CHAPTER - II
VIJAY TENDULKAR’S SOCIAL CANVAS

Literature wields a gigantic impact on the development of society. It has shaped civilizations, changed political systems and exposed injustice. It gives us a detailed preview of human experiences, allowing us to connect on basic levels of desire and emotion. A writer through his literary oeuvre reflects upon the societal issues, its good values and its pitfalls. In its corrective function, literature mirrors the ills of the society with a view to making the society ameliorate its gotchas and make amends. The writer also projects the virtues or good values in the society for people, perhaps to emulate. Literature, as an imitation of human action, often presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society. In literature, we find stories designed to portray human life and action through some characters who, by their words, actions and reactions, convey certain messages for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. It is impossible to find a work of literature that excludes the attitudes, morality and human values ubiquitous in the society, since no writer has been brought up completely unexposed to the world around him. What writers do is to transport the real-life events in their society into a superb work of art and present it to the society as a mirror through which people can look at themselves and mull necessary reforms. Thus, literature is not only a reflection of the society but also serves as a corrective modus operandi to overhaul the breakdowns of social coexistence. It is discernible to take a close look at some works of literature in order to understand how literature actually reflects society.

A literary man is as much a product of his society as his art is product of his own reaction to life. Even the greatest of artists is sometimes a conscious, sometimes an unconscious exponent of his time-spirit. The time-spirit is the total outcome, the quintessential accretion of all the
political, social, religious and scientific changes of a particular age. The historical aspect of literature, therefore, minor or unimportant though it may be for aesthetic purpose, cannot be totally ignored. Thus literature reflects his zeitgeist or the time-spirit. No writer can escape influence of his age. Every man, according to Goethe’s statement, is the citizen of his age as well as of his country; literature always expresses the thoughts and sentiments of human mind which are closely connected with and conditioned by the age. The influence of the age on the human mind is due to the fact that the latter is constantly influenced by the spirit of the age and reacts to it vividly and vigorously.

The reflection of the age depends on the quality of the mind in which it is reflected. If a work of literature is to be judged by the quality of this reflection, it apparently depends on the quality and nature of the reflecting mind. It records the thoughts and feelings of great minds. It attracts in two ways—through its matter and through its manner. The matter must be such that a writer possesses an optimistic view of society, and looks to a dawning future new age when all persons can achieve personal, spiritual self-development and evolution. In presenting this vision of society, the writer envisions and hopes to improve society. Vijay Tendulkar, too, envisions a society which will be free from Faustian evils.

Vijay Tendulkar, along with his contemporaries- Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh and Badal Sircar represent the young generation of 1960's and 1970's in his plays. His characters are hailed as 'angry young men' of the Marathi theatre, because they rebel against the orthodox social cannons. Like characters in John Osborne's plays, Tendulkar's characters also express their irascibility, discomfiture and frustration at the precarious condition of the society. Tendulkar vehemently satirizes all kinds of evils that are eating into the vitals of the society. He posits that a society should help human beings express themselves, not curb all their freedom or torture them. And unless we get rid of inborn tendencies of human nature such as lust, violence, selfishness, treachery, viciousness, cruelty, exploitation; the
Tendulkar’s plays depict the existing realities of human life with all its limitation. The subject matter of his plays is mostly related to man, his conscience, his ego, his body, his association, etc. There is always a disharmony between man and society, i.e. between identity and the social existence. Tendulkar ventures to depict all the filth and squalor, experienced in the society without any reservations and restrictions. Manchi Sarat Babu rightly notes:

Tendulkar successfully brings out the ugly cultural deformity of our society through his plays. He depicts gender deformity in Kamala, political deformity in Ghashiram Kotwal, physical deformity in Sakharam Binder, mental deformity in Encounter in Umbugland and Kanyadaan, and spiritual deformity in The Vultures. (151)

Sarat Babu further elaborates that Tendulkar depicts the problems but does not offer objective correlative directly. All the filth and squalor are laid bare realistically before the audiences so that they can ponder over the gnawing problems. He has been rightly called ‘a thinking man's playwright’.

Tendulkar does not subscribe to any particular political Ideology as these are unqualified and inapt to understand the complex human situations and to suggest any viable solution to our hydra-headed problems. Nor does he lack political awareness which forms the basis of Indian socio-political fabric. Tendulkar was actively associated with ‘civil liberties movements’ in Maharashtra and all this shows his great concern for his country and society. He is a realist and refuses to be fooled by romantic concepts of reforms and movements. He exposes the flaws and the inevitable failure of unrealistic reforms and movements in his plays.

It is discernible that though Vijay Tendulkar does not subscribe to any set of ideologies, yet his literary compendium leaves it to reader-
audience to see and judge for themselves. Reader-response criticism is a school of literary theory that focuses on the reader (or "audience") and their experience of a literary work, in contrast to other schools and theories that focus attention primarily on the author or the content and form of the work. Although literary theory has long paid some attention to the reader's role in creating the meaning and experience of a literary work, modern reader-response criticism began in the 1960s and '70s, particularly in the US and Germany, in work by Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Hans-Robert Jauss, Roland Barthes, and others. Important predecessors were I. A. Richards, who in 1929 analysed a group of Cambridge undergraduates' misreadings; Louise Rosenblatt, who, in Literature as Exploration (1938), argued that it is important for the teacher to avoid imposing any "preconceived notions about the proper way to react to any work".

Reader-response theory recognizes the reader as an active agent who imparts "real existence" to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation. It argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates their own, possibly unique, text-related performance. It holds that the reader is a necessary third party in the author-text-reader relationship that constitutes the literary work. The work, in other words, is not fully perceived until readers make a transaction with it by assimilating and actualizing it in the light of their own knowledge and experience. It stands in total opposition to the theories of formalism and the New Criticism, in which the reader's role in re-creating literary works is ignored. New Criticism had emphasized only that which is within a text is part of the meaning of a text. No appeal to the authority or intention of the author, or to the psychology of the reader, was allowed in the discussions of New Critics. Reader-response criticism, according to Joseph Chandra and K.S. Antony Samy in Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory,

does not mean or imply some personal “reaction”. In this type of criticism, one should concentrate on the effects of
texts or the reactions of groups of readers, or what Fish calls “interpretive communities”, which may or may not be historically “real”. (95)

In *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory*, reader-response theory is elaborated as:

Fundamentally, a text, whatever it be (poem, short story, essay, scientific exposition), has no real existence until it is read. Its meaning is in *potentia*, so to speak. A reader completes its meaning by reading it. The reading is complementary; it *actualizes potential meaning*. Thus, the reader does not have a passive role, as has been traditionally thought; on the contrary, she is an active agent in the creation of meaning. By applying codes and strategies the reader decodes the text. (Cuddon 589)

Tendulkar’s plays are open-ended. The plays are open to diverse interpretations and cannot be tied down to a single line of thinking. So the question whether Tendulkar writes for life’s sake or art’s sake is pointless. A close perusal of his plays reveals that he is neither a teacher nor preacher. He is not one of those dramatists who use art in the service of their favourite socio-political ideology. His plays touch almost every aspect of human life in the post-modern milieu. However, three major issues highlighted by him are gender, power and violence. Tendulkar was obsessed with individual rights for liberty. He envisions the stage to produce the voice of protest against all pervasive exploitations. He speculates:

The writer in me is more analytical than emotionally committed one way or the other. The writer in me raises inconvenient question instead of choosing his side and
passionately claiming thereafter that it is always the right one … As a social being I am against all exploitation and passionately feel that all exploitation must end. (A Testament 15)

Tendulkar experiences a greater commitment to his time and space and writes with a vision of reality as well as responsibility. He remains faithful not only in observing those realities but also in displaying them through his plays. He is a dramatist with commitment to his time and country. His plays are adorned with aesthetic value but he does not try to escape from his commitment. It can be justified more elaborately on the basis of his plays.

Tendulkar is a social critic, who wants to cure the prevailing ailments in the modern society through his plays. Actually, when Tendulkar was writing plays during 1960s and 70s, there was a great turmoil in the Maharashtrian society. Maharashtra State came into existence in 1960 but the lives of people were no better even after the constitution of the state. It was a dynamic period of sweeping social changes that were taking place due to the pressure of the circumstances as well as the newly awakened class-consciousness among people of various classes of society. The youth of the time was irascible and repugnantly participating in social and political movements. There were riots, scams and scandals of gigantic magnitude. Politicians complicated the matters further. A widespread dissatisfaction aroused about the customs and traditions in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Such upheavals and turmoil postulated the overhauling of society. Keeping in view such burning issues, Tendulkar started writing his plays truthfully exposing the follies and foibles of the contemporary society inviting philippic from critics. And hence the motive of the writer is questioned everywhere and his plays became controversial. He had to face the enormous hostility from the conservative community. Gowri Ramnarayan
states that Tendulkar was criticized for exaggerating the spiritual bankruptcy of the degenerated of socio-cultural milieu. He is also accused of projecting the squalor poverty, crime and disorder in an unrealistic manner. It was said that Tendulkar promoted defeatist apathy through his plays (Interview 168). He wants to uphold a mirror to the society through his heart-felt sensibilities. His characters like Nana Fadnavis in *Ghashiram Kotwal* are an epitome of a corrupt and immoral government and Sakharam in *Sakharam Binder* deliberately fob off a situation of marriage and family but remains unsuccessful. So it is difficult to accept and appreciate the incident, but it is as real as inevitable. This way audience leaves the theatre with disturbed mind. In this sense, Tendulkar can be called an iconoclast because he espouses to bring about a silent and gradual change in people's attitude towards life and its problems.

The loneliness of an individual appears to be one of the major themes of Tendulkar. A feeling of alienation from self and from others as well grips the mind of the individual. Actually the speed of industrialization and urbanisation is the root cause of identity crises. Money remains in hands of few capitalists only whereas the majority of people are still mendicantly underfed. Owing to industrialization, the growth of materialistic culture becomes more attractive and hence it leads to man's spiritual bankruptcy. Loss of values and dehumanization becomes the major traits of man and every individual stands alienated. Tendulkar in almost all his works depicts these identity crises. Human being is lonely, sometimes, due to cruel surroundings and sometimes his incapacity to fulfill dreams. Man is in clutches everywhere. The dispondency can be seen in the long speeches of the characters like Rama in *The Vultures*, Miss. Benare in *Silence! The court is in session*, Ghashiram in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and eventually it reveals their misery and despair effectively. There is utter loneliness and helplessness in their lives. Tendulkar brings out this severe conflict through these speeches.
Individual bitter experiences are primarily the subjects of Tendulkar's plays. Along with this, Tendulkar portrays complex and chaotic socio-political conditions of contemporary times, the corruption in the government, man's declining moral standards and gradual dehumanization of human spirits. Tendulkar looks askance to any kind of victory stories or romantic dreams rather hits at the rottenness in real life. He is of the view that one should live a happy and meaningful life fighting against the hostile circumstances. The character generally end up on the losing side bottom in their lives but for the playwright, their efforts to put up a brave fight is important and praiseworthy, so one can see an amalgamation of optimism and despair in Tendulkar's compendium. Tendulkar endeavours to make his audiences understand life with all its pains and conflicts in his plays. Life is truly a fusion of positive as well as negative, good as well as evil. He has compulsive urge to keep on writing the realities of society. He feels that no one is all positive or negative. Life is dark and cruel. One should not close his eyes at the sight of sufferings and maladies. It's writer's task to lay bare all faces and predicaments of life. In an interview, Tendulkar upholds his conviction:

I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world in which I live. If they want to entertain and make merry, fine go ahead, but I can't do it, I have to speak the truth. (Saxena 20 Dec.2006)

Tendulkar makes his point of view crystal clear by adding, “I don't deliberately try to find out things before I write. One does not live to write. You live, and writing becomes an off shoot from it. I live my life keeping my eyes open, observing things, and then something comes to me from
what I had seen before and I write it down” (CP vii). He is of the opinion that one must be ready to digest criticism and failures in order to survive and reiterates that the first and foremost duty of a writer is to present the society in its entirety. He holds to show its positive and negative aspects judiciously. He in his plays strives to acquaint the reader with many malpractices in Indian social fabric and focuses his vitriolic attack on poverty and misery which is presented through various levels of social life. His plays present in-depth analysis of social critiques. The main themes of his plays are classes and their relationships to the development or lack of it, and corruption within the government affecting Indian society. The outstanding characteristic features of Tendulkar's plays are their uncompromising realism, merciless probing of human nature, candid scrutiny of individual, group psychology and experimental technique. Vijay Tendulkar is highly realistic not only in the delineation of characters and human relationships but also in the depiction of the setting in which these characters enact the drama of their lives. He excoriates and abrades the values of the orthodox society.

Tendulkar does not write plays with the sole intention of entertaining the audiences and getting commercial success. Instead of giving happy endings and showing the complete victory of good over evil, the usual formulae of professional playwrights, Tendulkar chose to show a realistic picture of society with all its ugliness and nakedness. He used the medium of theatre to air his views and thoughts about various issues concerning society and did not compromise self glorification, success and popularity. Tendulkar chose drama as the means of exposing the defects of Indian society. The life which he has painted is gloomy and dark but his love of humanity and his commitment to human values are beyond question. He himself modestly says that the intention of his writing is to explore himself, his life and his thoughts alongside its ramifications. He indirectly wants people to mend their ways. By repeatedly showing us the lowest depths to which human beings can fall, he induces in us a
disapproval of evil. He urges us to introspect by showing that the malefactors do not prosper or succeed in life. Tendulkar does not provide any substantial objective correlative to the problems he depicts in his plays. In an interview Tendulkar ruminates that he did not think it possible to suggest any viable solution to the complex human situations. He attempts to take his audience with him in an exploration of human situation so that they may get insights into the great jigsaw puzzle of human existence and enrich their understanding of the life around them. N.S. Dharan aptly comments on “Tendulkar’s method of raising disturbing questions but never bothers to answer them is truly characteristic of a genuine playwright whose foremost concern is to open his reader-audience’s eyes to a social problem which continue to evade easy solutions” (87).

During the days when Tendulkar began writing his plays, the sphere of women awareness has been gradually developing, notwithstanding the restriction imposed upon them by the society were as rigid as ever. Even after getting economic self-dependence, they were being exploited in the domain of family and particularly under the institution of marriage. The issues like extra-marital relations, unwed pregnancy, subjugation of women etc. have existed earlier also. The society has become advanced enough to discuss these issues overtly. The same thing applied to the drama also. The problems that used to get constricted to the four walls of the house were now getting out into the open and even presented through the plays of that time. Tendulkar took the lead in giving vent to such issues through his plays. Paradigmatically, he discusses several aspects of the man-woman relationship which enkindle a new kind of transformation of thought process. He also cajoles the people mull the emancipation of human mind.

The patriarchal system unabatedly forces woman to conform to this role of domestic chores so that they, according to some feminist, can be disciplined and controlled. Tendulkar appears to suggest that women end up victims due to such kind of sociological conditioning forced upon them. Tendulkar’s women characters such as Rama in *The Vultures*, Lakshmi and
Champa in *Saktharam Binder*, Gauri in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and Jyoti in *Kanyadaan* end up as victims because of their inability to challenge the institution of marriage and family. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and also to some extent Sarita in *Kamala* try to stand against the male domination. The only exception is Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbuggland* whom Tendulkar has portrayed as a liberated new woman. Vijaya is an intelligent, strong and determined person. Instead of becoming a victim like most other characters of Tendulkar, she successfully handles the responsibilities of the ruler of Umbuggland and debilitates the dominance of the ministers who try to make puppet of her.

Tendulkar, who is known as angry young man of Indian theatre, created a sensation with the production of his play *Silence! The Court is in Session*. This production of Tendulkar was squarely criticized for radicalizing the inherent conservative canons of society. The play is based on a grave social problem of unmarried motherhood and man's attitude to her. So it, really, is the critique of society. The play, in fact, portrays the rehearsal of a play in an untidy old room of a small village by a theatre group named “Jagruti Sabha” of Sonar Moti Chawl. We find that all the characters have come to stage to perform a play and it ends before the anticipated play begins. The play moves around the protagonist of the play i.e. Leela Benare who is a school teacher by profession. She loves life of robust spirits. As she is good at her profession and does her job well, that is the end of matter and there is no sense in amalgamating her personal life and conduct with that of her profession, her performance as a teacher and feels that her life is her own.

Teaching is considered to be a noble profession and teachers like Professor Damle, however, make a mockery of it by engaging themselves in disgraceful activities. Despite being an eminent intellectual, he demeans himself and his profession by having an extra-marital relationship with Benare and he is the person who is responsible for her pregnancy. He advertently lowers the dignity of this profession. Through his characters,
Tendulkar lambasts the ugly face of society. The Kashikars put on a show of mutual fondness in public in order to hide their conjugal discord. Mr. Kashikar's buying of garland for his wife, and Mrs. Kashikar's buying of a shirt for her husband, are indicative of their attempts to project themselves to the world as an ideal couple - 'made-for-each-other'. Karnik says that the Kashikars in public show of their fondness for each other is utterly tasteless and absurd, for in its opinion when public formalities between husband and wife are observed more consciously then there is dubious aspect in the relationship. The urban middle class with its sham morality cannot tolerate Benare's strident independent ways, and it is satirically presented through Benare's lone but utterly nonchalant defense of herself in the face of interrogation at the hands of malicious Sukhatme who is bent on making Rokde admire that he witnessed the scene of Benare and Damle making love.

Inter-personal relationship with different dimensions is an important aspect in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. The incestuous relationship between Benare and her maternal uncle is flabbergasting and shocking. Benare in her teens is seduced by her maternal uncle. In Marathi culture the place of maternal uncle is of immense importance because during marriage ceremony 'Kanyadaan' is done by maternal uncle as his place is second to father. If a teenage girl is seduced by her own maternal uncle then in whom the girl should turn to for personal and social succor. Her uncle cunningly praises her, showers his love on her and misleads her to a social crime of incest. It does not make any sense why she has chosen Prof. Damle who is already married and has four children. Rather Benare offers herself to him, perhaps in desperate search for a life partner. It is found that the modern women on cross road are struggling with the question "to be or not to be". Benare is disillusioned in her quest for a stable and conducive relationship. As she realizes the sexual urge of the body she calls it a traitor. She wants to retain her body only for her child to be born.
Tendulkar has put Benare's character on a large canvas of society where the people are still stuck to the traditions. Benare is a progressive woman but in orthodox society certain norms are enforced upon women. A certain framework is created for Indian women and it is expected that the woman should conform to these norms. For men and women the norms are diametrically different. Ours is the patriarchal society and rules are male oriented and prejudiced. Benare continuously struggles against the patriarchal system though she is victimized by men coming from entire social spectrum. She cries in pain but does not surrender herself to the situation. Marriage as a social institution has laid down stringent rules for women whereas men have no inhibition as far as extra marital affairs are concerned. This attitude of chauvinism expresses the basic hypocrisy and double standards on which our society is founded.

The play contains a latent critique of modern Indian society, mostly middle and lower middle class from different angles. The play combines social criticism with the tragedy of an individual victimized by the outmoded canons of society. The individual is placed against the backdrop of society and the tensions between the two are explored. Tendulkar portrays life from different angles without trying to philosophize or moralize in any way. His sympathy for Leela Benare is undenying throughout the play. He has made Benare struggle against the backdrop of society. Benare possesses a zest for life and does not care about social customs and norms. The exploitative, insensitive society isolates Benare. In the mock trial, there is shift from make believe to the real world and Benare's private life is exposed and dissected publicly.

Tendulkar, in his plays, shows that more often than not men are exploiters of women and even the sensitive and liberal men are no exception to this. Kakasaheb in Kamala who opposes Jaisingh’s exploitative journalism turns a blind eye towards the oppressive treatment of Jaisingh to Sarita, his wife. On the contrary, he seems to justify Jaisingh’s dominating behaviour by suggesting that all men are like that.
Our society has different standards for men and women. The scales are heavily tilted in favour of men but do not allow women to live their lives in the real sense. The institution of marriage has meted out the supremacy of husband over the wife and constricts and relegates her to secondary status. It is essential to change the society’s ‘mindset’ in order to give natural justice to half of the population. That is what Tendulkar endeavours to posit in his plays. Tendulkar’s portrayal of the plight of women is different from his predecessors. Maya Pandit in “Representation of Family in Modern Marathi Drama” observes:

Playwrights before Tendulkar, like Warerkar and Acharya Atre, did try to present a critical view of the double standards of the morality for men and women but no one had tried to debunk the myth that family provides a place of protection, comfort and security; that motherhood is the supreme justification and most noble aspiration of a woman’s life.

(65)

The punishment meted out to Benare for destroying the foetus in her womb for breaking social norms clearly exposes society’s strategy of glorifying motherhood to control woman’s behaviour. The mind-boggling oppression of Tendulkar’s woman characters such as Rama, Gauri, Sarita and Jyoti takes place inside the sphere of family. In Madwoman in the Attic (1979), Gilbert and Gubar tried to unmask:

those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face both to lessen their dread of her “inconstancy” and by identifying her with the “eternal types” they have themselves invented to possess her more thoroughly. Specifically, as we will try to show here, a woman writer must examine, assimilate and transcend the extreme images of “angel” and “monster” which male authors have generated
for her. Before we woman can write, declared Virginia Woolf, we must “kill” the “angel in the house”. In other words, women must kill the aesthetic ideal through which they themselves have been “killed” into art. And similarly, all women writers must kill the angel’s necessary opposite and double, the monster in the house, whose Medusa-face also kills female creativity. (596)

They also try to demystify the false images of woman represented in literature. They justify, “the images of ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women’s writings to such an extent that few women have definitely ‘killed’ either figure” (596).

Almost all woman characters of Tendulkar meekly submit to injustice, violence and harassment done to them. Kalindi Deshpande blames Tendulkar of wriggling out of his responsibility of putting a woman’s suffering in a social context and of capitulating before the establishment and its reactionary value system. However, it must be understood that Tendulkar has projected whatever he has seen and experienced around him. While projecting the characters in the grip of their situations, Tendulkar, as far as possible, tries to be objective and rises above his personal feelings, emotions and thoughts and refrains from taking sides. He also feels that woman themselves ought to be determined enough to liberate themselves. By showing their abject surrender to male domination and injustice, Tendulkar seems to suggest that they should be more courageous, determined and assertive in dealing with their problems. He appears to urge the women to change their conservative mind-sets and to show more guts in their fight against injustice.

Playwrights like Karnad and Tendulkar highlight the role of many systems or institutions which confirm the power of age old practices and affect human life greatly. Karnad in *Tale Danda* and Tendulkar in
Kanyadaan depict the age old caste system. The monster of casteism proves to be a great hinderance in making life peaceful for the lower caste people in Indian society. The purpose behind creating caste system may be interdependence of one caste of another to enhance the feelings of belongingness but it has caused many ugly practices and resulted in a fragmented and divided society. People are just loyal to and responsible for their own caste only. They are highly possessive about their own caste and follow all rituals staunchly and rigidly. And this division of labour among castes and sub-castes paved way for many problems as Dr. Ambedkar in Annihilation of Caste also said that caste system is “not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers” (16). Religion also plays an important role in establishing hierarchy assigning particular task to every faith. And this division in name of caste and religion has proved to be detrimental to the society. Playwrights depict this issue to invoke the feeling of brotherhood above caste or religion as real human beings. A playwright faces the problems which are aired by caste consciousness and depicts how powerful people use this as a tool in their hands to grind their own axes. Kanyadaan is a play which is significant comment on political and social aspect of the society. In the present modern age, a human being should be assessed on his individual qualities. So it looks absurd to fight for caste and class.

In Kanyadaan, Jyoti, a Brahmin girl, marries Arun, a dalit boy, irrespective of his caste and background, considering only his talent. Her father, Nath, also supports her so as to prove his long preached ideology of casteless society. But what happens after it was a total disaster. Arun always remains conscious of his lower class-origin and inflicts on Jyoti inhuman cruelties. Constant haunches of their sufferings at the hands of upper class people render him obdurate and violent. These nostalgic agonized memories make him impulsively restless and mindless. He comes to the conclusion that dalits can not fit into the Brahmins “unwrinkled Tinopal World” (Kanyadaan 513). So the sufferings and pains that Jyoti
experiences after marrying Arun is a kind of revenge that he seeks on Brahmins for having humiliated and exploited his ancestors for centuries. *Kanyadaan* clearly depicts the humanitarian approach of the playwright. The main argument of this play is to consider all the human beings on equal footing and the society should not be divided into fractions on the basis of caste and creed. Vijay Tendulkar exhorts the change in the mindset of both the upper and lower caste people and thus pleads for balanced stratification of people.

In Indian English fiction, novelists like Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabhani Bhattacharya have brought the evil of caste to the fore. Similarly in Indian English drama Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar have also shouldered the responsibility to depict the same malaise in true colors. They postulate to create a casteless society based on human values such as love, equality, non-violence, truth, fraternity etc. Though the aim of the movement was to bring about a great social change by eradicating casteism but it proves to be superficial and theoretical only. Ideology plays a vital role in making human life peaceful or hostile. The Indian caste system is a closed system of stratification where a person is compelled to the caste he is born into and his hereditary profession becomes his tagline. Everyone has to do the work which his forefathers had been doing. The prejudiced mentality of people is laid bare before the audiences through the dexterous handling by such writers. Geeta Kumar aptly argues:

> As the caste in India is derived from birth alone, it is a closed system. The caste cannot be transferred from one class to another class or be gained as a reward for the highest merit or bestowed as an honorary title by even the most powerful monarch. (Dodiya 100)
Caste is such a rigid and watertight compartment in Indian society that it is almost next to impossible to think of marriage between a higher caste and a lower caste. Tendulkar feels that the process of social change has to go a long way which cannot be made possible in an overnight revolution. When the caste becomes curse and evil, many thinkers advocate the need for inter-caste marriages in all types. Modern thinker, champion of dalits’ rights and an architect of Indian constitution, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, included intercaste marriage in the Hindu Code Bill. He not only espoused the need of inter-caste marriage but also exhorted for praxeological consummation. Himself a Dalit, he married a Brahmin woman.

Actually, in the Vedic age, caste system was, perhaps, carved to suit to the needs of a man, but later on man proselytized his needs into compulsion and inevitability. The Vedic caste system regulated the needs of man according to the Vedic scenario but it was made complex and rigid as the time passed. Only the rigid caste system reiterated into practice, while its flexible nature was abjured altogether. Tendulkar stresses that certain tenets of our religion are needed to be questioned, changed and jettisoned. The deconstruction of caste and religion is needed to arrive at its real and proper meaning and to restructure the same for the benefit of the society and the country. His play Kanyadaan serves as a kind of political allegory for contemporary problem of casteism in India. The events in the play and events in the real India go parallel seeking the amelioration of the predicament. As a matter of fact social evils are deep-rooted in our society and these have so far been questioned for some period but have not been ameliorated. Even after the great works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi, and his followers, with gigantic legal and constitutional steps, the monster of casteism looms large in our society.

In Kanyadaan, Tendulkar shows that Jyoti becomes a victim of casteism and the scars that it has left on the mind of her dalit husband, Arun, who inflicts physical as well as psychological atrocities upon her. In
response to his cruel treatment and her utter humiliation, Jyoti declares her intention of becoming an ideal wife to him and accepting the lifestyle and thinking of her husband and his family completely. Though she is educated and conscious of her identity as an Indian wife, she decides to suffer injustice patiently. The reason of such behaviour probably lies in her inability to get out of her relationship with Arun. When Nath out of belated parental solicitude reassures her of his support if she chooses to come back to him, she brilliantly checkmates him by throwing one of his favourite ideas in his face.

Jyoti: It will not happen, Bhai, because you yourself have taught us that one must not turn one’s back upon the battlefield…. This drug, Bhai, has entered and mingled with our blood. The poison has numbed our entire consciousness. We cannot run away…. we shall continue to lose our lives as guinea pigs in the experiment, and you, Bhai,.. you will go on safely rousing the god sleeping in man. (Kanyadaan 564-65)

After this philosophical demolition, Jyoti goes on to reject Nath as father by telling him of the permanent psychological damage he has done to his children. Unlike man, a woman finds it very difficult to get out of a relationship as it goes deep into her skin. The same can be said about Rama in The Vultures who is unable to leave Ramakant, her husband, inspite of her great mental and physical torture by him.

Every day a new death. Every minute a thousand million deaths. A pain like a million needles stuck in your heart. Blinding you, maddening you with pain. You can’t endure them but you can’t pull them out…Many years like this I have endured so many-how much more must I endure? How long must I dam up my tears? (CP 240-41)
By portraying the plight of Jyoti and Rama, Tendulkar exhorts women to be on their guard against excessive involvement in an unjust relationship. Tendulkar’s genuine concern for the welfare of women is reflected through their realistic and sensitive portrayal in his plays. His plays skillfully expose the gender discrimination in the society along with the concomitant plight of women. He shows how a woman is exploited in the garb of social customs and traditions. He exposes the exploitation of the institution of marriage in order to uphold the male dominance. He shows how the uneducated women are not even aware of their pitiable conditions. He censures the conservative thinking of women who do not bolster up enough courage in their fight against injustice. According to Tendulkar, education and self-sufficiency are the answers to women’s problems. It is the responsibility of society that its women should be liberated from every kind of fear and pain. Tendulkar seems to have honestly accepted this challenge as an intense socially cognizant person. A woman, who is conscious of her self-identity and is getting ample opportunities and freedom to groom her, is immensely beneficial to the society. Tendulkar’s efforts seem to be directed towards this phenomenal understanding of ethos.

Violence is one of the other important issues in the plays of Tendulkar. Conflict, violence and sex characterize Indian middle class society. The social, political, economic power conflicts pertaining to these problems lead to violence. The middle class people feel insecure because they crave for power by indulging in violent means. Violence makes the people live in a make believe world and they are comforted with the harsh realities of the world. This generates disillusionment and concomitant violence. But ultimately his characters come to realize the futility of life. The middle class society is also reflected in the plays of Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad. In the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, as he was the most aggressive in case of violence, he becomes the spokesperson for the middle class society and makes violence as one of the dominant aspects
of his plays. Relationship between individual and society in play paved the social problems contorting the power of middle class society. “Tendulkar was much ahead of his age, aggressively candid in presenting sham and hypocrisy of the middle class” (Banerjee ix).

When Tendulkar presents violence he does not raise any moral issues; he just presents the violent, ugly and brutal side of man. Only in Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe there is some irony, pity and horror. There is no social comment or poetic truth in Gidhade. The sheer violence is revolting. It neither seems to grasp the tragic human condition; nor move to enrich us. Especially the characters like Ramakant, Umakant, their father and sister seem just like caricatures. They do not grow and there is also psychological probing into the problems of frustrated characters. Tendulkar just keeps the violence raw without dressing it up. He sincerely believes that as violence is a basic quality, its occurrence is not loathsome or ugly. He found that violence made people fascinating to him. We wonder what about the other human qualities in man like acts of kindness, gentleness, love and co-operation. He says that the question of rightness and wrongness of this justice does not affect him much. To Kumar Ketkar, editor of The Loksatta, Tendulkar enunciates that when he depicts:

Characters and relationships between exploiter and exploited, molester and molested, cheater and cheated, I am morally impartial. I have no direct sympathy with the person at the receiving, for I believed that their roles reverse. (22)

We see in Rajaninath of Gidhade the neo-realist trend of the "Theatre of Cruelty." Tendulkar does not explain why his characters appear erotic. His understanding has no metaphysical dimension. Through his art, Tendulkar presents the contemporary gotchas of society and vents out his disinterestedness with it. He portrays middle class man and his sorrows, sufferings, suffocation, pain and agony. Though the dramatist has dealt
with the lives of the upper and lower class people also, it is mainly the urban, white collared middle class people that the playwright is concerned with in his plays. The middle class has been historically considered to be the flag-bearer of the higher ideals and values of the society. By portraying the defects that have seeped into the lives of these people and the tremendous amount of exploitation and oppression that goes on among them, Tendulkar cryptically lambasts out the precarious condition of our society today. Mere political independence and acceptance of democratic system do not guarantee equilibrium in society; it requires drastic transformation in our thinking. The playwright aims at underpinning a change in the mentality of the people.

Though the Indian constitution has provided for liberty, equality and fraternity to everybody, the problems and sufferings of an individual have been continuing unabatedly; the exploitation of the weak at the hands of the powerful, the irresponsible behavior and double standards of people in society lie at the root of this malady. There is a conflict between the people who prefer status quo and those who want rapid transformation in the existing structures and institutions. Generally the sacrosanct people who are in majority become exploiters and tour de force exploit those who are less in number. Various types of discriminations such as racial, religious and political fall to the lot of the exploited people. The traditional customs and beliefs also perpetuate such oppression. The dominant class can use such customs and beliefs as weapons against the meek and the underprivileged people. These people find it extremely difficult to become free from outmoded conservative customs and traditions, which are supposed to have social and religious sanctions. In order to solve this problem it is necessary to sensitize and enlighten the exploited people aware of injustice being meted out to them. Creating awareness among the people is a step to bring a humanistic and just social structure into existence. Tendulkar gives vent to the cry of the exploited individual who is suffering in such inhuman and unsocial conditions. He ably partakes the
grief, despair and unrest of a suffering individual. He aims at the development of a new type of man, a really cultured human personality free from oppression and prejudices and hopeful about the future. He tries to deter the society’s indifference towards liberal, humanistic and reformist ideas. The Maharashtrian society, which had a tradition of social reformers and thinkers like Agarkar, Phule, Karve and Ambedkar, has become indifferent towards social change bowing down to orthodoxy and male domination. Tendulkar reawakens with specularity through his writings which sometimes lands him in piquant situation.

However, Tendulkar’s outlook as a writer towards the issues of inequality, exploitation and oppression that leech our society is different from his response towards these issues as a socially enlightened person. As a conscious social being, he overwhelmingly raised his voice against such things by participating in protests, meetings or aligning himself with some civil society organizations. But as a writer he analyses through deep probing the issues of exploitation in an impartial and objective manner and raises incisive questions instead of choosing a particular set of ideology. He passionately quips:

As a writer I feel fascinated by the violent exploited-exploiter relationship and obsessively delve deep into it instead of taking a position against it. That takes me to a point where I feel that this relationship is eternal, a fact of life, however cruel, and will never end. (‘A Testament’ 92)

Thus Tendulkar is not afraid of confronting the exploitative and oppressive society. According to him, human beings can be divided into two classes – the exploiters and the exploited. If we survey the history of mankind we find that this issue has existed in all societies at all times. It was replaced by the landlord-serf relationship in the medieval period. In modern era, it has taken the form of the conflict, in Marxian dialectics, the
bourgeois and the proletariat. Women have been exploited in the family whereas men have been victimized at workplaces. Moreover, the victim of one situation becomes the victimizers in another. It is a perpetuating process. That’s why; his favorite metaphor for human life is the ‘Mickey Mouse’ as he believes that the human beings are like the Mickey Mouse and its kins are fighting for survival. Tendulkar avers, “In this battle one mouse kills another. Many mice gang up and ruthlessly destroy each other. I see this as a sort of blind justice” (Ramnarayan *Frontline* 168). This way the playwright accepts violence and oppression as inexorable parts of life. Tendulkar’s characters such as Mrs. Kashikar and Balu Rokde in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Manik in *The Vultures*, Sakharam and Lakshmi in *Sakharam Binder*, Mitra in *A Friend’s Story*, Arun in *Kanyadaan* and the eponymous characters of *Ghashiram Kotwal* are the victims of exploitation and oppression. A person who has forced oppression is expected to show kindness while dealing with others who are facing similar situations. But the irony of human nature is that it does not happen that way. These persons spit out venom irascibly against the exploitation of other unfortunate beings. The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* is quite remarkable in this regard. The wheel of exploitation turns a full circle in this play. Ghashiram who is victimised by the Poona Brahmins mercilessly prosecutes them after getting a powerful post by catering to Nana’s lewd tastes. On discovering the possibility of Ghashiram becoming a nuisance to him, Nana refuses to shield him when the Peshwa orders an enquiry into the incident of twenty-two Brahmins dying of suffocation due to Ghashiram’s orders. Now the mob of the Poona Brahmins takes the law into their hands and kills Ghashiram after inflicting sever physical tortures on him. In *Kanyadaan*, Arun, a victim of casteism, leave no stone unturned to inflict mental as well as physical torments on Jyoti, his wife. He sees in her the iota of reflection of the same class, which exploited his ancestors in the past. Thus the playwright highlights the constant switching of the roles between the victims and the victimizers. The playwright enunciates the
contemporary spectacle of social stratification and does not mince words to blast the inhuman and unethical tendencies ubiquitous in the society.

Tendulkar’s dramatic personae such as Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Karnik, Balu, Damle and the Kashikar couple who are the amateur actors in *Silence! The Court is in Session* do not approve of Benare’s independent lifestyle and thinking. When circumstances give them an opportunity to criticise and discipline Benare under the grab of a mock-trial, they pounce on this opportunity to scandalize her character. The suffering and torture of Benare goes on unabated as the issue concerned with her private life are brought out into the open, one by one, under the pretext of upholding the social norms and values. In *The Vultures*, all the members of the Pitale family except Rama and Rajaninath seem to be capable of going to any depth for the sake of money. So great is their memmon greed that the children beat their father and brothers break their sister’s leg. The father Mr. Pitale is in no way less heartless than his offspring. He had earlier driven Sakharam, his brother out of the family business. Towards the end of the play, Mr. Pitale tries to enlist the support of Rajaninath, his bastard son, for recapturing his property from his children through a law-suit.

Tendulkar’s *Sakahram Binder* has evolved in a unique way of satisfying his lust by giving shelter to women who have been deserted by their husbands. He forces Lakshmi and later, Champa, to satisfy his lust. He does not pay any attention to his partner’s health or mood. He also makes them do all the rigorous household chores and beats Lakshmi several times for disobeying him. He murders Champa in rage when Lakshmi discloses the fact of her sleeping with Dawood to him. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Ghashiram falls to such a low level in order to satisfy his thirst for revenge that he barters the chastity of Gauri, his daughter, for the post of Chief Inspector of Poona. Nana also does not hesitate to make a person with a suspicious motive the *Kotwal* of Poona. Thus Nana’s misuse of power in order to satisfy his lust results in great sufferings for the innocent citizens of Poona.
Tendulkar’s play *A Friend’s Story* unfolds the society’s inhuman oppression of Mitra, a girl suffering from abnormality. Manya Dalvi who changes his mistress like clothes, persecutes Mitra in a cruel manner for trying to snatch Nama, his latest object of pleasure, from him. He brings Mitra’s abnormality out into the open and the great humiliation is heaped on Mitra which results in her suicide at the end of the play. The theme of Tendulkar’s play *Kamala* is that everybody is slave at one place or another. Jaisingh who exploits Sarita, his wife and Kamala, whom he had bought in a flesh-market, gets victimized by his employer at the end of the play and is sacked from the job. Thus Tendulkar portrays the exploitation of the human beings in an oppressive society in almost all his translated plays.

The characters of Vijay Tendulkar think that money is but the power for all intents and purposes. Where there is an issue of money, the family members even start fighting among themselves. Through his characters, Tendulkar wants to evidence the degradation of values in the society. Here he exposes the satanic tendencies of human nature and his plays dwell upon the genesis of selfishness, greed, violence, wickedness of the characters for money only which they think as a power. What he intends to advocate is that happiness lies in contentment and greed for money and power leads man towards destruction of ethical and social values.

The bitter experiences of men and women in their lives were also made the subjects of his plays by Tendulkar. He portrayed the complex and chaotic socio-political conditions in contemporary times; the corrupt governmental machinery, declining moral standards and the gradual dehumanization of human spirit through his plays. He admits his inabilities to show the stories of victory and romantic dreams by neglecting the rottenness in contemporary life. The person, who tries to live a happy and meaningful life, fighting against the hostile circumstances, wins the sympathy and admiration of the dramatist. The characters in his plays often end up on the losing side in the battles that they face in their lives. While feeling sorry for their defeats, the playwright admires them for putting up a
brave fight. There is a mixture of optimism as well as despair in the playwright’s outlook towards the future, the former holding the maximal space.

Being a true writer, Tendulkar understands life with all its trials and tribulations. He strives to sketch them truthfully and presents a true picture of life, incorporating interplay of the positive as well as the negative aspects of life. In an interview published in *The Hindu*, Tendulkar once amusingly said, “May be at some point of time, I will stop writing physically. But I will continue to write in my mind” (5). It shows his compulsive urge to keep writing. He feels that life is dark and cruel; a writer should not close his eyes at the sight of suffering and maladies just because it might make him uncomfortable. Tendulkar further remarked:

I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world I live. (Chakraborty 81)

Tendulkar did not make deliberate research before writing anything. He added:

I don’t deliberately try to find out things before I write. One does not live to write. You live, and writing become an offshoot from it. I live my life keeping my eyes open, observing things, and then something comes to me from what I had seen before and I write it down. (*CP* vii)

He ruminates that the theatre is for the thick-skinned and the stubborn. One must be ready to digest bitter censure and failures in order to stay put in this field. He minces no words in criticizing those who gave up theatre before even attempting to do it seriously. While delivering the
prestigious Sri Ram Memorial Lectures for Performing Arts in 1997 in New Delhi, Tendulkar said, “give me a piece of paper, any paper, and a pen and I shall write as naturally as a bird flies or a fish swims.” Such was his predilection for writing that he never minded where he was writing. He wrote sitting in newspapers offices, roadside restaurants, in the crowded local trains and sometimes sitting in the bathroom too. He was writing on the bed in the hospital in spite of his doctor’s advice against it. Far from taxing him, it was a relief and joy to him. While summing up his lifelong involvement in theatre during the Sri Ram Memorial Lecture, Tendulkar opined that his playwriting years have helped him grow as a human being and enabled him to analyze life - his own and the lives of others. It made him realize the complexities of the human mind, which defy all available theories and logic.

Tendulkar's plays, in general, throw a flood of light on the complexity of human relationship. The plays directly or indirectly bring to notice man's response to forces of fate or circumstances in his life. The characters in Tendulkar's dramatic personae are types, changing in the course of action, according to the necessity of circumstances. Some of them are sensitive, submissive and tender-hearted who rouse sympathy in the minds of the audience, even the characters that are wicked and violent win sympathies. Tendulkar presents the dark and seamy side of life and he admits that he cannot handle the people in their routine situations as he is not like one of his characters, there is no psychosis. Tendulkar's violence does not seem authentic. He seems experimenting with different maniac situations of violence like mob psychology of violence in Shantata !Court Chalu Ahe, family violence in a decaying joint family in Gidhade and the self-destructive violence of a rebellious reckless egoist like Sakharam Binder.

It is obvious that threat of war, rapid changes, industrialization and the daily ups and downs in life have unleashed more stress and duress on common human beings. Capitalism has changed the life of modern man
and it has led him to automation, unemployment, occupational problems, competitive world (Society) and the result is disillusionment on the part of common man's life. He is searching for his own identity. His condition is like Hollow Man of T.S. Eliot. A lot of psychological strain provokes him to violence. As man has become rootless he is searching for his foothold in the existential entity. Modern man is seeking solace through sexual violence and this mental conflict is going on continuously in his mind and it, more often than not, leads him to the aggressive means. Both Tendulkar and Girish Karnad are sensitive to the changes in the main stream of their cultures and contemporary situations but their techniques and treatments are different. Both of the playwrights are concerned with the disintegration of life. The disintegration of family life disturbs Karnad and Tendulkar alike. (*Yayati, Hayavadan, Kanyadaan, Gidhade*). Both the playwrights finding their societies in disjoint, reacted in their own ways. Both of them belong to a social and literary transitional period. Growing materialism disturbs Karnad and Tendulkar alike. (*Tughlaq, Ghashiram Kotwal*). They give exposure to the brutality and disgust, the harsh and undignified truths of the modern human being.

Tendulkar did not have didactic conception while writing his plays whereas Karnad uses his plays to move the society and by using folk and myth he tries to teach and preach the modern society. The objectives of Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar in writing the plays are quite different though both of them are contemporaries. In the plays of Karnad and Tendulkar we find a type of psychological struggle going on in the minds of the character. This struggle leads them to action and in Karnad's plays the characters turn to religion. The gaposis between impulse and reason, between desire and duty is the problem which affects the human life and it is through their writings both the playwrights are decidedly seeking the solution to the abject problems. The morbid exhibition of violence and the sexual depravity are seen in an abundant scale in the plays of Tendulkar as well as in some plays of Karnad. (*Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe, Gidhade,*
The process of cleaning of the dramatic form began with Tendulkar. His contribution is not constricted to this process rather tries to probe deep relationship between man and man by infusing dramatic elements into it. No Marathi dramatist before him had ever tried to present the tension arising out of ego conflict. Anti - traditional approach to drama by mirroring new perceptions or reality and creation of popular drama is the contribution of Vijay Tendulkar. His plays established new conventions in modern drama by writing simple, natural and character-revealing dialogues. Tendulkar never used dialogues that can reach poetic heights when simply for the sake of dramatization, a temptation that almost all Marathi playwrights have failed to resist. The dialogue gradually exposes his character. He also uses the old techniques of soliloquies effectively alongside characters with self revealing dialogues. It is remarked:

Tendulkar makes effective use of irony, irony of communication and that of situation. He also makes effective use of the old techniques and soliloquies. Tendulkar's dialogues are simple, natural. They gradually expose his characters. He does not use refined dialogues simply for dramatization. His simple dialogues can reach poetic heights when required. (R.V. Dhongade 535)

Tendulkar presented the woes of the middle class as he himself came from middle class surroundings. The trials and tribulations shattering of their dreams, the cruel and harsh surroundings that trapped these victims, their emotions, miseries, and sufferings are presented with great degree of authenticity bordering on sentiments while presenting social reality. Tendulkar discovered that violence makes men fascinating. Tendulkar's plays are unconventional intended to penetrate into the dark
corners, the repression, the brutality, rejection and alienation of his characters. According to him, to break the traditional framework of the Marathi theatre was essential and to do some experiment with the theatre was necessary. This view of Tendulkar substantiates that he was influenced by a French dramatist Antonin Artaud who replaced the French "bourgeois" classical theatre with the "theatre of cruelty" and in his plays he liberated the human subconscious and revealed man to himself. Tendulkar's Gidhade perhaps was influenced by Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty' and he wanted to do experiment with it.

The Indian culture has a spiritual base as we are God fearing people who believe in virtue or sin. Traditional, moral, cultural and spiritual values have taught us tolerance, respect, sexual self-control and self-sacrifice when necessary. Insecurity due to economic conditions, communal stratification, and caste system does not allow much freedom to the individual. Owing to the grip of rigid, orthodox traditions we are all victims of society in one way or the other. This is very much apparent in the hypocrisy and duplicity practised by the so called middle class which wants to achieve the best of both the worlds. Tendulkar was an unconventional writer who dared infringe the rules and conventions of Marathi Theater with egalitarian motive on his mind. "There are as well established rules for the theatre as there are for painting and music. The only ones who can successfully break the rules are the people who know them" (O' Neill 3). Thus Vijay Tendulkar breaks away and deviates from certain conventions of dramaturgy and foregrounds some aspects of Marathi drama.

The concept to which the dramatist must address himself is the creative vision of an event to take place before a large number of people gathered together for a purpose of experiencing that event. It is a vision of a story being enacted not only by means of dialogues spoken by actors, but by their physical activity, by their surroundings (in modern times usually a setting designed from a description furnished by the writers) by lighting, by
music perhaps, and dancing and costumes, by the whole pace and rhythm
of the play and its production. ‘All these matters are the concern of the
dramatist, for, though others must be called up on to help interpret his
vision (he cannot be a specialist in all the elements that go into making a
theatrical performance) the vision is his and he had better to be clear in his
own mind as to what he wants the audience to see and hear and experience
when his play is finally mounted and performed’ (O Neill 4). Human
beings cannot survive without the help of others in the society. The society
suppresses an individual's intrinsic nature and distorts his personality. An
individual becomes deformed and dehumanized as a result. Social
inequality, exploitation and oppression, which have been in existence since
ages, continue unabated till today. Vijay Tendulkar anathematizes the
forces which polarize to suppress the individuality.

Both good and evil co-exist in man, and a battle between the two
diametrically opposite traits is continuously going on in the society.
Tendulkar like Aristotle believes that man is a part of this animal world.
Despite his stronger brain, he is no different from animals and latently
seeds their basic instincts. In the face of personal gain, lust or greed, the
layer of culture peels off and human beings turn into animals. Often
conditions are so terrifying and hostile that a human being reacts like an
animal. Violence is an inexorable fact of life and Tendulkar puts it straight
in his plays. He does not conceal the truth even if it is quite hideous and
bitter. In the Post-World War II period, modernism and individualism and
the revaluation of old values had resulted in a conflict between tradition
and modernity and man's alienation from his own self. As a result, the
tendencies towards cruelty and violence are on the rise. Tendulkar paints
the psychological, physical and verbal violence unequivocally through
thinking, actions and articulation of words of these characters.

The violence in society has been increasingly unrelenting with the
passing of time. If one looks at the headlines of newspapers, it is
discernible that such violent incidents have become everyday phenomena
of our existence. Tendulkar tried to give a timely apocalyptical warning through his plays. He gives to understand the working of human mind through situations in which they are placed and their concerted efforts to wriggle out of them. His focus is on the vulture and not on the eagle in man. While responding to a query whether he thinks there is a beast hidden in man rather than an angel, Tendulkar concurring with Freud replies that there is definitely the permanent presence of animal in man with all the animal instincts. While facing unusual and stressful situations, man appears to behave like an animal. Tendulkar adds: "To explore myself, my life, my thoughts and to strive constantly to discover ‘something’ in life - that's the sole intention of my writing" (A Pioneer Playwright 146). He refuses to propagate and align with any particular ideology. He sanguinely intends to understand the viciousness of aggressive characters and penetrates into the ab-ovo of that evil.

The dexterous delineation of Tendulkar's vicious characters such as Mr. Pitale, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik in the Vultures, Jaisingh in Kamala and the eponymous characters of Sakharam Binder and Ghashiram Kotwal is authentically tragic. The coveting of materialistic pleasures at the cost of human values results in their turning into vultures. There is a lack of love in their lives; they resort to violence and oppression to get money as well as covetousness. Being dissatisfied with their own lives, they maliciously inflict tortures on others so that they can feel better. Tendulkar launches a scathing attack on perpetrators of inhuman treatment and seeks to sensitize the masses to introspect and transform their mindset for the betterment of society.

All their cruelty, cunningness and treachery prove to be futile as they end up as losers in the struggle for life. By showing the pugnacity of evil, Tendulkar vehemently registers to induce a disapproval of their evil ways. The playwright appears to be suggesting that a person cannot become happy or successful by indulging in inhuman actions. He gives an expression to the senselessness of human conditions and the predicament
of the modern man who has lost his sense of meaning in life. The unscrupulous practices in deals and actions, according to Tendulkar, lead to infringement and erosion of values which are significantly imperative for the holistic growth and development of an individual and society.

Some of the characters in Tendulkar's plays such as Damle in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Nana in *Ghasiram Kotwal*, Manya in *A Friend's Story* and Arun in *Kanyadaan*, do not get retributed for their sins. Virtuous and kind-hearted characters in the company of vicious and wicked characters also suffer a lot. Rama and Jyoti are examples of such people. Their depiction shows the incredible and unflinching predilection for humanistic values of the playwright.

This way he gives us a novel way of looking at self and society. He wants to improve the quality of our life and desires freedom, happiness and peace for everyone. His dislike for hypocrisy, vulgarity, barbarism and narrow mindedness which reduce human beings to the level of the beasts comes out through his vitriolic attacks on the social evils and the portrayal of the reality of life in all its nakedness. By attacking the outmoded norms, beliefs and values, he categorically makes clear his motive for a new way of life. The human defects are common to all ages and societies. However it is being enjoined upon every individual to overcome these multifarious flaws for the amicable coexistence.

Tendulkar's panoptic perception of society and human life is well reflected in his oeuvre wherein he dichotomises the human race into two classes - the victimisers and the victimised. Tendulkar concedes that exploitation and violence as inexorable facts of life. He tries to capture the elusive and ever changing nuances of human behaviour in his plays. He removes the mask of artificiality from the faces of people who pretend to appear respectable, clean and pious outwardly but Tendulkar dares to expose their inhuman face. His commitment for the betterment of society and sympathy for the oppressed people stands out embodying his humanistic stance. His plays appear to be an effort to awaken and stir
mankind's conscience. His desire that the society should be free of all the maladies is well reflected in his plays. Such infirmities and flaws alongside optimistic and positive postures can be perused in the wider perspective and, therefore, it becomes imperative to glance through the character portrayal and the dramaturgy employed by Tendulkar in his plays.
WORKS CITED


Tendulkar, Vijay. ‘A Testament’ in Indian Literature. No. 147, Jan-Feb. Print.


