CHAPTER - V
CONCLUSION

Indian English drama is a comprehensive nomenclature that denotes not only the Indian plays written in English but also the vernacular plays that are translated into English. Vijay Tendulkar will be ever remembered as a leading contemporary Indian playwright of the twentieth century, as a screen and television writer of success; a literary critic, political journalist and as a social commentator. Tendulkar can be classed as a master playwright in the tradition of Shakespeare, for his thirty full-length plays and seven collections of one-act plays, since he has the ability to create immortal tragic protagonists through the brilliant portrayal of their psychic development, his expertise in stagecraft and for the universality of his plays. There is a total experience of life as he holds up a heightened reflection of society without being didactic. He whittles out his characters with care so that they live in the mind of his readers-audiences.

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the finest playwrights in Indian theatre. His plays express his deep concern for society. He did not choose the subjects of his plays or wrote with a view to gaining commercial success. He deals with the themes that genuinely interested him and were vital to the holistic development of society. He makes us restless and prods us to think by portraying these problems in a frank and objective manner. Instead of making the audiences laugh or weep, he aims at exhorting the readers to mull over the delicate social problems in order to find an amicable solution. He has expressed his vision of the rottenness in contemporary society with an unflinching realism. He does not mince words in portraying the stark reality as it is and flaunts a mirror to the society by expressing his heart-felt feelings and sincere reactions to the contemporary burning problems.
Chapter one **Introduction** seeks to peruse the influences on Vijay Tendulkar and his writings. Tendulkar put the Marathi drama on the international map with his intensely thought-provoking and socially viable plays. He appeared on the scene of the Marathi theatre in the mid-1950s. The Marathi theatre had witnessed the decline of the verse play and the rise of the prose drama after 1920. The glorious days of the Marathi verse play were followed by a long period of decline for the Marathi drama. Tendulkar began his dramatic career against this uncongenial background. He imbibed a passion for theatre from his father and elder brother who were amateur actor-directors. Vijay Tendulkar became a voracious reader at an early age. He became aware of the sufferings and tribulations of life because of the tragic incidents around him such as one of his uncles' suicide and another one's derangement. His cognisant mind keenly observed the violence and vices inherent in human nature during his visits to the liquor dens in order to bring his alcoholic brother back home. These incidents seemed to have shaped and conditioned his vision of life. He began to look more closely at the people around him and found various flaws in them which contributed to constitute the major themes and concerns of his compendium.

Tendulkar’s participation in Quit India Movement in 1942 rendered him alienated from his family and friends. He found a copacetic catharsis for his feelings of loneliness and sadness through writing. The performance of Marcel Marceau, the French mimic, had a profound influence on him. He realized the unlimited possibilities of the visual and began to reflect on how to combine the visual with words to convey more out of his playwriting. During his career as a journalist, Tendulkar got an exhaustive knowledge of society and human life. He toured the various nooks and corners of India after receiving the Nehru Fellowship for a project and observed the social problems and the oppression of the poor and the downtrodden from close quarters. His observations and experiences of life find significant place and expression in his plays.
Tendulkar's predecessors such as G.B. Deval. K.P. Khadilkar and R.G. Gadkari had dealt with contemporary social issues in some of their plays. With the exception of B.V. Varerkar, P.K. Atre and M.G. Rangnekar, the other playwrights in the post-independence era were mostly writing farces and melodramas in order to entertain the audiences. Tendulkar's socially and politically significant plays revolutionised the Marathi drama which was trapped in a melodramatic mode. He tastefully and tactfully urged the reader-audience to confront the brutal realities of life through his portrayal of society and human life with all its ugliness and crudity.

The chapter two **Vijay Tendulkar’s Social Canvas** preponderates on the panoptic views of society. It also reiterates the premise that Vijay Tendulkar is a dramatist who can engage his reader-audience to the gnawing social problems. The major themes of Tendulkar's plays under the present study are - the society's oppression of an individual who violates its traditions, the treacherous ways of selfish and corrupt politicians, the effects of power on human nature, the immense lust, greed, violence and desire for revenge latent in human nature and its disastrous effects, the plight of women in our male dominated society and the obstacles in the way of creating a caste-less society. A thematic study of Tendulkar's plays brings to light the fact that he made the reader-audience face the obnoxious realities of life. While handling the social problem of unwed pregnancy, Tendulkar's play *Silence! The Court is in Session* portrays the plight of Leela Benare, a spinster who readily caught everyone’s attention and subsequently became one of the most famous characters of Indian drama. The society is hostile towards her as she has refused to follow its conventions. The play also draws our attention towards the gender discrimination in our society which allows a man to go scot-free, whereas a woman gets punishment for having committed the same act of immorality by having extramarital relations. Tendulkar's play *Encounter in Umbugland* depicts the transformation of Vijaya, a princess, from an
innocent girl into an ambitious and cunning politician, through her encounter with the cut-throat world of politics. Tendulkar has exposed the hypocrisy and treachery of the political leaders and the sordidness and futility of the power game in this play. There is a horrifying depiction of human viciousness and the evil consequences of man's avarice in Tendulkar's play, *The Vultures*. In this play, the wicked members of the Pitale family inflict inhuman violence upon their own family members, including their pregnant sister, for the sake of money.

There is an extraordinary portrayal of the immense capacity of lust and violence inherent in human beings through the eponymous character of Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder*. Sakharam satisfies his lust in the name of giving shelter to the women who have been deserted by their husbands. Though Sakharam is in the habit of changing his mistresses frequently, he expects their complete supplication to him. He murders Champa in a fit of anger when he realises that she is unfaithful to him. In the play *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Tendulkar exposes the corruption in contemporary society by drawing parallels between the decadent eighteenth century Poona society and the present conditions. Through Ghashiram's heinous act of offering his daughter as a pawn to an influential politician in order to become the Chief Inspector, the playwright points out the descent of bestiality in human nature. While portraying Mitra, the protagonist of his play *A Friend's Story* as a lesbian, Tendulkar sheds light on society's oppression of a person suffering from an abnormality. Manya Dalvi, a womaniser, exposes Mitra's abnormality in front of the society to settle an old score with her. Mitra commits suicide out of loneliness and despair.

Tendulkar's play *Kamala* reveals his keen insight into the pitiable status of women in our male dominated society. The playwright exposes the hypocrisy of Jaisingh, a journalist, who purchases a woman from a flesh-market to prove the going-on of the flesh-trade. Jaisingh's callous manner of treating that woman proves that he is just using her as a means of getting money and fame for himself. In his play *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar
shows how a girl who ventures into an inter-caste marriage becomes a victim of casteism. Jyoti, the female protagonist, suffers untold miseries as a result of the excessive idealism of Nath, her father in allowing her to marry a person belonging to the backward class in spite of the incompatibility of their lifestyles and cultures. The dramatist endeavours to expose the theme of man’s existential loneliness. His primary compulsion is and has always been anthropocentrically humanistic. In this way Tendulkar’s literary oeuvre transcend to hold universal appeal.

Tendulkar has exposed the society's hostile attitude towards and inhuman oppression of women who do not confirm to the traditional image expected of them through his characters such as Ms. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Mitra in *A Friend's Story*. By portraying the victimisation of Ms. Benare and Mitra due to their violation of patriarchal norms, the playwright gives vent to the gender discrimination in society and the resultant plight of women. Tendulkar shows that even the sensitive and liberal men are exploiters of women. In his play *Kamala*, Tendulkar exposes Kakasaheb's biased attitude towards women through his justification of Jaisingh's ill-treatment of Sarita, his wife. Kaka saheb criticises Jaisingh's exploitative journalism, but turns a blind eye to his oppressive treatment to Sarita. Thus the playwright highlights the deep-rooted sense of discrimination in society. By showing the meek submission of his women characters to the injustice and violence inflicted upon them and their sad fate, Tendulkar implies that women should be more courageous and determined in dealing with such problems. Thus the playwright has played his part in the movement for women's emancipation by urging them to change their conservative mind-set and exhorts them to fight for the legitimate rights.

The bitter experiences of human beings are made the subjects of his plays by Tendulkar. Most of the characters in his plays have been portrayed as failures. The persons who put up a brave fight against the hostile circumstances win the sympathy and admiration of the playwright.
Tendulkar has a knack of making his characters bare their inmost selves through their speeches and actions. Through the long speeches of his characters such as Rama in *The Vultures*, Ms. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Bapu in *A Friend's Story*, Sarita in *Kamala* and Jyoti in *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar gives a proper space to their distress and hopelessness. He makes us conscious of the utter helplessness of his characters and severe conflict that goes on in their minds through their speeches. Thus the loneliness of an individual arising out of his conflict with society appears to be one of the recurring themes of Tendulkar.

In chapter three, **Vijay Tendulkar's Dramatic Personae**, Tendulkar has given a graphic and vivid picture of the Maharashtrian middle class through the varied characters he has created in his plays. He explores divergent areas of human experience through them. The male protagonists in Tendulkar's plays such as Ramakant in *The Vultures*, Jaisingh in *Kamala* and the eponymous characters of *Sakharam Binder* and *Ghashiram Kotwal* are bound by the common thread of their arrogance and disrespectful attitude towards women. They do not think of women as anything more than objects of utility. Ramakant and Jaisingh have no regard for the feelings of their wives. Sakharam also ill-treats his mistresses. Ghashiram offers Gauri, his daughter to Nana Phadnavis as concubine in return of the post of Poona's Chief Inspector. Even Nath, the protagonist of *Kanyadaan*, ends up exploiting Jyoti, his daughter, while trying to bring his demagogic dream of a casteless society into existence. Thus all the male protagonists in Tendulkar's plays appear to be exploiters of their female counterparts.

However, with the exception of Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland*, Tendulkar has depicted his female protagonists such as Ms. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*. Rama in *The Vultures*, Lakshmi in *Sakharam Binder*, Mitra in *A Friend's Story*, Sarita in *Kamala* and Jyoti in *Kanyadaan*, as abject victims of male domination and unscrupulousness. Ms. Benare. Mitra and Sarita revolt against prejudices, traditions and conventions of society, whereas Rama, Lakshmi and Jyoti bow down
meekly to the hostile societal forces. Both the conformist as well as nonconformist women characters are crushed by the society and end up as defeated individuals. Thus Tendulkar exposes the pitiable condition of women as well as society's apathy to their misery.

Tendulkar also sheds light on the exploitative and oppressive nature of society through the constant switching of roles between the victims and victimisers. His characters such as Mrs. Kashikar and Rokde in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Manik in *The Vultures*, Lakshmi in *Sakharam Binder*, Mitra in *A Friend's Story*, Arun in *Kanyadaan* and the eponymous characters of *Sakharam Binder* and *Ghashiram Kotwal* are themselves victims of exploitation. Instead of showing kindness to other unfortunate beings who are in a similar situation, they take their hidden anger out on these persons for the exploitation which they have suffered in the past. The victims prey on others with great ardour when they get a chance to do so. Thus the playwright shows that exploitation is an inexorable fact of life.

The chapter four entitled **Tendulkar's Art and Concerns** focuses on his mode of dramatic representations. In his plays he supplemented the conventional dramatic technique with modern innovations in order to drive home his themes and vision more vividly and effectively. He chose different forms of presentation in his plays on the basis of their ability to deliver his message to the reader-audience more comprehensively. He used the medium of theatre to its fullest by skilfully manipulating all the component parts in his plays. His preoccupation with contemporary reality made naturalism a suitable form for the expression of his content. He employs the visual elements of theatre in a deft manner. The meanings in his plays emerge not only through the dialogues but also through what is shown gesticulatively on the stage. He gives detailed stage directions to avoid ambiguity with regard to his intention. The invaluable instructions in brackets in Tendulkar's plays are immensely helpful to the readers as well as to the actors to grasp the nuances of his plays better. The spells of silence and the dramatic pauses during dialogue are the strong points of
Tendulkar's style. He employs the device of indirect satire to evoke scorn and contempt in the minds of the reader-audience over the evil actions of wicked characters. He succeeds in avoiding the reader-audience's identification with the characters and situations by bringing about the distancing effects in his plays. Thus he has given a new direction to modern Indian theatre by his innovative experimentation with the form and technique of drama.

Tendulkar is regarded as the 'angry young man' of the Marathi theatre due to his rebellion against the established values of a snobbishly orthodox society. He defied traditions and defiantly violated taboos throughout his dramatic career. In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar exposed the latent violence and cruelty in the middle class through the inhuman mental torture of Ms. Benare by her colleagues during the mock-trial conducted against her. He brought out the inhuman face of the selfish politicians in *Encounter in Umbagland* through the treacherous conduct of the ministers of Queen Vijaya. He gives a horrifying picture of domestic violence in *The Vultures* by depicting the cruel man-handling of the father by his own children and the maiming and forcible abortion of sister by her own brothers. He attacked the institution of marriage through the eponymous character of his play *Sakharam Binder* who practises contractual co-habitation with his hired mistresses. Tendulkar angered the Brahmin community with his portrayal of the moral degradation of Nana Phadnavis, a historical figure and the Brahmin society in the late eighteenth century Poona in his play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. He deals with the theme of lesbianism while shedding light on society's oppression of a non-conformist in *A Friend's Story*. In *Kamala*, Tendulkar shows that the position of an Indian house-wife is no better than that of a slave. Jaisingh's utter indifference to the feelings of Sarita, his wife and her servile attitude towards him justify Tendulkar's stand. In *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar brought out the schism between the words and deeds of both the promoters of casteism abolition movement and its beneficiaries. Thus Tendulkar is an
iconoclast who shook the foundations of traditions, conventions and beliefs of society. He seems to suggest that the condition of society cannot be improved unless we get rid of the hydra headed evils infesting it and the inborn inherent evil tendencies in human nature.

Being a skilful playwright, Tendulkar ensures that his work is not misrepresented in its performance by visualizing the various dramatic elements such as plot, character, dialogue and setting, and presenting them in his text. He uses a supplementary, conducive and helpful technique to make his themes and vision clear to the reader-audience. Tendulkar's ample stage directions prevent ambiguity with regard to his intention. In order to avoid tampering with the sense of the play as he had intended, Tendulkar tries to compose a tight script and incorporates deft stage directions in it. He endeavours to deliver a compact play into the hands of the director so that he does not use the text of his play as raw material and shape it according to his own vision. In addition to avoiding directorial interference with the sense of the play, Tendulkar's lengthy stage manual allows the reader to grasp the soul of his play in a better manner. The valuable instructions in brackets in Tendulkar's plays are immensely helpful to the actors to prepare for their roles. V.B. Deshpande aptly comments that Tendulkar's stage directions, like those in the plays of Shaw, Ibsen and Pinter, are quite significant and are a part of the dramatic meaning. Tendulkar's intuitive awareness of the stage and his interest in an effective presentation of his plays become evident from his stage directions.

Tendulkar has used the long speeches given by his characters to convey information about their motives, intentions and state of mind. He has employed the device of symbolism to enhance the beauty of the language in his plays. Commenting on Tendulkar's keen consciousness of the possibilities of language in theatre, Shanta Gokhale opines that Tendulkar’s awareness of the sense and sound of words, the tone and rhythm of sentences and the juxtaposition of word with word, line with line, have immensely enriched the texture of the speech in his plays.
Tendulkar's characters do not use accurate and appropriate words or the proper lexical order while speaking under the influence of intense emotions which is quite realistic. The spells of silence and the dramatic pauses during dialogue are the strong points of Tendulkar's style.

While declaring that she will live her life according to her own wishes, Benare in Silence! suddenly becomes silent with her hand unconsciously placed on her stomach. Tendulkar indicates the pause in her speech by three dots. This pause makes the reader-audience think about the crisis through which Benare is passing by subtly hinting at her unwed pregnancy. Thus Tendulkar uses words in his own way and goes beyond them by utilising the silence and the pauses between them. Arundhati Banerjee avers that Tendulkar’s style of dialogue signifies more than what it says.

Tendulkar's dexterous handling of dialogue is one of his strengths as a playwright. The language that he embeds into the articulatory texture is most appropriately suited to the thought that is being expressed. He writes short, crisp and lively dialogues which are natural and witty as well as terse. His dialogues are bereft of gewgaws and prolixity. He has an ability to express maximum through minimum words. He turns everyday speech into a forceful dramatic tool. The silences and the unarticulated expressions are as important as dialogues. Gowri Ramnarayan states that Tendulkar revolutionised speech rhythms by employing half-sentences, part phrases, tentative expressions, pauses and silences in his plays and made the spoken word resonate with the unspoken. Tendulkar himself reiterates that he has an ear for the speech habits of people which gets stored in his brain and aids him in writing his plays. Thus the novel use of language helps the reader-audience understand the thought processes in the minds of his characters.

Tendulkar has endeavored to understand life with all its pains, conflicts and contradictions. He has striven to describe it truthfully through his plays. He presents a true picture of life incorporating interplay of both the positive as well as the negative aspects of life. He does not feel shy of
expressing the cruel and dark side of life. Though he has painted life in
dark and gloomy colours most of the time, his love of humanity and his
commitment to human values is unquestionable. The virtuous and tender-
hearted characters in Tendulkar's plays such as Rama in *The Vultures* and
Jyoti in *Kanyadaan* suffer due to their association with the vicious
characters such as Ramakant and Arun respectively. With his penetrating
insight, Tendulkar brings a touch of tenderness to the depiction of these
characters who suffer for no fault of theirs. The humanistic attitude of the
playwright comes to light through it.

Tendulkar displays an acute awareness of the loss of traditional
values and the resultant tendency towards cruelty and violence in modern
times. We find the lowest level of human behaviour in the beastly actions
of the wicked characters in his plays. The shocking incidents in Tendulkar's
plays such as the forcible abortion and maiming of Manik in *The Vultures*.
Arun's kicking of Jyoti, his pregnant wife in *Kanyadaan* and Sakharam's
strangulation of Champa in *Sakharam Binder* are no different from the
incidents one reads about in newspapers. Thus Tendulkar seems to have
correctly predicted the direction in which society is moving and tried to
give a timely warning through his plays. He appears to suggest that we
cannot improve the condition of our society unless we get rid of some
inborn gotchas in human nature such as lust, selfishness and violence. The
playwright's commitment for the betterment of society and his sympathy
for the oppressed people are revealed through his plays. Tendulkar seems
to convey that the social inequality, exploitation and oppression which
have been in existence since ages, continue unabated till today. The
Maharashtrian society which had a tradition of social reformers and
thinkers like Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Jotiba Phule and Lokahitawadi, has
become indifferent towards the change in its attitude and bowed down to
traditionalism and orthodoxy. Tendulkar tries to traditionalise modernity of
thought and feeling in his plays. By attacking the economic, political and
gender discrimination in society, he attempts to bring about a change in people's mentality.

A distinguishing feature of Tendulkar's plays is his preoccupation with the portrayal of the dark side of life. He forces us to accept the unpleasant realities of human existence by giving a gloomy picture of the unsuccessful human efforts to get happiness. An atmosphere of violence and cruelty characterises Tendulkar’s plays concurring with William Golding, he believes in the permanent presence of animal in man with all the basic animal instincts. He shows that human beings behave just like animals under the impact of lust, greed and self-centredness. His plays bring out man's wolfish cruelty to man and his malicious and revengeful attitude towards his fellow beings. His portrayal of the evils rampant in human nature is profoundly thought-provoking, almost disturbing. Tendulkar reminds us that man is unable to conquer the beast inside himself in spite of having progressed from barbarism to civilization. Thus the playwright gives a new way of looking at the self and society.

Tendulkar displays an extraordinary sensitivity to human suffering which is one of the prominent themes in his plays. While expressing the thwarted desires, unsatisfied longings and undeserved sufferings of individuals, he has painted a world full of disappointment, disillusionment and misery. Most of the characters in his plays end up on the losing side in the battles that they face in their lives. Ms. Benare in Silence! The Court is in Session undergoes inhuman mental torture, Rama in The Vultures is reduced to being a corpse-like existence, the eponymous character of Sakharam Binder becomes a frightened and dependent creature after murdering Champa in a fit of anger, the eponymous character of Ghashiram Kotwal loses his daughter and then his own life while treading the path of revenge, Mitra in A Friend's Story commits suicide, and Jyoti in Kanyadaan chooses a path of willful self-destruction by submitting herself to her husband's cruelty. None of these characters get what they really want as strive for in their lives. They are totally helpless and
suffering seems to be their decreed lot in life. The playwright seems to suggest the futility of a person's efforts to become happy, if faced with the evil. The suffering of these defeated individuals results from a combination of their sordid environment as well as the wrong decisions taken by them in their lives. Thus Tendulkar implies that in many cases human beings are themselves responsible for their misery and should be extremely careful in deciding the course of their lives.

The misery and despair of an individual resulting from either his conflict with the hostile society or his own failure to fulfill his dreams is revealed by the playwright effectively. Most of Tendulkar's protagonists admit defeat in their conflict with society. They end up as failures in life. Their despondency is suggestive of the fact that Tendulkar believes that suffering is an inseparable part of the human condition. Many of Tendulkar's characters end up as losers in the struggle of life. By showing that the evil persons do not prosper and succeed in life, the playwright expresses his disapproval of their wicked deeds and actions.

Tendulkar keeps the whole theatrical experience in mind while manipulating all the components in his plays. He enchantingly enhances the language of the theatre by employing the elements of movement, stillness, silence and sound property. Shailaja Wadikar precisely observes that the language, stage directions, setting, costumes, lighting and sound effects in Tendulkar's plays are in harmony with their thematic background, and his plays breathe realism. He uses the genre of the realistic play in a different manner and does not follow a beaten track. Though most of his plays are written in the naturalistic mode, he does not get trapped in unnecessary details with regard to his stage technique. He displays a fine grip over the scenes in his plays which are well planned and executed. His wield over the structure of the plays gives them cohesion and stylistic uniformity.

He has the power to awaken the slumbering conscience of his reader-audiences. He is acutely conscious of the ills of life. He has brought
out the evil in man and the world with the purpose of making the people aware of the prevalent maladies in society. He has satirised the shams and snobbishness of society alongwith the vices and follies of human beings with a view to helping man get over his defects. Instead of giving solutions to the social problems that he has raked up, Tendulkar tries to awaken people's conscience and creates awareness about the gotchas and defects of society. He satirises the ills of the society with an intention to correct them. He envisions an ideal society, free from exploitation and oppression, in which there is equality, freedom, happiness and peace for everyone. A sick society with decaying parameters of morality cannot hope to prosper and flourish. Thus Tendulkar has attempted to eradicate the obstructive forces that stand in the way of a healthy growth and development of human life. It is an effort on the part of the playwright towards the creation of an ideal society.