerjee in 1813. The play depicts confusion of a sensitive Bengali youth arising out of traditionalism and liberal views resulting from the acquisition of foreign education. However, the real journey of Indian English Drama began with Michael Madhusudhan Dutt’s Is this Called Civilization (1871). Madras Dramatic Society was established in 1875 where Europeans gave performances in English. The other dramatic clubs that followed was the Oriental Drama Club in 1882. Krishnammachary of Bellary in 1890 founded The Sarasa Vindonini Sabha which was the first Indian amateur dramatic society in southern India.

The prominent playwrights were Bharatendu Harish Chandra (Hindi), Girish Chandra Ghosh (Bengali), Dwijendr Lal Roy (Bengali), Dinabandhu Mitra (Bengali, 1829-74) Ranchodbhai Udayram (Gujarati, 1837-1923), M.M. Pillai (Tamil), Balvant Padurang Kirloskar (Marathi, 1843-85). Rabindra Nath Tagore delved into our folk tradition to create plays to protest against colonialism, social injustice and westernization. Jai Shankar Prasad (Hindi) and Adya Rangacharya (Kannada) wrote
historical and social plays to highlight the clash between idealism and the harsh realities by which they were surrounded. P.S. Mudaliyar gave Tamil stage respectability and new direction. Krishan Mohan Bandyophdhyay (1813-85) who was an educationist, linguist and anglican priest, was a prominent member of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio’s Young Bengal group and a Professor in Bishop’s college, Shibpur. His *The Persecuted* criticizes certain practices of the 19th century Indian Hindus that were resulting in the socio cultural and moral degradation of the contemporary Bengalis, enfeebling them to resist the colonizers. As Vinod Bala Sharma wrote:

The western impact gave life to the drying sap of Indian drama leading to the emergence of great writers like Tagore, Harindra Nath Chattopadhayaya and Sri Auribondo. These stalwarts made a major contribution to Indian drama. Tagore’s hallmark was philosophical complexity conveyed through lyrical simplicity. Aurobindo carried forward the tradition of Elizabethan poetic drama and Harindranath Chhatopadhyaya brought to India the Marxist theme of the need for economic and social revolution for the upliftment of the dispossessed and the deprived. (24)

In the 19th century Bengal, a few notable efforts were made by Michael Madhusudan Dutt who translated his three Bengali plays – *Ratnavali* (1858) *Sermista* (1859) and *Is This Called Civilization?* (1871) into English and Ram Kinoo Dutt wrote *Manipur Tragedy* in 1893. In Bombay the available texts of Indian drama are C.S. Nazir’s *The First Parsi Baronet* (1866) and D.N. Wadia’s *the Indian Heroine* (1877). Dosabhai Nasarwanji Wadia’s *The Indian Heroine* was based on events from 1857 Indian war of Independence. In 1875 Madras Dramatic Society was founded, which provided opportunities to amateur Europeans to stage several plays in English. Madras based theatre houses witnessed a number of efficient dramatic productions focusing not only on Indian society but also on Indian history and myths. The plays produced in Tamil Nadu are P.V. Ramaswamy Raju’s *Urjoon Singh; or the Princess Regained* (1875) and *Lord likely* (1878), Mangadu Krishnamacharya’s Dasartha: or, *The Fatal Promise- A Tragedy* (1901).

Rabindranath Tagore hardly had any association with the Calcutta stage. He assimilated various features of Bengali folk drama and Sanskrit drama with western drama. He experimented with all categories of plays: five act plays, comedies,
tragedies; farces and satires, lyrical, philosophical, social or political plays. He introduced tragic conflict in many of his famous plays and deviated from classical Indian tradition and opted the Western models. His plays are deeply rooted in Indian ethos and his plays can be compared to the famous Irish playwright, W.B. Yeats. He introduced the ideas of French Symbolist Movement to the theatre. He got the Nobel Prize for literature. He contributed a lot to the Bengali theatre. He was the first playwright who invested Indian English Drama with symbolism. He acts as a bridge and synthesizer of the traditions of the East and the West. As Diana Devlin observes, “the philosopher, writer and teacher Rabindranath Tagore set out to unify Indian and European traditions creating plays which have been described as a mixture of Bengali folk drama and western medieval mystery plays” (1989). Tagore wrote his plays in Bengali which were later translated into English. Tagore himself translated a number of his own plays such as Chitra (1913), The Cycle of Spring (1917), Red Oleanders (1924) and Natir Puja—The Court Dancer’s Worship (1927) and his others plays like The Post Office (1914), The Curse at Farewell (1924), Three plays—Mukta-Dhara, Natir Puja and Chandalika (1950), and Devouring Love (1961) have been respectively translated by Debabrata Mukhopadhyaya, Edward Thompson, Marjorie Sykes, and Shankutala Rao Sastri.

Shri Aurobindo Ghosh was a major Indian English playwright with encyclopaedic knowledge of Indian culture, society and metaphysics. He was a nationalist and great Indian philosopher who was tried and acquitted in the Alipore Bomb case of 1908. He was well versed in the great classics of Greece, Rome, Germany, France, Spain and Italy and with our rich traditions of Sanskrit as well. He wrote five complete and six incomplete verse plays between 1891 to 1916. His five complete plays are on a variety of themes which are representative of important cultures of the world and which symbolizes certain significant moments of human history. Viziers of Bassora (1959) is romantic, Rodogune (1958) is tragic, Perseus: the deliverer (1907) is mythological, Eric (1912) is heroic, and Vasavadutta (1957) is legendary. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh inherited and carried forward the tradition of the British poetic drama revived by Stephen Phillips and Robert Bridges. He has written his plays in blank verse with well knit plots from the classical mythology of the East
His first play *The Viziers of Bassora* is based on the story of Nur-Al-Bin-Ali and the story based on the Muslim city of Bassora of 9th century. *Rodogune* is a modified version of the tragedy of the same name by Corneille. It owes much to the Shakespearean and Jacobean tragic plays. It is an example of the revived Elizabethan tragedy of the late Victorian era.

Harindra Nath Chattopadhyaya with his left leanings and revolutionary zeal added a new dimension to the Indian-English drama. *Raïdas, Chokha Mela, Pundalik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva and Tuka Ram* - these plays deal with the lives of saints. His five plays were published in 1937. *The Window, The Parrot, The Coffin, The Evening lamp* and *The Sentry's Lantern* deal with social problems. His first play *The Window* deals with the exploitation of textile workers of Bombay by the industrialists. *The Parrot* depicts the bondage of marriage and the woman's urge for freedom from her undesirable husband. The last important play *Siddhartha, Man of Peace* (1956) deals with the glory of Buddha's life. This play expresses his concern for the discovery of nuclear power and war-torn society. These playwrights were not able to make an impact on the stage.

Other major playwrights in the colonial era were A.S.P. Ayyar, T.P. Kailasham and J.M. Lobo Prabhu. *In the Clutches of the Devil* (1926), *Sita's Choice* (1935), *The Slave of Ideas* (1941) and *The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity* (1942) are the protests against several evils and ills of society like the blind beliefs and superstitions, widow-marriage, caste system and gross materialism.

Kailasam was a powerful Kannada and English playwright. He had a real genius and love for drama. He blended both Indian and Western tradition in his dramatic world. He wrote *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfillment* (1933), *A Monologue: Don’t Cry* (1933), *Karna or The Brahmin's Curse* (1946) and *Keechaka* (1949). His plays are inspired by *Puranas, Ramayana* and *Mahabharata. Karna* is a full length play. Both *Karna* and *Oedipus* of Sophocles suffer from a fatal curse which shapes their life and destiny. His vision could be compared to that of Ibsen or Shaw. With his inbuilt genius and intuitive vision, he uplifted Kannada drama and was rightly called the father of Modern Kannada Drama. G.S. Amur hails him as “a talented actor who
appeared in the amateur as well as the professional stage. He brought to the writing of drama an intimate knowledge of the theatre. It is for this reason that his plays whether in Kannada or English have a uniform technical excellence” (186). Prabhu wrote about a dozen plays. His two plays published before independence were Mother of New India: A play of the Indian Village in Three Acts (1944) and Death Abdicates (1945).

The Indian English drama has been enriched in the post-independence era. Gradually, it begins to develop as powerful form for the creative expression. The pre-independence Indian English drama is notable for its poetic excellence, thematic variety, technical virtuosity, symbolic significance and its commitment to human and moral values. G.P. Deshpande comments on the Indian English playwriting:

By the time independence came to India in 1947, Modern drama as we knew then, was deeply aware of the west and also of modernity. In as much as it was a response to modernity for colonialism and imperialism, it was also a response to modernity, for colonialism and imperialism were ‘modern phenomenon’. With the arrival of political independence, we do not quite have post-colonial theatre. In fact the phenomenon of the ‘post colonial’ is more than doubtful and debateable. (xiv)

G.V. Desani was born in Kenya, educated in English and wrote in India. Hali (1950) was performed successfully in India and also at the Watergate Theatre in London in 1950. It depicts the theme of love and passion. Professor Iyengar observes that, “A short poetic play, Hali is an attempt to project the story of a passion’: in other words, Hali’s confrontation of the powers of creation and destruction, his grapple with life and death, his surrender to the play of this phenomenal world, his communication with love, and his transcendence of the dualities of time and place” (Drama 243). Hali is an allegory about everyman’s quest.

Gieve Patel succeeds in evolving “a form of modified English which is not standard English, which has distinctively Indian rhythms, but none of the ‘cuteness' or self-conscious phony “Indiannesss” of other experiments in this genre” (Souza 181). Princes (1970) is written by Gieve Patel which is first Parsi play, set in the
sub-urban Parsi sub-culture of the Sanjan-Nargol area of south Gujarat, focussing on two Parsi families and their savage conflict for the possession of a sole male child.

Partap Sharma wrote *A Touch of Brightness* (1968) and *The Professor has a War-Cry* (1970). *A Touch of Brightness* attacks Mumbai’s brothels and slums. *The Professor has a War-Cry* depicts the mental anguish of Virendra as he becomes aware of his illegitimacy.

Lakhan Deb wrote three dramas in verse namely *Tiger's Claw* (1967), *Murder at the Prayer Meeting* (1976) and *Vivekanand* (1972). *Tiger's Claw* is a three-act play. It deals with the murder of General Afzal Khan by Shivaji. *Murder at the Prayer Meeting* deals with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. This play is modelled on the technique of Greek tragedy. The play deftly employs the dramatic unities of time, place and action as well as the classical devices of prologue and chorus.

Gurucharan Das has picked up certain events from Indian history, but he has tried to establish their relationship in the modern context. He wrote *Larins Sahib* (1968), *The Mira* (1970) and *9 Jakhoo Hill* (1996).

Habib Tanvir, a leftist Urdu dramatist, got his training in acting at England’s Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and in direction at Bristol old Vic Theatre School. He started his dramatic writing in 1954 with *Agra Bazar*. He endeavours to work with people whom he wants to make visible to the urban dwellers and middle class. He uses theatre as a forum from where the weak can articulate their voice. In his adaptations of ancient classics like *Mitti Ki Gadi*, he provides the villagers and artisans to express their voice against the prevailing conditions of exploitation and oppression. His *Charan Das Chor* (1975) is translated into English by Anjum Katyal and abridged by Sally Jones.

Nissim Ezekiel’s *Three Pays* (1969) consisting of *Nalini, A Marriage Poem* and *The Sleep Walkers* and one more play, *Song of Deprivation* expose the hollowness of the urban middle class life, fickleness of modern lovers, greedy fascination for American life and the hypocrisy and inhibitive nature of contemporary Indian society. His plays are the depiction of his observation of the oddities of human
life and behaviour. His other play is *Don’t Call it Suicide* (1994). In the words of Chetan Karnani, “In his satire of current fashion, in his exposure of pose and pretence, Ezekiel comes very close to the spirit of some English social artists in the theatre” (126). He employed various figures of speech to exhibit hollowness of urban middle class.

Asif Currimbhoy is rightly said “India’s first authentic voice in the theatre” (Bowers xii) after independence. He is a playwright with a social purpose. He included diverse issues in his plays such as social, political, economic, philosophical, religious and cross-cultural. His play *The Clock* (1959) is a psychological play, *The Tourist Mecca* (1959), *The Hungry Ones* (1965) and *Darjeeling Tea* (1971) focus on the east-west encounters; *The Doldrummers* (1960) is on Maharashtrian ‘hippie-culture’; *The Dumb Dancer* (1961) is a psychological play, *the Captives* (1963) on Indo-China border conflict; *An Experiment With Truth* (1969) on India’s freedom struggle and assassination of M.K. Gandhi; *Inquilab* (1970) about the Naxalite Revolution; *The Refugee* (1971) and *Sonar Bangla* (1972) about the Indo-Bangla-Pakistan and war; *Om Padme Hum* (1972) about the Chinese aggression against the Tibetan; *Angkor* (1973) on politics in south-east Asia and the *Dissident MLA* (1974) on students agitations in Gujarat. K.R.S. Iyengar appreciates the creative talent of Currimbhoy as “Farce, comedy, melodrama, tragedy, history, fantasy: Currimbhoy handles them all with commendable ease” (*Indian* 732).

drama theorist Bertolt Brecht. The native drama of India finds place in the modern English drama in India, as M.K. Naik points to this distinct emerging trend:

But during recent years vernacular Indian drama has increasingly been turning to folk forms and tapping their springs of vitality with splendid results. Girish Karnad’s use of the Yakshagana in the Kannada play, Hayavadana, and Vijay Tendulkar’s of Dashavatar and Khele techniques in the Marathi play, Ghashiram Kotwal; the adaptation of Bhavai in two Gujarati plays—Dina Gandhi’s Mena Gurjari and Bakul Tripathi’s Leela; the employment of the Jatra motif in Uptal Dutt’s Jokumareswara and Badal Sarcar’s Evam Indrajit; and Habib Tanvir’s presentation of The Little Clay Cart in a neo-Navtanki style, etc. are prominent recent examples. (158)

Mohan Rakesh influenced by Marxism waged a war against the tradition of Hindi drama and projected challenging themes. He explored the themes of man-woman relationship in his plays. His famous play Adhe Adhure is translated into English under the title Half Way House (1971). It explores the effects of parent discord. One Day in Asadha (1958) and The Great Swan of the Waves (1902) are his full length historical plays commenting on the contemporary problems. Nirad C. Chaudhry observes, “With Mohan Rakesh Hindi drama makes a departure from pseudo-modernism and traditional symbolism to the drama of ‘non-communication’—the modern man’s failure to understand himself or to understand the other person and their mutual failure to understand each other, which is the real tragedy of modern life” (qtd. in Sircar 25-26).

Badal Sircar projected the existential attitude of modern life. He created a people’s theatre known as Third Theatre. It is essentially a flexible, portable and inexpensive theatre. He revolutionized the concept of theatre. He wrote Solution X, Evam Indrajit, That other History (1964), There is not End (1971), Pagla Ghoda, Palap, Procession, Bhoma and Stale News.

Mahesh Dattani, the versatile theatre personality, was a drama teacher, stage director, actor and Bharatnatyam dancer who is the first Indian dramatist to win the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998. He established a performing arts group called PLAYPEN in 1984. He has nine plays to his credit. Dattani holds theatre courses at Portland State University USA. He writes radio plays for BBC and conducts workshops regularly at his studio. Where there is A Will (1986) is his first play.
Others include *Dance Like a Man* (1989), *Tara* (1990), *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991), *Final Solutions* (1992), *Nigh Queen* (1996), *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* (1998), *Thirty Days in September* (2001). His plays are produced on the stage very successfully. John Mc Rae calls him “the voice of India” and writes, “They are the plays of today, sometimes as actual as to cause controversy, but at the same time they are the plays which embody many of the classic concern for the world drama” (2000). Dattani’s plays deal with religious tension, sexuality and gender issues. His characters are taken from urban middle class milieu.


The presence of women playwrights along with their contribution cannot be forgotten in Indian drama. Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954), wrote the first drama in English, *Gold Mohur Time* (1930), a parable play that she succeeded in publishing from London. Bharati Sarabhai’s socialistic *The Well of the People* (1943) and *Two Women* (1952) followed. Bharati Sarabhai is influenced with Gandhian thoughts. Her first play *The Well of the People* (1943) was a poetic pageant. It deals with the life of a Brahmin widow and Harijans. *Two Women* (1952) is written in prose with the theme of integration of India. The women dramatists include a number of experiences with regard to women and their number increased appreciatively after Independence.
Significant names among women dramatists are Mahasweta Devi, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, and Saoli Mitra (Bengali theatre); Dhiruben Patel and Varsha Adalja (Gujarati theatre); Mannu Bhandari, Kusum Kumar, Mridula Garg, Shanti Mehrotra, and Mrinal Pande (Hindi theatre); Malatibai Bedekar, Mukta Dikshit, Tara Vanrase, Jyoti Mhapsekar, Sushma Deshpande, and Prema Kantak (Marathi); Manjit Pal Kaur (Punjabi theatre); Ambai and Mangai (Tamil theatre); Volga and Vinodini (Telugu theatre); Jameela Nishat (Urdu theatre). Important women dramatists include the Parsi playwright Dina Mehta who is among the best known of those writing in English, addressing various themes. Her *Myth Makers* (1969) is on the violent anti-immigrant demonstrations in Mumbai. Politicians are criticized for dirty politics and regionalism in it. *The Brides are not for Burning* (1993) is a protest against the burning of wives or relatives over dowry. Dina Mehta’s *The Myth Maker’s* is her first full length play. *Tiger, Tiger* (1978) is a play on Tipu Sultan. *Brides Are Not for Burning* is a play on dowry deaths. *Getting Away with Murder* is an account of three women friends who describe their own private hells of childhood, sexual abuse, infidelity and insecure relationship. *Sister Like You* (1996) and *When One plus One Makes Nine* (1984) are her other plays. The new millennium opened with positive progress. Manjula Padmanabhan shot to fame with her award-winning *Harvest*, followed by *Lights Out, Hidden Fires*, and *Mating Season*. Polie Sen Gupta wrote *Manglam* which depicts domestic violence in a middle class Tamil Brahmin joint family. *Keats Was a Tuber* (1966), *Inner Laws* (1994), *A Pretty Business* (1995), *Collages* (1998) and *Alipha* (2001) are her other plays. These playwrights try to touch the realm of life and offer a variety of analysis of the position of women, exploration of female subjectivity, and different strategies that need adoption of issues to negotiate social change. Their work and voice demand reformation of traditional paradigms and give meaningful social intervention to the reconsideration of historical knowledge and the re-examination of the basic premises of traditionally organized systems of knowledge about social and literary dynamics. They shape a new dramaturgy—a feminist theory of theatre of protest that finds unacceptable the notions of Aristotelian catharsis and Bharata’s rasa as the feelings aroused in viewers.
Manjula Padmanabhan is a powerful playwright whose fifth play *Harvest* won the Onassis International Cultural Competition Prize in 1997 in Greece. The play *Lights Out* depicts the violence in daily life of women. Manjula Padmanabhan wrote *Lights Out* which presents the tragic spectacle of the daily rape of women. It shows the helplessness of society at such events. *Hidden Fires* deals with the issues of violence, intolerance to others and narrow concepts of community and nation. *Harvest* is her another play which depicts the miserable condition of poor urbanites who under extreme pressures make up their mind to become an organ donor and mortgage their body to white First World buyer. She portrays a mean and moribund world where mothers sell their children for the ‘price of rice’. The exploiters world is commented realistically. In this way, the playwright has protested against the alienation and marginalization of the individual and society.

Uma Parameswaran is a poet, playwright and short story writer born in Madras and grew up in Jabalpur. She started her career as a newspaper reporter in India. The plays written by her were published in Toronto and India. *Sons Must Die* (1960), *Meera* (1971), *Sita's Promise* (1981), *My Sister* (1989) and *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* (1998) are her famous plays.

The drama does not exist in isolation or vacuum. It is a product of the social and political milieu which surrounds it; in turn, it exerts an influence on the milieu. No theatrical activity can be understood without some knowledge of conditions outside the playhouse. Tendulkar throws light on the relationships within and outside family and brings out their connectivity and complexity. Isolation results from defiance of accepted institutions, individuals and society. It gives way to secular individualism and psychological privacy and is linked with an essentially romantic self image of isolation. Modern literature is full of isolation and relationships are within a decaying moral order. Tendulkar protests against it. He never tries to obsess the minds of his audience or readers with false idealism or feelings of nationalism or patriotism. His characters are typical individuals who strike a blow, to the fullest, to established social norms or religious convictions. They want space for themselves in society which the society is unwilling to share with them. The plays of Tendulkar are thought provoking. They burn fires in the minds of audience and protest against the
ills and vices of society. Tendulkar intelligently uses the drama as a medium to raise his voice against the atrocities and against the victimization of innocent. What happens in the process is that Tendulkar succumbs to the gruesome spell of distrust, hostility, violence and sex obsession.

The artist as a part of society both influences and is influenced by the society. It is true in the context of the drama world of the west also. In the 1950s the main significance attached to the new theatre of Osborne, Wesker and others is that it was political, a theatre of anger and revolt. The protest depicted was reformist rather than revolutionary in spirit, and much the same might be said of Indian drama. Free trade, industrialization and urbanization have greatly impacted the Indian society. The new advances created rift in the society and divided the classes hugely. It altered the relations and writer’s use theatre as a form of protest. There is a changed pattern of social relations. The twentieth century has seen the breakdown of the old familiar pattern of private and social life. Tendulkar was inspired by Marxist ideas and protested against exploitation and class conflict to create a social awakening among the workers and the poor. He was committed to a non-violent humane path which is similar to Buddhism though he didn’t completely ignore the existence of violence. Throughout the world, the deprived, the under privileged sections, whether they are racial and ethnic minorities or low castes and classes, organized themselves to fight against inequalities, discrimination and deprivation. They often violently agitate for their legitimate share in economic opportunities, educational privileges and political power. Like Karl Marx he treats human beings as human beings. He presents the angry and frustrated protagonists of the contemporary young generation of India in objective and realistic terms. He presented his characters realistically as some of them are rough and tough while others are miserable and pitiable. He wants freedom, equality and justice for one and all.

Tendulkar handles the complex issues deftly. Major issues of life whether psychological, socio-political, existential, feminist and humanitarian are delineated in a realistic manner. He protests against adultery, hypocrisy, dual personality, vulgarity, cruelty, narrow mindedness, violence, distorted relations, breakdown of joint family system, faithlessness, oppression of women and society. His presentation of stark
realities stumped the orthodox Indian society which was unable to digest it and protested against the playwright. The audience was greatly disturbed. He protests against both individual and society. He presents the modern man with his predicament, his challenges, his difficulties, and his complexities. He endeavours to make the people conscious of their voices and limitations. He knows the functions of drama, that it is the subservient mode of protest against the ills of society and man. His plays cannot be termed as problem plays like those of Ibsen, Shaw or Galsworthy, because his plays depict the naked reality of socio-politico and cultural reality of mankind. He does not provide any escapist way through amusing scenes and situations but his plays are, “engaged with the presentation of the problems of social inequality, the anguish and the disillusionment of the modern life, and the place of the individual in the society that is becoming hostile increasingly to the individual aspirations” (Kanwar 12). The dramatist revolts against orthodox settings and desires to set a new society with new set of rules. He exposes the frustration of the weak and the neglected people who then seek vicious pleasures in inflicting miseries on others and enjoy and forget their own pains. This type of politics is abundantly available in Indian society irrespective of their caste, creed or status. He uses drama which is the most concrete form of art to recreate human situations and human relationships. He allows the spectator to interpret what is happening in front of him on a multitude of levels.

Two major themes which run parallel in almost all the plays of Tendulkar are the issues of women and miseries of powerless human beings. In the end of the nineteenth century, women in India suffered from disabilities like child marriage, practice of polygamy, sale of girls for marriage purposes, severe restrictions on widows, non access to education, and restricting them to domestic and child rearing functions. *Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakharam Binder, The Vultures, Encounter in Umbigland* and *Ghashiram Kotwal* etc. deal with the plight of the second sex. Kamala launches vitriolic attack on the male-dominated Indian society which prides itself on discriminating against the weaker sex. Tendulkar shows how in advanced India women are sold and bought. They are no different from buffaloes or cows sold in cattle markets. No less different is the fate of Sarita, Jai Singh’s wife.
Though she is educated, yet her plight is no different. She is merely a servant in the form of socially accepted title of ‘wife’. What Tendulkar tries to project is that the fate and condition of women is same irrespective of class, caste or creed whether it be a tribal woman or a high-class woman.

In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, most of the males are unsuccessful in their pursuits. They are not ready to adjust each other. Middle-class people have sadist tendencies and Tendulkar throws light on them in *Silence! The Court is in Session*. The females like Benare are fully exploited by the powerful. They think that they are intelligent and doing justice to their profession but, in reality, they are kept as long as they are useful and then thrown out. The theme of this play is of callousness and indifferent attitude of society against the helpless and needy. Benare is such character. Professor Damle stands for emotional aloofness. The other theme which goes along with is of female foeticide and problem of unmarried motherhood. Society cannot allow unmarried motherhood and orders Benare to go in for foeticide. They torture her physically, emotionally, economically, socially, psychologically and culturally. In this way, this play transcends the limits of time and space and stands for the universality of the theme of female subjugation. Tendulkar’s protest against commodification and objectification of women reaches its crescendo in this play.

Saksharam Binder in the play *Saksharam Binder* stands for the victimized children who are born to frustrated and immature parents. He is ill-treated by society and, in turn, he returns the same thing which he gets from society. The playwright depicts the lower middle class of society and the destitute people in this play. He discerns the basic needs of human beings and man-woman relationships of the needy people. The ways and mannerisms of the deprived are significantly noted in this play. The protagonist Saksharam is made the iconic character with raw dealings. Under the guise of a false ownership, he abuses and tortures his ‘wives’.

*The Vultures* deals with the distorted human relations in an urban and industrialized society. The playwright shows the ill-effects of urbanized and industrialized society on the relations, joint family and society. He shows how individualization is responsible for the disintegration of joint family system. The westernization and modernization have their ill-effects on family and Indian society.
Urban people are crazy for materialistic gains only. Alcoholism adds to their violent nature. Immorality is present in enormity in their lives. Males are in the habit of keeping kept woman and females are equally interested in illicit relations. It shows urban milieu is stinky and people are the vultures. The varying relationships in the play *The Vultures*, for example, brother to brother, brother to sister, father to children etc. expose how greed for money makes these family members wild and mad. In fact, Tendulkar, a rebel, explores the complexity of the middle class mentality and behaviour in his works. V.B. Deshpande writes “These men are simple and rough persons that one would meet next door. What Tendulkar is interested in is to find out how such apparently simple and straight forward people turn violent, how they come to love, hate and envy each other, how they become enslaved by passion, and how and why they are lovely and alienated” (19). Manik represents modern-day girls who indulged in pre-marital affairs. In Benare, the spirit of individualism is depicted boldly and is inspired by westernization.

In *Encounter in Umbugland*, Tendulkar protests against the type of ‘monarchical system’ prevalent in Indian Democracy. How economy matters is another serious question posed by him. All the ministers are in search of becoming king by any means. The jealousy against each other makes them helpless. He protests against the caste system and corruption in the field of journalism. The marginalized and subalterns are exploited according to the wishes of the dominant. He voices equality for all. He dissects the power games played by the powerful. A woman turns down tables against the powerful males. He depicts how princess Vijaya tames the dominant men. Various types of tricks of power games are used to insult and damage others.

In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the playwright protests against female subjugation, caste system and corruption in Indian society. He protests against criminalization of politics. He exposes how the powerful use and throw the powerless for their own benefits. He exposes the ills of a patriarchal culture in this play. Cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, sychophancy and dishonesty are the characteristics which Englishmen found in the Indian society. Inter-caste conflicts are also depicted here in this play and power struggle is shown as a universal phenomenon with social and
regional politics as animosity is shown between Maratha and Brahmins. Tendulkar is of the opinion that society could be reformed by a mass reformation and not by laws of parliament. The same is the case of Ghashiram who protests against the powerful.

The play *Kanyadaan* exposes the social inequalities and gender discrimination in raw form with social tensions due to casteism. The playwright depicted the social tensions and casteism through the inter-caste marriage of a girl named Jyoti from a socially and politically awakened Brahmin family with a boy named Arun from a lower class Dalit family. Arun inflicts violence and cruelty on Jyoti because of her high class origin. This suffering and misery of Jyoti can be seen as a revenge of a dalit boy against the high castes. Nath the father realizes the hollowness of his idealism after making the life of his daughter hell because she has to face endless humiliations and tortures.

Tendulkar’s protest is against aberrations of Indian society. He shows how diffusion of culture or westernization of culture leads to erosion of Indian ethical values which, in turn, paves way to cultural crisis. Tendulkar protests against these in his plays. He protests against the unlimited freedom sought by the individuals. This results in tensions among the family members and society which leads to intolerance. No one is ready to give space and freedom to others irrespective of class, caste, creed or gender. The playwright protests against the loose morals and hypocritical characters. The impact of modernization and industrialization on urban society makes them follow escapist from reality in their lives. This leads to develop bad habits such as drug addiction which has given rise to criminalization and the graph of crime increases rapidly. This further aggravates the situation because it adds to inter-caste, inter-class and inter-regional disparities. Various vested interests among the politicians have led to aggravate the grim situation of considerable gap between the rich and the poor in the country. Due to westernization and its impact people are unable to discriminate between right or wrong. The playwright satirizes the hypocrisy of the ruling class, religious institutions and the media, thereby, making his drama of dissent an apt vehicle for voicing the collective experiences of the subaltern classes. The tradition bound world is in conflict with the modern one, as the old patterns of behaviour no longer seem to be acceptable.
Tendulkar registers various types of protest against the ills and inadequacies of society, individuals, institutions of family, caste system and class, gender discrimination, man-woman relationship, adultery, female foeticide, slavery of women. Protest is against gender relations and woman subjugation. He protests against failures and frustration of human relationships. It is against sexual oppression and social ostracisation, socialization patterns and gender roles, gender domination and patriarchy. It is against attitude of men towards women. It is against gradual loss of charm of the family as an institution. Protest is against system as a whole. Protest is through language; gestures and setting. It is silent, individual to individual, and individual to society, circumstances, violent protest, protests against marginalized, protest against Brahmanism. Sarita protests through language, when she refuses to go to party with Jai Singh. She protests against all supporting patriarchy, suppression of women. She protests against Jai Singh, her husband. She protests against the circumstances which make her life miserable and which leads to the firing of her husband from the job. She protests against the psychological violence which she has undergone when she becomes aware about the barrenness. The exploiters use force, intrigue and manipulation in exploiting the weak. Tendulkar protests against the system as a whole.

Tendulkar’s plays have been critically examined by a numbers of critics from different perspectives. N.S. Dharan in *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar* has analysed the various issues taken up by Tendulkar in the form of structure and technique. In his analysis, he talks of typical Indian women, violence and idealism but he hardly makes any serious attempt to comprehensively reveal the working of this phenomenon in human life. Dharan discerns that the plays of Tendulkar are full of irony and satire. He used unconventional dramatic techniques in his plays and observes, “Structurally, both *Silence!* and *Kamala* are free from any easily recognizable flaw, and both are compact …. There are elements of surprise and suspense in them which make the spectator sit on edge, eagerly looking forward to the next turn of events” (Dharan 66). He further delves deep into the thematic study of major plays of Tendulkar translated in English. He focuses his analysis on various aspects of Tendulkar’s plays briefly.
Shailaja B. Wadikar in *Vijay Tendulkar: A Pioneer Playwright* takes up the issues of individual freedom and social norms in naturalistic vein. How the various issues of life “by and large, focused, not on the happy, gleeful aspects of life but on the human weaknesses, follies, and foibles. He (Tendulkar) intends to make people conscious of their vices and limitations and, directly or indirectly, or even secretly wants them to mend their ways” (2). Wadikar studies various types of violence in Tendulkar’s plays. He reveals “the psychological turmoil in the character’s mind” (7). She compares him to Harold Pinter and Edward Albee in the absurdian terms. In Tendulkar’s *Kanyadaan*, the character Nath dreams of “egalitarian, humanitarian society where human beings are treated as human beings, and not as animals” (26) where caste-barriers are to abolish through inter-caste marriages. In the play *A Friend’s Story* lesbian relations are explored through the character of Mitra who “is portrayed as having physical hormonal imbalance” (28). These types of characters are not accepted in society as “she is abnormal, but her gestures, features, mannerisms also suggest it” (29). The playwright exposes “satanic tendencies of human nature through” the play *The Vultures*. Wadikar searches out that “violence is the part and parcel of the day-to-day life” (112) in Indian society.

Anita Myles wrote about the feministic attitude of Tendulkar in his plays in her book, *Contemporary Indian English Drama: An Overview*. In the play *Kamala* (1981), he “depicts the deplorable state of women who are treated as mere objects to be bartered, bought and sold” (Myles 87). She depicts how women fight tooth and nail for their survival. In *The Vultures*, Rama is depicted as the “epitome of compassion and emotional support even though it comes with a price” (Myles 95). In *Encounter in Umbugland*, the princess Vijaya depends on her attendant Prannarayan for getting emotional and moral support. In *Kanyadan* (1983), Jyoti at last seems to confirm that “marital and social experiences teach her that it is almost impossible to change either people or society” (Myles 103). She is unable to fill the gap of modernist and traditional casteless society of Dalit and Brahmins.

Anshul Chandra writes in “Vijay Tendulkar: A Critical Survey of his Dramatic World” that Tendulkar “has scanned the life-world of contemporary Indian in order to identify the sources and nature of the violence” (157) in his plays. Indulekha Roy
Burman in “Man-Woman Relationship in The Sakharam Binder” asserts the power of a lady like Laxmi “from a meek to a murderous lady who performs religious rites and homicide with considerable aplomb, deflates the ego-centric male-power in the play” (167). Neeru Tandon in “A Biographical Sketch of Tagore and Tendulkar” focuses on the brief history and works of both Rabindra Nath Tagore and Vijay Tendulkar. P. Obulla Reddy in “Power and Cruelty in Ghashiram Kotwal” writes about violence which exposes “the cruelty and lack of principles in the rulers and their subjects” (83). G. Mallikarjuna, in “Ghashiram Kotwal: A Study” briefly points out violence, and position of women in Indian society. He writes that “Tendulkar has explored the psyche of Ghashiram to the extent of revealing the hidden sense of failure haunting his life” (85). N. Rama Devi in “Ghashiram Kotwal: Folk Theatre” writes about the use of elements of folk theatre in Ghashiram Kotwal by the playwright to meet his aim of jolting the audience from their unconsciousness and to make them see the inevitable change. S.G. Bhanegaonkar in “Depiction of Politics, Police, and Prostitution in Ghashiram Kotwal” depicts the evils and corruption prevalent in politics and police. Geeta Kumar in “The Play of Power-Politics in Ghashiram Kotwal” writes that only king has all powers to manipulate the weak and use them for his own convenience. It is true in relation to the powerful and the weak. Prahlad A. Kulkarni in, “Ghashiram Kotwal: A Reassessment” writes that, “Tendulkar shows the demoralized society, probably of his own times. When constraints of civilization and culture are removed, the beast inside the man peeps out and crawls in the society” (114). D.K. Pabby in “Challenging the Canons: A Study of Ghashiram Kotwal” writes about the thematic aspects of Ghashiram Kotwal. Shailaja B. Wadikar in “Power as a Theme in Ghashiram Kotwal” writes about this play as a satire. Satish Barbuddhe in “Ghashiram Kotwal: The Mechanics of Power” writes that women are used as a stepping stone in the game of power and irrationalism is the device of power.

Veena Noble Dass in “Women Characters in the Plays of Tendulkar” writes in New Directions in Indian Drama: With Special Reference to the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad that Tendulkar depicts “the status of a women, her dominance and her influence in the present-day society ruled by male
chauvinists” (14). She writes about poor and middle-class women and takes up the issues faced by these women such as pregnancy without wedlock, exploitation and subjugation. Geeta Kumar in “Portrayal of Women in Tendulkar’s Shantata Court Chalu Ahe and Sakharam Binder” observes that the plays depict the strongest women of the seventies, who face society in its crudest form. It is proved “that Tendulkar has created these three unique women characters in Shantata Court Chalu Ahe and Sakharam Binder. E. Renuka in “Casanova as the Saviour: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar’s Sakharam Binder” writes about the autobiographical element of Tendulkar reflected in Sakharam Binder. Nishant D. Mirajkar in “Two Recent Plays of Vijay Tendulkar” writes about unique experiences in terms of language and existence of individual in society in To Hell with Destiny and The Tour.

T.R. Muralikrishnan in “Silence! The Court is in Session: The Muted Spaces of Violence Camouflaged in Camaraderie” included in Indian Drama in English: Some Perspectives writes about the issues of women, their freedom and say in matters of sex and profession and the suffocating male mentality of middle-class society. Shukla Chatterjee and Sukla Basu (Sen) in “The Problem of Identity and Existence in Tendulkar’s A Friend’s Story” observe that Tendulkar writes about the attitude of Indian society regarding lesbianism in the 80s and tries to raise his voice for the gendered identity and hetero-sexuality. He focuses his attention on the Indian Legal system and the suppressed condition of marginalized people who find the society suffocating for them. This play is “a representation and re-presentation of patriarchal society’s embarrassments towards homosexuality” (259). Ashok K. Saini in “Vijay Tendulkar’s Journey towards Self-discovery: Some Reflections” writes about the attitude of middle-class society in Tendukar’s plays. R. Manjushree in “Complexities of Human Relationships in Vijay Tendulkar’s Play” writes about social problems in the plays of Tendulkar.

Sudha Rai in “Gender Crossings: Vijay Tendulkar’s Deconstructive Axis in Sakharam Binder, Kamala and Kanyadan” probes violence in different relations and “issues of caste and gender identity, caught in essentialisms of one kind or the other, cemented by the elites in Indian society, and internalized by the subjugated too” (112) and “hypocrisy within the patriarchal institution of marriage” (106) seems the theme
of these plays. Nishi Upadhyaya in “Vulnerable Victims: Vijay Tendulkar’s Kamala” writes about females as weak and vulnerable who are to be protected by the males. “Tendulkar raises certain cardinal questions regarding the value system of a modern success oriented generation who are ready to sacrifice human values even in the name of humanity itself” (251).

V.B. Deshpande in “Vijay Tendulkar’s Contribution to Indian Drama” explores “apparently simple and straightforward people “turn violent, how they come to love, hate and envy each other” (19) while depicting the inter-personal relations and “makes us feel the complexity of the middle class mentality and behaviour. These men are simple and rough, persons that one would meet next door” (19). V.B. Deshpande writes on the growth of Tendulkar as a playwright and the issues he has included in his plays. Maya Pandit in “Representation of Family in Modern Marathi Plays: Tendulkar, Dalvi and Elkunchwar” writes about the gendered representation of characters, the differences and subjugations they enjoy. “Family becomes the site not only of the subjugation of women. It emerges as the space where they will be inevitably destroyed. The omnipotence of family is maintained by state and also by the capitalist culture and rigid caste” (71).

Catherine Thankamma in “Women that Patriarchy Created: The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani and Mahasweta Devi” writes that women are depicted weak by Tendulkar because they have certain limitations. Thankamma writes that Kamala, Laxmi, Benare, Champa, Kamalabai, Sarita, Rama and Manik represent the women who “have to limit themselves to the circle of restraint that confines them. According to differences in background—social, economic, educational—the circumference may be greater or lesser but the restraining” (84) force is always present to the make cheques. Tendulkar discerns through his characters the realistic portrayal or “the worldview that gets projected” (85) in his plays. “Ghashiram Kotwal’s exploitation of his daughter may be the result of his feelings of anger and bitterness against society; Sakharam Binder’s gross physicality and aggression may be inevitable in a repressed, conservative society” (85). Kalindi Deshpande in “Capitulation to Conservatism: Vijaya Tendulkar’s Women Characters” writes that Tendulkar is under impression of reformatory movements when he made “the
accusing finger of Leela Benare at the males in society in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, the strong challenge to manhood in the form of Champa in *Sakharam Binder*, the dumb sorrow of Lalita Gauri the victim of power struggle between her ambitious father and Nana Phadnavis, the almost animal like screams of Manik in *The Vultures*” (88). Kalindi comes out with the analysis that in post war period throughout the world individualism is getting great heights and it has reciprocally affected the family and society. Individualism gives rise to aloofness, cruelty and violence. The plays like *Sakharam Binder*, *The Vultures* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* sent tremors in the lives of conservative society of 1970s. Tendulkar discerns that not only women characters but the weak also helplessly submit to the injustice, violence and exploitations.

N.S. Dharan in “Salient Structural Features of *Silence! The Court is in Session*” writes that the structure of the play is made up of dialogues which “are characterized by a certain unconventional use of syntax. Most of the utterances are short” (96) and pauses, dots and dashes are frequently used in the play. The language and structure of the sentences are fitted according to the background of characters. The play is “free from any easily recognizable flaw” (97) structurally. The audience enjoys the musicality, pauses, silences, rhythm, theatricality and intellectual delight.

Jyoti Havnukar in “Levity and Seriousness in *Silence! The Court is in Session*” writes that Tendulkar in the beginning of the play introduces the element of fun which later on becomes the serious affair. He sarcastically and ironically fills the atmosphere with damn seriousness when “Coming like a bolt from the blue, Ms Benare is caught completely unawares in this role of the accused” (100). Jyoti Havnukar underlies how “the deeper implications are to expose the way how inferior, mediocre persons … take recourse to such subterfuges as a mock-trial. Cruelty, laced with fun and farce becomes all the more cruel. The “wanton boys” like Sukhatme and Ponkshe have their “sport” but in the process, they “kill” beautiful butterflies like Benare” (104).

Vijaya Mardhekar in “Encounter in Umbugland: A Play of Power-Politics” studies the nature of human beings, their hypocrisy and usual fierce struggle for power. “The power struggle that ensues after the death of the king replicates the tug-
of-war, not after Nehru’s but Shashtriji’s death. The choice of Vijaya as the compromise candidate refers to the choice of Indira Gandhi, Nehru’s daughter, by the Congress Party bosses” (107). The critic emphasizes the role of diplomacy in life. Like chastised school boys, the ministers turn to their old, obsequious ways and start addressing her as “Her Majesty” (108). Vijaya is caricatured as strong ruler but she gets guidelines from Prannarayan who selflessly always stands by her. “Vijays asks him about the paradox of his words being that of a man but the viewpoint that of a mother” (111).

A.P. Dani in “Vijay Tendulkar’s Gidhade (The Vultures) and John Webster’s The Duchess of Malfi” writes that this play produced in “May 1970 and published in 1971, is a dramatization of deep-seated unmitigated depravity, perversity, greed and diabolic villainy reflected in the ravenous members of a middle class family. These characters symbolizing diabolic villainy reflected in the ravenous members of a middle-class family” (113). The dramatic structure noticed by Dani in Tendulkar’s The Vultures is with “poetic brevity and cadences of free verse” (114). The family shown in The Vultures by Tendulkar is full of corruption, dilapidated, low morals and intolerance, with psychic characters (raving mangalomaniacs). He finds similarities in Tendulkar’s The Vultures and John Webster’s The Duchess of Malfi (1613) in respect of “the theme, the imagery accentuating the thematic structure and the characterisation” (118). The inevitable misery and suffering are depicted in both these plays.

V.M. Madge in “Sakharam Binder: An Unwitting Deconstruction” writes that Tendulkar has a clear outlook for his characters though it looks ambiguous in the beginning. Through Sakharam Binder, he envisions the modern age with intermix of westernization. The showism can be explored in the character of Sakharam who refers himself in the third person to exalt his position and manners. Tendulker shocks his reader with his unorthodox and dogmatic views, and the hypocrisy of appearance and reality. In the end, this play leads on the way of “Darwinian struggle for survival” (128) from undogmatic path.

Neela Bhalla in “Ghashiram Kotwal: Text and Sub-text” observes that gender differences are easily notable in this play with decadence, cruelty, and sensuality in
the culture of Indian masses while the writer also portrays the Western outlook on the “Indians as exotic, mystical and seductive—as colourful spectacle providers, both during the Rangapanchami festivities and the wedding celebration. It also devalues the Indians” (139) as emotional people. This play is presented as such a controversial and complex where the meaning of the text and subtext cannot be easily drawn. This play is an experiment of various forms such as of folk drama, musicality, revenge and historicity.

Nutan Gosavi in “Kanyadaan: An Expose of Political Progressives” writes that this play comes in the category of “discussion plays of the 1930’s” (153). Tendulkar sarcastically emphasizes “that the parents have really no time for their children” (155) because they are busy in their own lives. Gosavi discerns that children blame their parents even for their own mistakes. Nath as a Gandhian, has the credit of giving away his daughter “in more ways than one. His Kanyadaan has turned out to be a sacrifice of his daughter on the altar of his socio-political ideology” (167).

Veena Noble Dass in “Experiment and Innovation in Modern Indian Drama in Translation: The Plays of Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad” writes about the new styles and themes discovered by Tendulkar. She writes that four plays—Silence! The Court is in Session, The Vultures, Saktharam Binder and Ghashiram Kotwal “are considered as representative plays of the Marathi theatre of cruelty” (70). Tendulkar searches new dimensions of freedom and he writes with full conviction “his concern for modern man’s anguish. That, these plays, so different in content and form, are pointed towards an important human predicament is itself a tribute to the questioning, probing spirit of Tendulkar. The controversies that arose after the performance of many of his plays is a clear proof of his unconventional attitude towards human problems” (70).

Vinita Bhatnagar in “Theatre as Translation: A Performance-based Reading of Ghashiram Kotwal” examines how translation is similar with that of transformation of a dramatic text into a drama on stage. Both of these acts are governed by rule of translation. The responsibility of translator is important because he has to keep intact the message, the structure and rhythm of the original play in the performed translated drama. Amar Nath Prasad in “Ghashiram Kotwal: A Play of Technical Perfection”
writes about the use of music which lessens the grimness of satire and some relief is given to the spectators. The images, symbolism and music are interwoven successfully that the artistic beauty is appreciated by all. Santosh Chakarbari in “Tendulkar’s Dramatic Art in Ghashiram Kotwal” observes that “the myth and reality” (12) and the use of Greek Chorus in the form of Sutradhar and “the innovative use of the Chorus in making it the stage props as well as effecting scene changes” (14) with using “the function of the Chorus of the Marathi folk drama in uttering the refrain, for the sake of emphasizing” (14) gives a unique place to the Tendulkar’s art of dramatization.

Santosh Chakarbari in “Tendulkar’s Dramatic Art in Ghashiram Kotwal” observes that “the myth and reality” (12) and the use of Greek Chorus in the form of Sutradhar and “the innovative use of the Chorus in making it the stage props as well as effecting scene changes” (14) with using “the function of the Chorus of the Marathi folk drama in uttering the refrain, for the sake of emphasizing” (14) gives a unique place to the Tendulkar’s art of dramatization.

Sandhya Saxena in “Ghashiram’s Revenge in the Labyrinths of Power,” Shilpi Rishi Srivastava and Sarika Srivastava in “Ghashiram Kotwal: A Revenge Play” and Ashok Kumar Sharma in “Ghashiram Kotwal: A Study in the Politics of Power and Revenge” study vicious cycle of victim and victimizer; and with the basic nature of human behaviour in the form of Ghashiram. Satish Barbuddhe in “Ghashiram Kotwal: The Mechanics of Power” briefly touches the male hegemony and the use of sexuality in the power structure. M.B. Gaijan in “Ghashiram Kotwal in the Eyes of Audiences” discerns that common masses are used like Ghashiram by political bosses for their own ends. Shailaja B. Wadikar in “Ghashiram Kotwal: An Indian Classic” writes about the use of history, myth, songs and dances and the inter-mix of “the three forms of theatre: the classical, the folk and the modern” (61).

Neeti M. Sadarangani in “The Symphony of Darkness and a Dark Romance: Ghashiram Kotwal and Hayavadana” compares the two plays in their depiction of violence and tragedy in which the “violence in Karnad’s Hayavadana is camouflaged,” (72) while violence in Tendulkar’s Ghashiram Kotwal is “at it’s rawest and ugliest form” (72). M.H. Siddiqui in “Sex, Power and Ambition in Ghashiram Kotwal” observes that this play is a tragedy of power conflict where sex and power are the means to achieve the desired end i.e. ambition. Shrirish Chindhade in “Ghashiram Kotwal: The Play is the Thing” finds that Tendulkar has moulded the theatre to put across his message of “simple skullduggery, spicy entertainment, acrimonious persiflage and venomous maligning of a certain heroic figure in Marathi history” (88) of crossing the limits of time and space to reveal the working of power.
Shailaja B. Wadikar in “The Theme of Casteism in Vijay Tendulkar’s *Kanyadan*” depicts that caste-barriers are broken by individuals in order to resolve the caste conflicts. Shilpi Rishi Srivastava in “*Kanyadan: The Admission of Defeat and Intellectual Confusion*” notices that some issues are compromised while trying to contribute to form the idealistic society without castes. P. Pramila Devi in “Vijay Tendulkar’s *Kamala: The Theatre of Cruelty*” observes that gender discrimination in the form of patriarchy helps in maintaining cruelty in society. “So, man is either a slave to others or oppressor of others” (118). Satish Barbuddhe in “Imposed Silence in *Silence! The Court is in Session*” writes about saving the dogmatic rules of society in man’s domination and taming of Benare. Ram Sharma in “The Trial between the Humanists and the Anti-Humanists in Vijay Tendulkar Play *Silence! The Court is in Session*” writes about the role of society and the personal rights of individuals where humanists believe that no one can interfere in the private life of Benare. Harish Tapadia in “Depiction of Human Viciousness in Vijay Tendulkar’s *The Vultures*” depicts the issues of drunkenness and violence.

Uday Shankar Ojha in “Vijay Tendulkar’s *The Vultures*: A Study of Crude Realism in Post-Colonial Perspectives and Beyond” writes that individualism leads to alienation in this materialistic world where “‘Ye dil mange more’ encapsulates many of the deadly diseases hidden beneath our endless desires” (150) in the forms of violence and misery. Harbir Singh Randhawa in “Vijay Tendulkar’s *His Fifth Woman* –An Insight into Social Reality” highlights the need of economic independence of woman for providing them dignified stature. Bhaskar A. Shukla in “Vijay Tendulkar’s *The Cyclist: A Journey of Life*” writes about “three journeys: geographical, an historical journey of the bicycle, and a psychological exploration” (164). He finds the same cycle of adventure of man’s symbolic journey. Vijay Kumar Sinha in “Feminist Concern in Vijay Tendulkar’s Plays” writes that woman makes “a loud protest against the good old image of ‘an appendage’ or an auxiliary in the male dominated society” (173). She stands for the equal rights and powers which man enjoys.

Shibu Simon in “Man-Woman Relationship in the Plays of Tendulkar” comments that “Women are seen as the plaything of man, reduced to objects which can be bought, sold and traded for” (189) the benefit of the man. Anju Bala Agarwal
in “Dramatic Technique of Vijay Tendulkar’s Plays” writes that Tendulkar explores “extensive use of irony in his plays” (199). In The Vultures, Tendulkar “resorts to almost poetic brevity and cadences of free verse in his prose dialogues” (201).

Subha Tiwari in “Silence! The Court is in Session: A Strong Social Commentary” writes from the feministic perspective that women are not respected as human beings but are taken up as flesh only in this world. Smita Mishra in “Ghashiram Kotwal as a Political Play” writes that corruption and bloodshed are the inherent features of power struggles. Smita Mishra in “An Estimation of Vijay Tendulkar as a Playwright” writes that Tendulkar has a “deep understanding of human psychology” (116) and he exposes oppression and exploitation irrespective of gender in his plays. He experimented different aspects of drama in his plays and portrayed his characters in realistic manner.

The foregoing survey of criticism available on Tendulkar’s plays clearly reveals that the critics have focused mainly on such thematic concerns as violence, exploitation of women and degradation of human relations. There are also not many book length studies on Tendulkar. The critics have consistently and constantly ignored the element of protest so much dominant in Tendulkar’s plays. Till now hardly any study appears to reveal in detail and depth how Tendulkar has transformed a subject like protest in all its different forms in his plays. All the limitations, disparities and gaps of existing studies of Tendulkar need a comprehensive examination of the theatre of protest in its different dimensions. It is a humble attempt to explore and establish the feasibility of probing this neglected aspect of Tendulkar’s plays. The study explains precisely the broad meaning and sense in which the term ‘protest’ has been used in this study. The word protest can be interpreted in varied ways. It includes in itself a variety of ways and means to condemn, defy or oppose or revolt against the variety of distinctions and discriminations done against them or others. It has resulted in a good deal of discussions and debates among psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and scholars of different subjects. Protest does not exist only in physical form but is also expressed verbally and non-verbally through words, gestures, pictures, symbols or raising the voice and with hunger strikes is upheld by Vijay Tendulkar. Protest can be done through a physical action, which is personal,
individual, direct, explicit, expressive or instrumental, predominantly physical, legal, legitimate, and intentional. This explanation is not completely satisfying. Protest is an act of powerful intention, which is willful, which can commit physical harm if committed by an individual or a group against himself or another individual or a group or society or organization or Government or state.

The concept of idea of protest against individuals or larger social groups acquires a new connotation in the form of expression of power or disgust. Protest is not restricted to a particular person or class, rather it is raised by all sorts of individuals whether they are powerful or powerless against authority and conventions. A writer voices protest when he finds various oppressions and their manifestations in various ways in institutions which control and opt irregularities and suppress differences such as those of sexuality and gender, and pushes and punishes those who are indifferent to the margins of society. Protest is against the economic, social, cultural and political structures of the society. Protest can be psychological, cultural, economical, verbal, individual as well as physical. It can include indoctrination, threats and is against the unequal distribution of resources or wealth or victimization. It can lead to individual isolation and loneliness. Generally, protest is against the life denying forces which cause troubles or damages or jeopardizes the health, safety, life and well-being whether mental or physical of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and it includes physical, sexual, verbal and emotional and economic exploitation. It is apparent that protest is discussed in all its different forms, its sources, causes, expressions, aims and its consequences along with different types of victims. However, they help us in understanding and elaborating significant features and dimensions of the phenomenon of protest more precisely. Tendulkar’s treatment of theatre of protest is taken up in physical, psychological, sexual and verbal connotations –expressed through actions, gestures, words, images and signs etc. by individuals, groups or systems.

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter studies the evolution of Indian drama and makes a brief survey of extant criticism on Tendulkar. Chapter two takes up for detailed discussion *Encounter in Umbagland* and *Ghashiram Kotwal* to analyse various paradigms of Indian political system and Tendulkar’s strong protest.
against the corroded and corrupt society and political institutions. The role of Press and politics are also studied in this chapter.

In the third chapter, *Kamala* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* have been taken up to study various forms of Tendulkar’s protest in gender discrimination, violence, man-woman relationships and various other ills afflicting post-independence society.

The fourth chapter discusses Tendulkar’s protest against dysfunctional family relations in *Sakharam Binder* and *The Vultures*.

The last chapter sums up the findings of the study regarding the playwright’s protest over the corrupt and corroded social, political and religious institutions. It also justifies his contribution, achievements and position in the evolution of Indian Drama in English.
WORKS CITED


Chindhade, Shrirish. “Ghashiram Kotwal: The Play is the Thing.” Prasad and Barbuddhe 83-89.


Dani, A.P. “Vijay Tendulkar’s Gidhade (The Vultures) and John Webster’s The Duchess of Malfi.” Madge 113-119.


Deshpande, V.B. “Vijay Tendulkar’s Contribution to Indian Drama.” Madge 18-29.


Dharan, N.S. “Salient Structural Features of Silence! The Court is in Session.” Madge 93-97.


Kumar, Geeta. “Portrayal of Women in Tendulkar’s *Shantata Court Chalu Ahe and Sakharam Binder.*” Pandey and Barua 16-30.


Madge, V.M. “*Sakharam Binder: An Unwitting Deconstruction.*” Madge 120-129.


Miraljkar, Nishant D. “Two recent plays of Vijay Tendulkar.” Pandey and Barua 37-51.


Mishra, Smita. “*Ghashiram Kotwal as a Political Play*” Tiwari 55-69.


Ojha, Uday Shankar. “Vijay Tendulkar’s The Vultures: A Study of Crude Realism in Post-Colonial Perspectives and Beyond.” Prasad and Barbuddhe. 140-152.


Randhawa, Harbir Singh. “Vijay Tendulkar’s His Fifth Woman –An Insight into Social Reality.” Prasad and Barbuddhe 153-158.


Renuka, E. “Casanova as the Saviour: A study of Vijay Tendulkar’s Sakharam Binder.” Pandey and Barua. 31-36.

Sadarangani, Neeti M. “The Symphony of Darkness and a Dark Romance: Ghashiram Kotwal and Hayavadana.” Prasad and Barbuddhe. 63-73.


Sharma, Ram. “The Trial between the Humanists and the Anti-Humanists in Vijay Tendulkar Play Silence! The Court is in Session.” Prasad and Barbuddhe 125-129.


Shukla, Bhasker A. “Vijay Tendulkar’s The Cyclist: A Journey of Life.” Prasad and Barbuddhe 159-167.

Siddiqui, M.H. “Sex, Power and Ambition in Ghashiram Kotwal.” Prasad and Barbuddhe 74-82.


Tapadia, Harish. “Depiction of Human Viciousness in Vijay Tendulkar’s The Vultures.” Prasad and Barbuddhe 130-139.


Wadikar, Shailaja B. “Power as a Theme in Ghashiram Kotwal.” Babu 121-124.
