Chapter - IV

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar and Caryl Churchill are the notable playwrights in the land they lived and wrote. The plays of Tendulkar are primarily written in Marathi and later on translated into English. The second is a British woman playwright who wrote in English. Both of them attempted to expose the devilish aspects of their societies, which was based on power relations. A critical analysis has been attempted on the plays of Tendulkar are: Silence! The Court is in Session (1967), Kamala (1981), Sakaram Binder (1972) and Kanyaadan (1983). The plays of Caryl Churchill taken for consideration are Cloud Nine (1978), Top Girls (1981), Vinegar Tom (1976) and Owners (1972). This chapter aims at unveiling the social taboos and norms, running underneath various facades in Indian and British contexts.

Since human features are similar all over the world the expression of human nature is obligated to have deep seated similarities and affinities. Language, tradition and culture might be different, whereas human attitude is essentially the same in all over the world. Through this comparative study an attempt is made on the similarities and dissimilarities of the plays selected. Due to the circumstances, environment and language differences; there are similarities that can be considered as the common heritage of human being. It helps to find out the inter-relationships of the various people having different culture, tradition and languages.
The present chapter is a comparative study of the two prolific great dramatists named Vijay Tendulkar and Caryl Churchill in the modern drama. Their plays present some universal issues such as the exploitation of woman, her suppressed voice, the power politics, caste and class discrimination...etc. Moreover, the plays understudy deals with the issues like gender prejudice, corruption in politics, and marginalization of people. By exposing these social ills both the playwrights try to show the hollowness of the contemporary society. The popular belief that underestimates humanity has been completely exposed by them in the plays taken for the study.

Notwithstanding the huge difference between their societies, still one can notice that there is no much change in the position of woman who is considered as the marginalized being. Noticeably, patriarchy can’t be separated from the structure of the society concerned. Woman’s oppression is considered as one of the most important themes of their writing. Both the playwrights consider family as the basic training station of the patriarchy.

The select plays depict a pattern of development and change in terms of the place assigned to the woman. The picture that emerges through shows what woman’s status in her respective society is and the nature of the freedom she enjoys. The writers try to present the biased attitude of the society particular. The projection of the characters is made in tune with the temper of the time. It is a gender- based critique of the works. It is, therefore, a male and a female writer has been selected.

Gender plays an important role in the lives of human being. Since the early beginning, humans learned to follow a constructed code. An Individual is forced to fit into gender roles. Thus, they are forced to experience life differently. The work is an attempt to study the representation of woman by male playwright to see whether or not the
male playwright is able to give an accurate reflection of the woman's experience. It is believed that male playwright cannot write about woman sincerely as woman could, since man and woman experience life differently. Man didn't experience life as woman dose. For investigation, the researcher has studied the representation of woman in eight dramas, four British dramas in English by female playwright and four Indian dramas in English by male playwright. By studying different cultures through different perspectives one can understand whether the gender of the writer affects her/ his representation of woman and whether the male writer could represent a female point of view genuinely.

This study focuses on the analyses of the woman's position in the selected plays. The plays present a woman who incorporates all the patriarchal values. She is shown as victim. The aim of the playwrights under study is to make social change by portraying such subjugated and oppressed woman character. They depict the real picture of the patriarchal society and try to sensitize the audience and readers with the established social and economic norms.

Woman has been fighting for equal opportunities and status since time immemorial. Through the select plays, the dramatists depict some rebellious women characters, who try to reshape their lives. They challenge the present norms and try to revolt against the injustice. They demand for their right to live respectably in the society.

This study focuses on the social construction of gender. Throughout history woman is oppressed in different ways – socially, emotionally and psychologically. Woman is not given the same privileges and opportunities as man does. Due to the physical reality, woman is subjected to the male violence and abuse. She is not encouraged to challenge any kind of gender discrimination, marginalization and oppression. If she does, she deserves to be isolated, punished and killed. The playwrights
successfully depict such truths through their characters. They have depicted woman’s oppression and suffering. At the same time she has been provided with a space legitimate.

The modern theatre has played a vital role in exploring such issues and bringing them to the public considerations. The aim is more for social change rather than just entertainment. The well-known feminist writer Elaine Aston says that:

....theatre practice can help women to see their lives politically: to raise awareness of oppression and to encourage women’s creativity (Aston 2)

The playwrights understudy, attempt to articulate woman’s issues in their plays. Woman has been presented as a person with potential. The works also highlight the issues related to woman such as gender inequality, sexuality and social identities. The focus is on the woman’s suffering in the patriarchal society, and man’s aggressiveness towards her. For instance, Tendulkar’s Silence! The Court is in Session is a play that explores issues related to the oppressed young woman living alone and struggling against all odds to express her relevance. Therefore, the notable feminist scholar Helene Keyssar points out:

.....each woman’s battle for strength and survival inspires the others and points to deep social structures that support patriarchy and women’s own weak self-image. (Keyssar 133)

In fact, the establishment of different theatre companies in Britain provided ample space for the feminist playwrights to put forth the issues of woman. This opportunity yielded the natural potentialities of woman. It sent a positive massage in the society about the worth and value of woman. Caryl Churchill is one of the important playwrights in Britain who wrote for such cause. Moreover, she is considered as one of the first foremost female playwrights in England who paved a feminist style of
drama. She focuses on some important issues like subjugation of woman, social roles and woman’s position in society. The feminist playwrights such as Megan Terry, Pam Gem and Caryl Churchill portray woman as the central character with a complete absence of man on stage. It was an attempt to deconstruct the gender concept. Their aim is to dismiss the role of man in shaping a new woman. Caryl Churchill has exposed the social construction of woman throughout history. Churchill’s Top Girls, Vinegar Tom, Owners and Cloud Nine are the best examples that highlight the reconstruction of gender in the patriarchal society. The feminist theatre groups established to focus on women’s issues. The feminist writer Godiwalla declares that:

With the gradual incorporation of women in all walks of life came the awareness of women’s issues in mainstream theatre; as more and more women wrote for the mainstream, the interest in a ghettoized women’s theatre diminished. (Godiwalla 52)

Churchill’s association with Joint Stock Theatre group and Monstrous Regiment Theatre group had helped her to use new theatrical devices and concepts for the dialogue related to issues of woman. Her works bring to notice that woman can survive and assert though the milieu is hostile. It propagated among the oppressed women a feeling of hope that they can reconstruct their lives on their own terms and conditions. It had a positive impact on the negative mentality of woman.

Tendulkar’s and Churchill’s plays are the result of the dramatists truly living in and experiencing their time and place. Besides, the events that happened in either playwright’s life time repeatedly influenced the works they produced. It is important to recognize that it is more a reflection of ideas floating around in the society than a conscious attempt to circulate feminist theory.
In the plays of the dramatists understudy one finds different types of women. Kamala, Mrs. Kashikar, Laxmi, Joyce and Suzan who are absolutely docile, submissive and subservient women. Betty, Benara, Jyoti and Sarita are educated, modern and relatively more voiced, more free, but still are bound and tied to the expected norms of women. Marion, Marlene, and Champa are freer by being ruthless and cruel. They have become aggressive as men are.

Through her plays, Churchill highlights the arbitrariness of gender roles and its formation. The effect of it on the individual has also been shown perfectly. She uses an interesting strategy to manifest the arbitrary notion of gender roles through the cross-gender character which shows how gender is a constructed ideology. By using such technique, she attempts to stress the assumption that gender is not a natural ideology and result of physical difference.

Women characters are either trapped in patriarchal structure or temperament. As we see in the plays of Churchill that women pretend to be liberated, but in fact they are not. Added to this they represent the worst kind of oppression when they imitate the male counterpart. To liberate society and woman from all odd norms there is a need to remove power division and replace brutality and callousness with equality and love. Moreover, mutual understanding is very important.

The thesis aims to meet the woman’s needs and presents the concepts, terminology, problems, and opportunities that construct gender politics. The use and misuse of power to continue the violence against woman has been a frequent theme in Vijay Tendulkar and Caryl Churchill’s plays. The environment might be changed and different but the violence of power and its operational mode is similar with both the writers. This constitutes the massage of their works selected.
Tendulkar’s Kanayadan pictures the suffering of a high class wife at the hand of a Dalit husband. Vinegar Tom pictures the plight of poor women in the seventeen century British era. By shedding light on the plight of low and poor women, both dramatists affirm that their position is worst as they cannot escape from the punishment. Thus, both, Tendulkar and Churchill are social realists.

Like Tendulkar, Churchill also pictures the marginal position of women and their struggle against exploitation dealing with the issues, such as gender inequality, class-conflict and violence. Besides, they highlight the woman's contribution in the continuation of her subjugation. Tendulkar highlights the plight of middle class- woman in the contemporary India whereas Churchill depicts experiences of women not related to the contemporary time but women belonging to different times and places.

These dramatists portray that human relations have no value in comparison with success and money. For instance, in Top Girls, Marlene left her daughter and her family to achieve success. She scarifies human relation to achieve her aims. In Kamala, Jaisingh uses Kamala, a poor woman, as a ladder to achieve promotion. The hegemonic power between man and woman is effectively highlighted in their plays. Frederic Engels claims that woman’s oppression arose hand in hand with the rise of a class society. Tendulkar and Churchill clarify how the imbalanced power relations between man and woman are frequently encouraged by a strict family structure determined by the patriarchal customs. The violation of it would result in violence. Next, their plays depict recognition of the bond of sisterhood as an effective political instrument for better change.

The plays understudy shows a pattern of change and development in terms of the place given to the women. It is important to examine the treatment given to women characters in the plays selected. Women have
always been at disadvantageous position on social, economical and political fronts. Through the women characters these dramatists try to delineate gender issues. They have given a comprehensive view of life with equal emphasis on both male and female characters. They want to eliminate the gender discrimination and advocate the true liberation of woman in a patriarchal society. However, the Indian culture seems to be more oppressive to woman than that of the British culture.

Churchill attempts to generalize about patriarchy across cultures. Apparently, man and woman are responsible for woman’s oppression. Man through his patriarchal practices and woman through her passivity and acceptance participate in strengthening the patriarchal system. The oppression of woman varies according to the culture, society, class and race. Tendulkar spells out these societal issues as they are in reality, whereas, Churchill goes further; she reaches out for a solution to them.

5.2 Marriage and Society

Marriage is the reward that society gives to the ideal woman. If she crosses the social norms, no one will be ready to take risk and marry her. Woman must meet the expectations of society. According to the patriarchal ideology woman’s existence is defined by her relation to the man. A woman should be either married or a widow or waiting for a husband. Woman learns from the early childhood that she should keep her body chaste, remain virgin for her husband. She doesn’t have right on her own body. In such society, woman’s existence is denied as an independent human being. She must relate to man otherwise deserve to be called “whore”:

Man : A whore? Take a whore with me?
Alice : I’m not that.
Man : What are you then? What name would you put to yourself? You’re not a wife or a widow. You’re not
a virgin. Tell me a name for what you are? (Churchill 137)

For example, in Vinegar Tom Alice’s sexuality is not accepted by the society. She is punished for that. Through her conversation with the man, she reveals her rebellious attitude toward the entire system. Likewise, in Silence! The Court is in Session Miss Benare’s violation is not accepted and she also is punished.

No memento of your sin should remain for future generations. Therefore this court hereby sentences that you shall live. But the child in your womb shall be destroyed. (Tendulkar 119)

The plays understudy dramatizes that it is difficult for a woman in any patriarchal society to live as an individual. It pictures the powerlessness of a woman. In the patriarchal society, woman cannot enjoy sex without being married. If she does it she is considered as odd and dirty and deserves all bad adjectives. No one is ready to accept woman as human being who has vices as well virtues. Woman is identified by her body, not by her intelligence and knowledge. Woman is a victim due to acceptance and practice of the ideology. Patriarchy succeeds in imbibing on woman to internalize this ideology and look at themselves as mere bodies and as the object of entertainment rather than independent individuals. The unconventional woman is not acceptable in the patriarchal society by either sex. For example, in Vinegar Tome, Churchill presents Susan as a traditional woman who internalizes the patriarchal ideology about herself and about other transgressed women. Though she is Alice best friend, she abuses her saying:

No one’s going to marry you because they know you here. That’s why you say you don’t to be married- because no one’s going to ask you round here, because they know you. (Churchill 119)
Alice is a rebellious woman who has illegitimate child. It is absolutely forbidden in the patriarchal society. Benare is another character who has conceived child in her womb and refuses to abort it. It is safe to assume that woman with loose character is an easy victim to be exploited and abused in male dominated society. Since the early childhood of any girl, mother prepares the daughter for the marriage. A girl is considered as a guest in her father home, and her real home is her husband’s. Woman is born to be a wife and a mother. She must endure restrictions on her being and body. She has no voice in determining / selecting her life partner or profession.

The plays selected show how woman is prisoner to different ideologies. She has to stay home to be safe. Noticeably, though it is said that home is the best place for woman, but here too, she is not safe. Incidents of domestic violence, abuse, and murder are abundant in our society. In a patriarchal society man is supposed to be respectable and is given more value than that of woman. Such kind of policy and discrimination helps to silent and marginalize the woman.

Marriage is a basic institution that forms the structure of society. It should consist of understanding, love, respect and cooperation from both the sides. But in reality, since from the beginning man tries to dominate his woman. His arbitrary and violent behavior is supported by the society on account of his being head of the family. Unconsciously man does all these because of the social system and in order to be acceptable as a man in the power system. Society always treats women as “other” and gives them only the subservient roles.

The destiny of unconventional woman is tragic death. All of them face the same tragic and unhappy ending. For example, Champa in Sakharam Binder meets her end tragically. Alice and all other unconventional women in Vinegar Tom meet the same tragic end. Such
characters are the victims of the social condition they live in. They are the woman victim without vice. The culprits that victimize them thrive in the name of religion and culture.

The dramatists selected depict the fact that the oppressor of woman is not only man but woman also. For example, Goody, Margery, Susan, Laxmi, Mrs. Kashikar and Marion are the causes for other women's suffering. They are the victims of patriarchal mind-set. Both the playwrights depict family as the place where woman has been made fit for exploitation. Moreover, marriage is a privileged section of society where woman is oppressed and exploited. Unconsciously, woman becomes a slave of her master rather than a partner or human being.

I was asleep. I was unconscious even when I was awake. Kamala wake me up with a shock. Kamala showed me everything. Because of her, I suddenly saw things clearly. I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. I have no right at all in this house. Because I 'am a slave. (Tendulkar 46)

Marriage is not based on love but rather on power position. Woman is made to suppress her individuality and work for man's wishes and needs. In Kamala, Sarita does all things relate to her husband. In his absence, she is scared of him if she doesn't do the things the way he wants her to do. Through their dialogues one finds the hollowness in their relation. It is loveless life continued in the name of certain tradition. Tendulkar presents Sarita's position as many stereotype Indian women. Woman's position for a considerable time-span has remained inferior to her male counterpart.

After marriage, woman becomes a slave to her husband. Her personality and dignity ceases after marriage. She has to be submissive to her husband. She does all duties relate to her husband's family very faithfully. Though, Jaisingh, the husband has servants, he gets pleasure in making his wife work for him. He takes it as his natural right. She
performs her duties perfectly as an efficient housekeeper and as a good wife. In fact, women themselves are the prisoners of these ideologies. Tendulkar through the plays selected highlights man’s dominance over woman in different situations to demonstrate how gender and power are associated with each other.

Husband wants wife only for his domestic comfort, sexual enjoyment and also for social companionship. Sarita puts all her energy and life to support her husband. She contributes to see her husband as a successful professional whereas she remains at home powerless. To be a wife in a patriarchal society, woman must adjust, compromise and self-sacrifice for the happiness of her husband and his family. The valuation of man and devaluation of woman is effectively highlighted in the plays of the authors in question. A woman in order to be an ideal has to suppress the desires and at the same time support the desires of her man.

Sarita cannot enjoy any sort of authority in her house; she has to ask her husband’s approval for everything. She has to bear all kinds of degradation to keep her position in society as a married woman. She must be patient when he scolds or humiliates her for any reason because he is a master, and the owner. He has right to become nervous and get out of control whenever he wants. At the same time, man denies woman’s right to become angry and get out of control. Likewise, In Cloud Nine Betty’s intention is to meet her husband’s expectations as she declares:

I live for Clive. The whole aim of my life
Is to be what he looks for in a wife (Churchill 251)

Like Jaisingh, Clive struggles to control and shape his wife the way he wants her to be.

My wife is all I dreamt a wife should be,
and everything she is she owes to me. (Churchill 251)
Moreover, there is a sort of repetition of the views passed down from one generation to the other. It is a set of rules and norms. For instance, when Betty tells her mother, Maud, that she feels bored for being idle at home and just waiting for her husband who is busy in his work, Maud gives her daughter a piece of advice to be patient, be a good wife and meet society’s expectation.

Betty you have to learn to be patient, I am patient. My mama was very patient. (Churchill 258)

This ideology has been aptly presented by Butler in the first chapter of Gender Trouble thus:

Gender is not just a process, but it is a particular type of process, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame. (qtd in Salih 63)

It shows the co-relationship between one’s gender and pattern of behavior. The character of Maud in Cloud Nine stands for the patriarchal values. She is submissive to her man, since she believes in his supremacy. She acknowledges the supremacy of male gender and inferiority of female gender. The same lessons she embarks to her daughter. She thinks that if her Betty if behaves according to the patriarchal norms, her life would be secure. It shows how woman constructs and contributes the oppression and exploitation of other woman. The mother and the daughter seems to have been internalized the stereotypical image of woman. This social temper has been aptly presented by Zalwski remarks in this regard that:

.....what gets associated with men and masculinity is generally given a higher value than things associated with women and femininity. (Zalewski 11-12)

Both the playwrights portray the helplessness of human being before destiny and fate. Human being feels helpless and frustrated because he/she can’t change his/her destiny. In Kanyadaan, Tendulkar
depicts that after marriage for a woman it is very difficult to change her decision or turn back. Jyoti’s mother says that:

Saying something is easy, but doing it is very difficult .... And later there is no chance for a woman to hide or to run away. (Tendulkar 509)

Woman should take the responsibility of her own decision. Tendulkar portrays Jyoti as a strong woman who is able to challenge and take the whole responsibility of the consequences of her action. She replies: “It doesn’t seem to me that I would run away” (Tendulkar 509).

In a failed marriage woman is only the victim and she has to pay the cost of her failure or for her bad luck. Society holds woman responsible for her failure. In such society everyone puts blame on woman, that she doesn’t meet the social expectation. So, she has to be punished and man will be allowed to get another woman. In many cases, he can get a younger and more beautiful partner than his ex-wife. On the other hand, no one asks the man about the failure in marriage. He is free to go and exploit another victim. Man sees woman as something inferior and changeable item. Her duty is obey him.

5.3 Woman and Religion

Across cultures, religion has been used to oppress woman. It evaluates man and devaluates woman. Under religious norms, woman is doubly oppressed, due to religious misperception and man’s domination. Man is superior to all religious practices. It seems that everybody in society accepts the status without raising any question. It makes man superior, dominator, aggressive and selfish. On the other hand, woman internalizes this ideology and believes in man’s superiority and her inferiority. She must relate to man. Man accepts his superiority over woman and woman accepts her inferiority. Woman is degraded and humiliated by socio-cultural practices and beliefs. It alienates her from the society; which denies her the right to exist. It doesn’t give her any
opportunity to use her experience, capabilities and serve the society. Such a social system is created and maintained in the name of religion. It legitimizes exploitation of woman through giving arbitrary power to the masculine gender.

Tendulkar and Churchill attempt to show how religion is used to suppress and devalue woman. The misinterpretation of religion leads to woman’s suppression. Besides, man has awarded the power to shape and reshape nature, law, religion, culture, tradition, society, and woman for his own benefits. In other words, the dramatists attempt to show how religion is used as an instrument to repress and subjugate woman and at the same time it supports and strengthens man.

5.4 Socialization in the Family

The noted feminist writer Millet in her book Sexual Politics argues that family is the chief institution of patriarchy. It imbibes on its members to internalize the patriarchal ideology. Through such socialization, both sexes acquire the patriarchal policies and become a part of it.

Every moment of the child’s life is a clue to how he or she must think and behave to attain or satisfy the demands which gender places upon one. (Millet 12)

Millet further states:

Sexual politics obtains consent through the “socialisation” of both sexes to basic patriarchal polities with regard to temperament, role, and status” (Millet 26)

Likewise, another noted feminist writer Beauvoir in her book The Second Sex says that woman is not born but made. It means that our biological sex as male or female determines our identity in society. Gender discrimination is not natural but artificial and imposed. A just –society can be had the rough teaching different ideas and ideologies. Differences are not meant for discrimination. The tone in the plays taken up for study echoes the same philosophy. Effectively, Churchill depicts gender as a
social construction throughout her plays by using some theatrical devices such as cross gender casting, cross-dressing and role reversals. Showing a man in a woman’s attire is not technical only but intentional and philosophical. It enables the character to understand the other, and at the same time the stereotyped formation of personhood is challenged. She makes such massage clear and strong through using such techniques. Like Butler, Churchill wants to prove that gender is socially constructed.

Churchill skillfully succeeds to prove that gender is illusion and not reality by using different theatrical devices. Therefore, a character that appears to be feminine is actually masculine and vice versa. The use of such techniques emphasizes that gender is something constructed and not natural. This sort of imitation shows that gender is constructed in specific condition and not real identity. Butler in her book Gender Troubles asserts that:

Gender proves to be per formative – that is constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed…. There is not gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is per formatively constituted by the very “expression” that are said to be its results. (Butler 25)

The play Silence! The Court is in Session depicts the theme of corruption in administration. Kamala depicts the theme how the politicians use their power over society. Vinegar Tom is about the oppression of the powerless women who suffer daily under the patriarchal institutions. The women characters in the play who attempt to go against the set patriarchal code of behavior meet a tragedy. The massage is that woman should remain submissive and voiceless.

The prominent concerns that emerge through the plays are the exposure of the institutions such as marriage, culture and religion and to create awareness among the vulnerable women. Simultaneously, the
works expose the hollowness of the superiority of a particular gender and the uneven relationship between man and woman. To restate, this idea turns around the women’s dilemma that most women in the patriarchal society, at vital moment in their lives, are oppressed, humiliated and controlled by certain patriarchal norms. A woman’s body and work is controlled by marriage while her mind, her spirituality and morality is controlled by the religion.

While depicting the institution of marriage both the dramatists show how the relations between husband and wife are affected by power. The physical and verbal abuse of the one by the other shows the deep-rootedness of the master-slave mentality. In addition to the oppression generated by marriage itself, their female characters suffer further by having husbands allied with other patriarchal institutions as well. It can be said that religion plays an important role in shaping a person’s perception and decision whereas it affects the life and destiny of the other. It has the most pervasive influence on culture and societies throughout centuries. In essence, the plays of Churchill dramatize the coming together of women on all front-domestic, political and spiritual. Churchill’s emphasis on woman’s inter-relationships with each other places her within a larger movement carried on in the field of women’s writing and feminist criticism.

The relationship between man and woman is a complimentary and it should be based on respect and mutual understanding. Tendulkar portrays his women characters as victims of the patriarchal system. Kanyaadan is regarded as the most debated play of Tendulkar. It attempts to portray the caste and gender issues in Indian society. In Silence! The Court is in Session he uses play within the play technique to present actions moving forward and backward to the present. Through the mock trial, the audiences come to know the entire life of Leela Benare. The play is full of verbal violence. In Sakharam Binder the action starts with the entry of
Laxmi into Sakharam house and ends with Champa's murder. All actions are intermingled and related to the central character Sakharam. The patriarchal violence can be traced throughout the play. In Kamala, Jaisingh uses his power over his wife and Kamala who he has bought from the flesh market. He uses her as an instrument to reach his goal. Tendulkar depicts the relationship among the powerful and powerless. A male may become powerless in front of a person having monitory and authority power. He attempts to depict the real picture of the world where powerless people are harassed and oppressed. The dramatists in question present female characters suffer at the hand of the male dominated society. Simultaneously, there are women who are treated par with the male who oppress their male counterparts.

The plots of both the dramatists are neatly intune with the milieu. Tendulkar's plays are based on the real life incidents, whereas the plays of Churchill are based on the history that silenced woman. Her plays can be considered as reflection of a growing feminist preoccupation.

Churchill shows women characters that attempt to take revenge on their male counterpart to achieve their goals which also end in their suffering. The character of Nijo who enjoys sexual freedom is threatened by the sense of insecurity. It is the result of the psychological dependency of woman on her man. A male is not threatened or discharged by the sense of insecurity. Supremacy of the male guarantees his security whereas inferiority of the female gender constitutes the insecurity of the woman. On the other hand, Tendulkar's women characters submitted to the patriarchal norms and make their lives acceptable to the society they live in. Women like Benara, Sarita, and Jyoti testify the fact. In Kamala, Tendulkar represents Sarita as a stereotyped woman in the patriarchal society. Through her character, he effectively shows the slavery of women within institution of marriage. Through Vinegar Tom, Churchill attempts to paint a historically accurate picture of the ordinary women's lives. She
attempts to portray the reality of the institutions of patriarchy. She
dramatizes woman’s power and weaknesses, simultaneously. The women
characters of Churchill belonging to different social locations and having
or otherwise financial power seem to be interlinked on the basis of their
sufferings. Woman suffers because she is woman.

Tendulkar sheds light on the evil social tradition of dowry. The
parents of girl, in a sense, appear responsible for the exploitation. Jaisingh
has bought Kamala from the flesh market whereas Sarita has been
accepted with dowry as wife. Both Sartia and Kamala are slaves to
Jainsigh. In public life he pretends as a supporter of gender equality,
which is his hypocrisy. At the same time he is victimized by his master at
the work place. He is victimized by the nexus between politics and
economy. The beneficiaries of the flesh market fire him from his position
when he poses a threat to their authority.

In Owners, Marion is the most dominating character than that of her
husband, her assistance and her lover. She compels them to behave in
accordance with her will and pleasure. Churchill presents her as a strong
character even stronger than all male characters in the play. Churchill de-
feminizes Marion. Perceptibly, Alec’s weakness is unexpected as her
strength. Marion’s ways to overrule her husband and other males in the
play shows inversion of sexual relations and the order of gender politics as
well. Marion’s domination over her husband and others reflects the issue
that there is no correlation between gender and the oppressive mentality.
In the same way, in Sakharam Binder Tendulkar de feminizes Champa. He
portrays her as an aggressive woman. Champa’s drinking and aggressive
speeches on the stage were shocking to the orthodox mind. The
description of the sexual harassment of Champa is really shocking.
Through such depiction the playwrights attempts to criticize the growing
recklessness in modern Indian women.
These selected dramatists portray the fact that woman is a human being; she can also be aggressive, cruel and evil. They attempt to present their thoughts through reversing sexual roles. For example, in Owners, through Marion’s character Churchill attempts to portray woman’s power to emasculate her man. Most of the women characters in their plays are crushed, deflated, depressed and tortured by the patriarchal agents in one way or the other. Their plays show how women are exploited, tortured and victimized by the patriarchal society. They focus on the important issues like man-woman relationship, children-parent relationship, and caste and class discrimination. Tendulkar in Silence! The Court is in Session attempts to depict the hypocrisy and cruelty of all those male members of the amateur theatre group, who uphold the conventional social morality. In Kamala, Kanyadaan and Silence! The Court is in Session the central women characters, though they are educated, never take a decisive step against the cruelty of man.

In Kamala Tendulkar portrays the plight of women in the patriarchal society. He portrays family as a place where woman has been oppressed and subjugated. The patriarchal society outlines woman as changeable object which can be used and abused. In this play, marriage has been dubbed as an act of buying woman. Though Kamala is an uneducated woman, she could see what Sarita couldn’t. She could see Sarita’s enslavement in her husband’s home. Their conversation makes Sarita aware of her rights in the family. She thinks of arranging a press conference to expose her husband’s reality. In addition, she wishes to expose the predicament of woman in the modern Indian society. Kakasaheb, Jainsingh’s uncle tells her that male domination is natural. The idea of her independence exists at the imaginary level. She could not materialize her concepts of individuality and independence. Sarita is in a sense awaked but inactive character in the play. She lacks courage in front of challenges posed by life. The liberation of the woman can be
attained only when she is awakened. The change in the person particular is essential, and then would follow the reception from the other world.

Tendulkar highlights the relationship between violence and power. How these forces go hand in hand in different walks of life. How it practices violence on women in modern Indian society and also shows that monetary gains have become important than that of human relation. Jyoti’s father, Devalikar is a man of progressive ideas as he has no objection to Jyoti’s decision of marrying a Dalit boy. In the beginning, Jyoti thinks that it will be an easy task to bridge the social gap between them. Very soon, she realizes the influence of caste on their co-existence. The milieu, they were brought up in makes them foes of each other, rather than life partners. The husband ill-treats Jyoti since he had seen his father doing the same with his wife. The husband of Jyoti is the victim of the patriarchal arrogance. It is the real cause of discrimination on the wife. Arun, since his childhood had witnessed the arrogance of his father and submissiveness of his mother. These are not the natural characteristics of a community but products of the unequal social design.

The playwright depicts the fact that a human being is a result of the environment. To reach the other side of life can be made tolerable through understanding and accommodating each other. The same issue is highlighted by Churchill in Owners. Clegg follows his mother–father relationship as a model. He internalizes how wife must deal with her husband. In short, it can be concluded that, both the playwrights seem to show that family is the school wherein biased lessons are taught to its members. It is, therefore, reformation and reconstruction in the institution is essential.

Tendulkar represents Sakharam as an overwhelmed man by nature and social norms. The social ethos gives man power to be dominated. At the same time it makes woman submissive and inferior. A male, when,
sexually humiliated by a woman is transformed into an animal. Sakharam’s ego as a powerful male has been distorted by Champa. This made him to take the extreme step of killing Champa. Champa, the keep is murdered by the insult of the phallic pride. The dramatist attempts to show that woman doesn’t have the right over her own body. Woman cannot decide how many children she should give birth to. Man considers wife as his property and enjoys total control over her. He treats her the way he wishes. Her abuse at his hands is his birth-right.

The oppression of woman is through verbal, psychological and physical ways. Man governs woman by adopting various forms of violence. The various forms of oppression don’t act separately; they are interconnected to each other, forming the system of oppression. The system of oppression is nurtured and strengthened by race, religion, caste and gender.

Vinegar Tom shows the lives of several women in the 17th century who were accused as witches. The women are represented as the threats to the patriarchal system. To keep the patriarchal system strong and valid, the beneficiaries discourage and destroy the attempts on the part of the oppressed. The songs in the play are presented in a modern manner to indicate that it is a timeless issue. Churchill attempts to deconstruct the problems of the relationship between gender and class. The church provides the institutional mechanism for burning such witches. It is a feminist play which illustrates the relationship between gender and power. She highlights marginalization of woman by using the theme of witchcraft. The rebellious women were/are often branded as witches by the patriarchal agents. Though Vinegar Tom is set in 17th century England, its temper could be seen in any part of the globe, present or past. The play is a bitter criticism on the hypocritical mentality of the society that determines the worth of a person on the basis of the gender. Moreover,
the play highlights the hypocrite society and how the class can decide status of the person as much sex does.

Churchill scrutinizes the interaction between economic inequalities and patriarchal attitudes which work together to entrap woman under different names. The needed vigor and strength is provided by religion, society and culture. The plays selected show the irrelevance of the outdated thought and ideology. It is, therefore, women have been given the central position in the plays. The thought process and action of the women characters are meant for the annihilation of the patriarchal mind set. All the women characters of Churchill seem to have been nurtured in unhealthy environment. Due to this they didn’t enjoy control over their body and being. Such a helpless state landed them in troubled waters. The emancipation of such women from the patriarchal trappings is possible when they become self awakened. The awakened woman re-examines her own image and identity as well as the oppressive network. The state of self enlightenment helps her in reconstructing her gender in a positive manner. This ideological tone is audible and visible in plays of Churchill.

Top Girls, Cloud Nine, Owners, Vinegar Tom deserves special consideration because they give a special treatment to the idea that the personal is political. In this regard, the remarkable writer Heila Rowbotham observes:

The contemporary Feminist movement has made the need to uncover every aspect of women’s experience an immediate political issue, and in doing so has begun to redefine what is personal and what is political, questioning the present scope of what is defined as politics. (qtd in Lopman 47)

Taking into considerations the social, sexual and economic inequalities between woman and man in society, Churchill skillfully balances in all the four plays a serious reflection of the patriarchal ideology at the time. Besides, she depicts the connection between
outwardly domestic details and the matters of serious political significance. It makes her as a playwright of notable talent. Churchill attempts to break the silence of women through all her writings.

Through the exposure of the unhealthy social milieu and the awakened woman, an attempt is made to remoulds the public mentality.

In Top Girls, the character of Marlene who prosperous in life becomes insensitive and inhuman towards her own gender. Marlene refuses to recognize and accept her own daughter who had been forsaken long back. The daughter to the mother at that point of time appeared as a hurdle in the path of progress and prosperity. The playwright wanted to communicate that the feeling of ill-treatment is not gender specific. A woman becomes enemy of other women

The act three shows the discussion between the sisters. They seldom agree on certain issues. Their conversation covers topics like the institution of family and the nature of their parents. Joyce justifies the arbitrary and abusive nature of their father towards his wife on the basis of the ill-treatment he receives at the hands of his master. The wife and the children to the father, appear suitable targets for venting out his anger. The two sisters though grown up in the same atmosphere, their nature appears different. Joyce internalizes the traditional role of woman. She believes in man's superiority and woman's inferiority. On the other hand, Marlene revolts against all the trappings around her. She attempts to change her pre-determined constructed identity. She leaves her family and gives her illegitimate child to her sister to embark upon the journey towards liberty. She decides to keep aside everything to make her desired future a reality, whereas her sister Joyce surrenders to the situation. Joyce prefers to remain in the same miserable situation. Moreover, Joyce criticizes her sister for leaving her family and her daughter. The impact of
patriarchy on these characters appears different. It is due to the individual particular.

Churchill depicts Marlene as a subversive character as she could succeed and get promotion in the male dominated society. At the same time, Joyce has been presented as a traditional woman who can’t accept the radical ideology. Joyce prefers to stay silent, impressive and subjugated. Though Marlene is a successful woman, she is unhappy, unsatisfied with all her achievement. She experiences the sense of incompleteness in her life. She seems to be haunted by the longing for family and motherhood. Women of Churchill, who defy the conventional roles meet tragic end. The massage the playwrights wish to stress appears that success and satisfaction in life for a woman is ensured by her following the fixed roles of wifehood and motherhood.

Churchill further stresses exploration of the female solidarity as the best strategy against patriarchy. The emphasis is on the bond of sisterhood. In Cloud Nine, Betty is portrayed initially as a downtrodden stereotyped woman who was tied to an arrogant and oppressive husband. To overcome her boredom and find new meaning in her life, she embarks on a journey towards enlightenment and liberation. However, Betty’s quest is directly linked to a larger political quest. The interplay forms the core of the play’s action and provides, additionally, a thematic base. Like Betty, Sarita in Kamala comes to know about her slavery.

Though the women characters in Cloud Nine enjoy sexual pleasure but till they seem to unsatisfied in life. In Kamala, Sarita appears a traditional wife who performs faithfully all her duties and responsibilities towards her husband and house. Though she is educated, modern, she can’t escape the traditional role of woman. Her example certifies the fact that family is the first school that tame woman.
Another important institution that comes under scrutiny is marriage. It seems to be based on the power one enjoys rather than love and care. It also trains woman to be passive and submissive to the arbitrary commands of husband. Sarita, in Kamala, tries to keep the house in such a way that could please her husband. What she does is not out of love but fear and terror of the power called husband. Such sort of relationship gawns the family within. The attitude of the husband towards his wife is dry. Though the women's characters of Tendulkar are educated, they appear trapped in the exploitative structures of patriarchy. It makes woman an object for use and abuse.

Both dramatists portray female characters who try to revolt against all the unjust norms. Some of them seem to thwart the evil social orders that subjugate them. Some of them internalize and accept the subjection as an inevitable thing. There appear women characters who contribute in the patriarchal system of exploitation. Those who show traces of unyielding nature at the end seem to repenting for going against the social order. In Top Girls for example the dramatist represents the central character as a strong modern woman who sets aside everything to achieve her ambition. Though she reaches the goal still she appears dissatisfied in want of the conventional responsibility. The protagonist, therefore, vents out her emptiness. The author puts forth her agony thus:

If you ask yourself what has changed for women since the 1980s, I think you have to say that while more women go out to work, corporation still haven’t modified their employment practices and women at the top are scarce. Top Girls also remains a hit because it’s a play about family and emotional ties and attachments. The theme of strong women in history resonates: we ask what worked then and works now or doesn’t work. (qtd in Luckhurst 99)

To sum up, the present chapter attempts to analyze the women characters of both the writers, who try to assert their independent being. Laxmi, Mrs. Kashikar, Kamala, Suzen, Joyce and Maud appear
conventional in nature. They accept the superiority of their male counterparts and their subjugation. They allow themselves to be ruled by their male masters.

Marion, the character in the play Owners is one of the strongest creations of Churchill. She never surrenders to any trap of the patriarchy. In a sense, she can be called the mouthpiece of the playwright. Marion stands for the glory in matriarchy. Though Marion and Marlene seem to be nurtured by the principle of new womanhood/personhood, at the same times they appear to have been carrying the trace of the conventional patriarchy and society. Though Benare in Silence! The Court is in Session opposing the society, time and its convention decides to develop the foetus in her womb, but at the end of the play wishes to be accepted by the milieu. On the other hand, Marlene looks at her daughter as an obstacle in her way. The former is ready to face the consequences of developing the baby in her womb whereas Marlene discards her daughter. To Benare the fetus gives meaning to her life whereas discarding of the daughter is the remedy to Marlene. The two women trod on two different ways to realize meaning in life.

The study attempts to show with the plays taken up for study that how modern woman at two difficult locations chart out their lives. The location and language of the women characters are different but the impact it leaves on the women is similar. The women hail from different educational, social and economical backgrounds but - they end up with the same destiny. But it can be argued that through such women characters the playwrights wish to show the female power and personality that can reconstruct new space. These characters stand for the revolutionary passion of a woman’s potentiality self-freedom and female power. But, neither Tendulkar nor Churchill has moulded their female characters into positive women who would have been an inspiration to other women. The women portrayed by both the playwrights are life like.
It is, therefore, they have potential to inspire common women. This is the strength of the women character presented by the both author. Marion, Marlen, Champa and Alice wish to become unsexed. They want to put aside their feminine qualities. They struggle and refuse to surrender to the patriarchal rule and domination. They never hesitate to sacrifice their lives for attaining their self-power and above all, self-identity. Moreover, all transgressed female characters fall into the bad women catalogue.

Both, Tendulkar and Churchill appear self-conscious critics of the society. Since, they focus on the miserable condition of woman. Depicting women in unconventional colors is an attempt at the awakening of woman and society she lives in. The male-world in the works of both appears as a trap of exploitation of woman. The allies of the male wish to maintain and nurture the gender-based discriminative hegemony. The works focused on seem to prioritize the tradition of male supremacy to the identity of a person (woman). The reconstruction of a just society can be had only through the male-female relationship based on the principle of equality. Study of a gender in isolation leads one nowhere. The authors not only focused on women but also the structures of gender and culture. The interrelationship between woman and the rest need to be based on just principles. That is the major theme in the works of the authors in question. Tendulkar the playwright wishes to do the same thing. He doesn’t provide solution to the problems raised but wish the reader/spectator to arrive at with his/her ability. He states:

.....By not giving a solution , I leave possibilities open, for whatever course the change may take. When the members of my audience go home and chew on the situation, they might be able to see their daughter or sister in the woman’s position and come up with a way of changing the situation for her advantage (qtd in Wadikar 72)

Similar technique has been adopted by Churchill. Both the playwrights prefer to leave the plays open ended.
In short, it can be concluded that there is a vital need of theorizing the needs of woman in a society ridden by patriarchy. It would provide space to her for breathing and articulation. It is error to interpret history in monolithic universal terms ignoring the differences in culture. The politics in the name of gender is multilayered. It is further constructed by several factors like family, society, race, economy and culture of the place and time. To address it the feminist discourse needs to be strengthened through different perspectives.


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