CHAPTER - III

TENDULKAR’S DRAMATIC PERSONAE

The ability to create and depict fictional characters in such a way that the reader-audience perceives them as living beings is essential to the art of drama writing. Characterisation is one of the chief elements of drama. The dexterity of a playwright is displayed through the creation of convincing individuals in addition to an effective treatment of themes in the plays. One of the key factors behind a playwright's success and effectiveness is his art of characterisation. A playwright is expected to handle his characters in such a way that they appear as replica of human beings. This chapter examines Tendulkar's art of characterisation and attempts to bring out its distinctive features.

A creative playwright develops his dramatic personae by allowing them to speak and act on their own impulse. The display of such intensity in the creation of characters saves them from becoming mere stereotypes in the hand of their creator and infuses into them life and breath like real human beings. He cares not only for the outer embellishments of dramatic personae but also pays heed to the paralinguistic and non verbal aspects and, therefore, nurtures a dynamic relationship among the characters, situations and the audience. The playwright can define the personality of his character by providing the necessary contours in the stage directions. The changes that come in their expression or demeanor at critical moments of action should be made clear to the reader.

Unlike a novelist, the playwright cannot dissect thoughts and feelings of his characters and comment on them; he has to allow his characters to reveal themselves through dialogue, action, expression and gestures. The novelist's privilege of appearing as an expositor and critic from time to time is denied to the playwright. He can, however, do this by employing various dramatic devices in a clever manner. A character in drama takes different shapes and roles through the surrounding conditions,
personal experiences and subsequently his reaction to them, and the influence of other people on his life. He may change his behavior or thinking due to some exceptional crisis or circumstances in his life. A playwright's success in character delineation depends upon his artistic ability to show us the means by which the changes occur in a character. If a playwright can account for the behavior of his character by assigning proper causes to them, it lends force to his character portrayal. The insight and skill that a playwright displays in his character delineation are the secret of his success.

The dexterity of a playwright is also judged by the range of his characters. Often a playwright is required to depict what he has only thought of, read about or heard. A skilful playwright can portray his characters convincingly if he has the power of absorbing and utilizing all kinds of material gathered from various sources. A realistic imagination working upon this material can make his character portrayal authentic. An intimate knowledge of the working of human nature, its common motives and passions, render an authenticity to the playwright's character delineation.

Another important hallmark of character delineation in drama is the impersonality and objectivity which the playwright has to maintain. Portraying complex characters and the subtle motives behind their actions is quite a challenging task for the playwright. Unable to analyse the thoughts and feelings of his characters directly, the playwright brings out the intellectual and moral qualities of his men and women by making them face crises and situations in their lives. Thus plot becomes an effective means of character exposition. The playwright can also use one of the characters in the play as the 'chorus' to offer comments on the action as well as link the various events. In ancient Greece, the chorus was a group of persons who commented on the action of the play. The role of the chorus was taken by a single actor in Elizabethan drama. The contemporary playwrights have also used this adumbration to good effect.
In earlier times, the use of the device of soliloquy was made to make the reader-audience aware of the character's agitation or to give information concerning other participants in the groove. It is a ploy of the playwright to analyse and comment on the action. It is his means of taking the reader-audience down into the hidden recesses of a person's nature. Sometimes his use of this device is given up as it is considered unnatural. In its place, the playwright can use a character as a confidant to whom the main character reveals his private thoughts, motives and intentions. The confidant is a person to whom the speaker can unburden his soul without any restraint and in addition to that, he also plays a specific part in the action of the play.

While delivering the Sri Ram Memorial Lectures for Performing Arts in 1997 in New Delhi, Tendulkar has expressed in detail his opinion and views on the art of characterization in drama. While describing the process of his character portrayal, Tendulkar says that he is something of an actor-playwright and emotes the lines of the character as he goes on writing them. This helps him in converting the utterance of a character into a complete and spontaneous expression of his personality. He inverts the order of the words and sometimes leaves the sentences half-finished, bringing to the colloquial level. He also synchronises the pitch of the voice, stress on certain syllables and the paralanguage and gestures of a characters in the script of his plays. Such efforts on the part of the playwright carve a verisimilitude of life on the stage.

Tendulkar in an interview with Gowri Ramnarayan clarifies that he requires to visualise his characters before putting them on paper. He consciously learnt and developed the art of visualization of the characters through long years of his apprenticeship. Tendulkar aimed at depicting human life and its concomitant problems arising out of the changes happening in the society. Helping the reader-audience view a character correctly is extremely important for Tendulkar. He manifests his characters and their actions in a way that accurately capture their purpose.
According to Tendulkar, the behaviour of a human being is very complex phenomenon. Man does not leave out the inner contradictions while developing into a character. That makes his characters more complex than those of other playwrights. His characterisation is multi-dimensional and fully convincing. Tendulkar endorses art for life’s sake by using his observations. All these personal experiences and observations of society were utilized while sketching the characters in his plays in a convincing manner. Being a journalist, he stood at the centre of various events from where he could see everything without being involved. This helped Tendulkar in developing an independent perspective of looking at the world at large. It also seems to have developed in him the habit of not taking sides and portraying his characters with detachment and impartiality.

Regarding the sources of his characters, Tendulkar told Elizabeth Roy in an interview that his,

characterization begins with a germ or an idea...sometimes just an incident someone has narrated, or a person who has met me maybe for a brief time but has left me guessing as to what kind of a character he or she can be, or even a news item which I read in the morning's paper... can even be some other play. (Indian Review of Books April 7, 1993)

Tendulkar uses his wide experience of people, their mannerisms and behaviour in sketching his characters. He had developed a curiosity for people and the knack of observing them closely at an early age in his life. He also takes note of the articulative habits of people. This entire repertoire stored in his mind came handy while portraying men and women in his plays. Sometimes a character became the combination of different characteristics of different persons known to the playwright at some point of time in his life. The character, in short, did not remain a replica of a single person in real life.
Tendulkar gives great importance to the language his characters and their speech patterns. He says that characterization in a play is to a large extent through the dialogue and the playwright must have a flexible style of writing. He must change his style with every character. Tendulkar tries to give every character a speech pattern which is true to his background. He takes the culture, region and profession of a person into consideration for deciding his style of speaking. He believes that the characters may become dumb and lifeless puppets if such a care is not taken while creating them. The fact that Tendulkar's characters speak their own language in their unique personal styles lends an authenticity and flavour to his characterisation. Tendulkar views his dramatic personae and ruminates:

I had to wait for days trying to conceive a set of characters for a play. I could not proceed to write a play unless I saw my characters as real life people, unless I could see them moving, doing things by themselves, unless I heard them emoting, talking to each other. I was never able to begin writing my play only with an idea or a theme in mind. I had to have my characters first with me" (ANMS 2)

Tendulkar thinks highly of his characterisation and the pains he takes in creating his characters seems to justify his claim. He refrains from making his characters puppets and speaking his own piece of mind through them. He allows them to have their own minds, ways and destiny.

Tendulkar’s dramatic personae have made a deep impact on contemporary Indian theatre. He deals with the issues of social injustice and the loneliness of the disillusioned individual that arises from his conflict with the hostile society. There is a realistic portrayal of the contemporary men and women in his plays centring around various social problems. Giving vent to the miseries and sufferings of individuals appears to be the main concern of he playwright. He has displayed a high level of
competence in the delineation of his characters. They capture and keep our interest focussed right from their entry in the play. On different aspects of human nature, Tendulkar presents modern man with all his complexities and idiosyncrasies.

Tendulkar faithfully reflects the strains and pressures of contemporary milieu through his characters and compels the reader-audience to ponder over the sorrows and sufferings of their fellow human beings. He makes his characters seem real through a skilful portrayal of their actions, manner of thought and the distinctive qualities and usual traits of their personality. He tries to maintain an objectivity in their presentation. In 'The Poetics', Aristotle has stated that making characters true to life is essential for successful characterization (685). This yardstick is fully applicable to Tendulkar's characters. Their virtues and weaknesses, joys and sorrows, loves and hatreds, are just like that of the ordinary human being. Tendulkar's highly individual outlook on and vision of life is reflected through his characters. G.P. Deshpande, a contemporary Marathi playwright and critic, observes “Tendulkar's plays are notable for their uncompromising realism, merciless probing of human nature and candid scrutiny of individual and group psychology” (xviii). As a realist, Tendulkar tries to show human nature as it is with all its potential for cruelty and an inclination towards it, rather than to escape from it. Through his characters, Tendulkar portrays the plight of contemporary human beings in today's world, the rapid dehumanization of man and his great concern for the future of mankind. The multi-layered characters of Tendulkar are a result of his subtle observation of Indian social reality. Some of his characters are composites of contradictory qualities, struggling between emotion and intellect, seeking emancipation and yet submissive. There is a gradual unraveling of motivations and emotions of a character through which he attacks societal hypocrisy. Commenting upon the enigmatic nature of Tendulkar's characterisation, Arundhi Banerjee reiterates, “Tendulkar's characters have the same prismatic quality
associated with their creator and give forth new meanings as one turns them around in the light of one's understanding” (584). The women characters in Tendulkar's plays include housewives, teachers, mistresses, daughters, slaves and servants. He enmeshes a broad range of emotions in his plays though his penetrating and layered characterization. Shanta Gokhale aptly observes:

Tendulkar's characters are drawn from the widest range of observed examples and are allowed to inhabit the entire spectrum from the unbelievably gullible to the clever, from the malleable to the stubborn, from the conservative to the rebellious, from the self-sacrificing to the grasping. (81)

Tendulkar looks askance and berates the pitiable condition of women in the society through his characters. By presenting a kaleidoscope of people, Tendulkar does not venerate or criticize their lifestyle and behavior but presents them before us as they are and, therefore, endeavours to probe the working of their minds.

The individual impulse to freedom and the societal impulse to restrict it provides the basis of his characterisation. A careful perusal of Tendulkar's plays brings to light the fact that his characters are either victimisers or victims. Sometimes there is a shift in their roles during the course of the play and the victimizers become victims and vice versa. The playwright points out the basic exploitative and oppressive nature of our society through the behavior of his characters. Through the depiction of he physical and mental tortures his characters inflict on each other, he dwells upon the overt as well as covert beastliness hidden inside human beings and their immense capacity for violence as its consequence. Tendulkar's characters in his eight plays translated into English and selected for the present study can be classified into four main categories based on the features that they have in common, i.e. the male protagonists, the female protagonists, the characters who function as the playwright's mouth-piece,
and the secondary characters. Tendulkar has time and again stated that his characters are the most vital ingredient in his playwriting. It makes sense to approach Tendulkar’s work through his characters that help to reveal his social conscience. A detailed study of these characters helps to understand the features of Tendulkar's art of characterisation and his vision of society in general and human life in particular.

Ramakant in *The Vultures*, the eponymous characters of Tendulkar's plays Sakharam Binder and *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Jaisingh Jadhav in *Kamala* and Nath Devlaikar in *Kanyadaan* are the male protagonists in the plays under the present study. All of them have been portrayed as gestating characters and are quite different from each other in behavioral traits, class, character and social position. They are bound by the common thread of their similar attitude of looking towards women as their property. They treat women as nothing more than the objects of satisfying their various needs in life. Catherine Thankamma rightly comments:

> Whatever be their socio-economic background, Sakharam, Jaisingh, Ramakant and Umakant, all have one thing in common—they see women as subjects to be exploited, as individuals with feelings and desires of their own. (83-84)

Her remark can be safely applied to Ghashiram also as he is guilty of the heinous crime of bartering his daughter's chastity for his social position. Though Nath's attitude of looking at women is liberal, he also ends up exploiting his daughter while trying to bring his dream of a casteless society into existence. Thus all the male protagonists in Tendulkar's plays appear as exploiters of women.

Ramakant, in Tendulkar's play *The Vultures*, is a symbol of man's overt bestiality. His character is based on Tendulkar's perceptive observation of some cruel, crafty, unscrupulous and greedy men around him. A.P. Dani avers:
the character of Ramakant bears testimony to Tendulkar's firm conviction that the vulturine in man is deeply rooted and his endeavour to manifest the unspiritual and desolate sensitivities stemming from the pervasive alienation of devastated middle class man. (114-115)

Ramakant’s severe addiction for liquor and his crooked deals have ruined the business set up with so much hard work and pains by his father and uncle. On his debut entry on the stage, he is shown as beating and abusing the poor gardener who has come to request for his rightful wages. His words and actions prove that there is no civility or decency in his nature. The frequent phone calls of his clients complaining against the inferior quality of his goods and services flaunt his dishonest practices. Instead of feeling gratitude towards his father for gifting him a well established business and giving him a share of his property, he grudges the expenses that he has to incur on Pappa. He has an inordinate lust for money and wastes all his intelligence and energy in making money using fair and foul means. His excessive habit of drinking and gambling has made him impotent. With regard to self-interest he follows no moral or legal restrictions. Angry at Ramakant's ill-treatment, Pappa becomes sad at his folly of having fathered a son like him. Completely unmoved, Ramakant shamelessly retorts, "As the seed, so the tree did we ever ask to be produced?" (The Vultures 211).

In spite of all his cunningness and dishonest practices, Ramakant is not able to achieve something substantial in the world. His financial condition goes on deteriorating day by day. On the one hand he fails to handle properly his day-to-day business, on the other, he constantly dreams of a bungalow, car and a fat bank-balance. He is eager to lead an affluent lifestyle. Unable to get money from outside, he goes after his family members one by one. Uncle Sakharam's return and demand of money from Pappa gives Ramakant a clue of Pappa 's hidden bank account. After
frightening uncle Sakharam out of his wits and driving him away, he hatches a conspiracy with Umakant and Manik to rob Pappa. He pretends to be affectionate towards his father and cleverly gets him dead drunk. He feigns a quarrel with Umakant and Pappa in the middle and dashes him on the ground. Afraid of getting injured, Pappa agrees to hand over his remaining money to Ramakant.

Manik, his younger sister, becomes Ramakant's next victim. He comes to know about Manik's affair with a rich old man. Together with Umakant, he embarks on an unscrupulous enterprise of detaining Manik in the house by maiming her and extracting money from her rich lover by blackmailing him. This horrible act of maiming Manik is done by Ramakant without any scruples. The accidental death of Manik's lover results in a complete fiasco of his plan. Manik is discovered to be pregnant. In the name of protecting family honour, Ramakant kicks her in the belly repeatedly and aborts her. The actions of Ramakant show that he has lost his sanity and humanity completely and is living life just like a beast.

Ramakant treats Rama, his wife, in an unkind and callous manner throughout the play. He frequently takes her to the doctors and charlatan as he desperately wishes to have a son. He fails to realize that his excessive intake of liquor is responsible for this problem. He has no regard for his dutiful wife's sane advice. Her suggestion to leave the present business and to begin a new life somewhere else is unacceptable to him. Like a genuine egoist and male chauvinist, he orders Rama to look after the domestic chores and leave the things connected with the outside world to himself.

Ramakant asks Umakant to leave their ancestral house to him and go his own way. Umakant refuses and asks him to settle all the accounts related with their family wealth and jewelry etc. On realizing that Ramakant will not give him his share, Umakant tells him that his wife is carrying in her womb the child of Rajaninath. Ramakant rages and rants and drives Umakant out of the house once for all. However, his suspicion is aroused. In order to know Rama's feelings for Rajaninath, he talks to
Rama tactfully and succeeds in eliciting her tender feelings for Rajaninath. He becomes convinced of Rama's having committed adultery and coerces her to abort the foetus. At the end of the play, we see Ramakant running away from the house in order to escape from his creditors.

Tendulkar has painted Ramakant's character in a total black hue without an iota of good quality in him. Perhaps his wish to have a child is the only trace of humanity left in him. Shailaja Wadikar comments that Ramakant is a “victim of his own evil nature which he has inherited from his father” (67). Pappa's act of driving his brother Sakharam out of business jointly set up by them proves that treachery and deceitfulness is in Ramakant's blood. Moreover, Ramakant's frustration at being childless and his failure to fulfill the desire of being wealthy also seems to drive him towards acts of cruelty and barbarism.

Another eponymous character of Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder* is a remarkable study of basic instinct of sexual urge and violence in a human being. The playwright has brought out the complexities in the human nature through his insightful portrayal of Sakharam, the book-binder, as a strange combination of sensibility and insensibility. Sakharam is depicted as a self-made man who lives life according to his own beliefs. He has a habit of lashing out at the world time and again. As he does not believe in the institution of marriage, he has chosen to remain a celibate. He offers shelter to women who have been deserted by their husbands and makes them perform all the wifely duties in his house. Tendulkar portrays him as a self-centered womaniser who exploits the deserted women to satisfy his lust. Sakharam is a product of his circumstances as well as heredity. The lack of love from his parents and the constant beatings that he used to get from his cruel father had denied him a secure childhood. The bitter experiences in his family dissipated his tender feelings. Even after running away from the house, there was no escape from misery for Sakharam as the world outside proved to be equally exploitative. Such experiences of life turned him into a rough and tough guy with strong
leaning towards being violent. Shailaja Wadikar observes that the want of love has generated a kind of fierceness in Sakharam's temperament. As a result, he turns into a masochist.

As the play opens, we see that Lakshmi is the seventh woman brought to his house by Sakharam. While explaining the rules of living in his house to her, Sakharam condemns the hypocrisy of the people in the society. He accuses the husbands of giving an inhuman treatment to their wives. He also mocks at women for showing devotion to their cruel and uncaring husbands. It is ironical that he himself behaves in the same manner with his mistresses. He makes them slave for him all the time. According to V.M. Madge, “the self-proclaimed unorthodoxy of Sakharam provides Tendulkar an opportunity to rail at the middle-class sensibilities of his audience and shock them by his unorthodox views and opinions” (123). Sakharam appears to be a hypocrite who indulges in the same actions for which he blames others. Moreover, he is blissfully unaware of the contradictions in his behavior and thinking.

The few months that Lakshmi spends with Sakharam effect certain changes in his character. He begins behaving like a sober family man to some extent and starts making an effort to reduce his intake of opium and liquor. However, Sakharam's relationship with Lakshmi cannot last for a long time due to the inherent difference in their personalities. Soon Sakharam is fed up with the placid ways of Lakshmi. When Lakshmi objects to the presence of Dawood, his Muslim friend, during the worship of Ganesha, Sakharam beats her severely and drives her away.

Sakharam brings Champa to his house as his next mistress. The goodness and sensitivity that Lakshmi had kindled in his nature completely evaporates now as Champa is an antithesis to Lakshmi. Sakharam is a complex character that undergoes profound changes with the changing circumstances. The physical beauty and aggressive nature of Champa inflames Sakharam's sexual hunger. He wallows in the mire of lust in Champa's company. Arundhati Banerjee aptly comments, “Sakharam is
transformed into a sensuous, lewd drunkard with thoughts only of sexual enjoyment in his relationship with Champa who is gross, sensuous and brazen in nature” (*CP* 578).

Sakharam is fond of flaunting his virility in order to hide his loneliness. To his utter discomfort, he realizes the transient nature of his virility when Lakshmi returns to his house. Champa forces him against his wish to allow Lakshmi to stay in the house. The simultaneous presence of Lakshmi and Champa seems to bring out the two different strands in Sakharam’s nature and results in his impotence. His ego is deeply hurt when Champa refuses to have intercourse with him citing his impotence as its reason. When Lakshmi discloses the fact of Champa's having an affair with Dawood to Sakharam, he is enraged and murders Champa by strangulating her. Once his fury subsides, Sakharam realizes the gravity of his crime and is reduced to a pathetic condition. All his life, he had prided himself in doing everything openly and not concealing anything from society like the hypocritical people whom he often criticized. Now he is forced to hide Champa's corpse in order to escape punishment from law.

As he is bewildered and unable even to move, Lakshmi takes control of the situation and starts instructing him and he seems to have become a play-thing in the hands of Lakshmi at the end of the play. According to Jonathan Kalb, an eminent drama critic:

Tendulkar, instead of demonizing the coarse bookbinder, leaves the viewer with an understanding of his helplessness in a certain sense. Sakharam's tragedy is the result of his unsuccessful attempt to exploit a corrupt system for personal advantage which leads him to lose everything he has hoped to protect. (*New York Times* Nov.3, 2004)

Sakharam keeps insinuating the fact that the people in society indulge in the same practices as he does. Tendulkar seems to imply that everybody is the same, but some people hide what they are and others
don't. Thus Tendulkar unmasks the veil off the faces of middle-class people through the portrayal of Sakharam.

Through the character of Ghashiram, Tendulkar believes that violence and sexual urge are the basic instincts of human beings and natural traits of human nature. According to G.Mallikarjuna, “the eponymous character of Tendulkar’s play Ghashiram Kotwal stands for the basic human instinct of violence and that of Nana Fadnavis in the same play stands for the instinct of sexual urge” (85). Through these two characters, Tendulkar wants to stress the abnormality of the tendencies that they exhibit. The playwright seems to imply that wherever there is a Nana Fadnavis, there is a Ghashiram and vice-versa.

Ghashiram, a North Indian Brahmin, arrives in Poona in search of a fortune. Unable to get a decent job, he becomes a Nachya, the supporting dancer, making mimicry in order to please the audience, and lives with Gulabi, the famous dancer in Bavannakhan, Poona's red-light area. Ghashiram wins the favour of Nana Fadnavis, the chief minister of the Peshwa, while the latter visits Gulabi's Kotha (dance-hall). When Nana twists his ankle, Ghashiram offers his back to Nana to rest his foot on. His use of flattering words for Nana shows that Ghashiram is prepared to demean himself in order to get into the company of influential people. Nana rewards him with his pearl necklace which Gulabi snatches from him. When Ghashiram objects to it, her servant beat him and threw him out of the place. Ghashiram is again humiliated when he attends the Dakshina ceremony in which the Peshwa rewards the Brahmins with gifts. Being a Kannauj Brahmin, Ghashiram is regarded as an alien in the Poona Brahmin Community and is, therefore, ostracized. Instead of getting any gift, Ghashiram is unjustly accused of committing a theft and is beaten severely. Ghashiram had come with high hopes to Poona, but he only gets pain and humiliation. Mad with rage and grief, he vows to take revenge on the Poona society which has treated him in such a degrading manner. In order to teach a lesson to the Poona community, Ghashiram needs power. He
perceives a chance of getting power when he sees that Nana wants his daughter, Gauri to satisfy his lust. Ghashiram stoops to the level of a rank opportunist and he barters the chastity of his daughter with the Kotwalship of Poona. Though he is fully aware of his own wickedness in sacrificing the chastity of his conscience, Ghashiram's overpowering desire for revenge transforms him into a beast.

After becoming the Kotwal, Ghashiram begins a reign of terror in Poona. Under the garb of maintaining law and order he starts persecuting the Poona Brahmins in the most inhuman manner. He does not think even for a moment that he is punishing an entire community which includes many innocent people, for the crimes committed by a few. He stretches his plan of vengeance to absurd limits. His plan of freeing Gauri from Nana's clutches, however, does not succeed because Gauri dies of an unsuccessful abortion. Ghashiram's grief and anger now knew no limits. He is well acquainted with the fact that Nana is responsible for Gauri's death. Nana succeeds in pacifying Ghashiram by suggesting that he will lose the Kotwalship of Poona if he dares to utter even a word against him. Ghashiram tamely surrenders to Nana's authoritarian talk. This is a further degradation of Ghashiram who decides to forget the unjust death of his daughter in order to retain his 'Kotwalship'.

After Gauri's death, Ghashiram begins persecuting people in even more ruthless and violent manner. Neela Bhalla argues: “Ghashiram uses his tyrannies to assuage his own guilt and every blow that he strikes against hapless victims is a vindication to him of the crime against his daughter”. Nana realizes that Ghashiram may become harmful to him in future, therefore, he hands Ghashiram over to the bloodthirsty crowd of Poona Brahmins who are angry over the death of some Brahmins due to Ghashiram's order to lock them in a narrow cell. The victims of Ghashiram’s cruelty now become his tormentors. They inflict all kinds of tortures on Ghashiram and beat him to death. Tendulkar succeeds in giving a semblance of humanity to the beastly character of Ghashiram in his dying
moments when he blames himself for his daughter's death and accepts his suffering and death as a just retribution of the crime.

Jaisingh, one of the central characters in Tendulkar's play *Kamala*, is an ambitious and adventurous journalist who leaves no stone unturned to expose the social maladies to light. Outwardly Jaisingh makes a show that he is devotedly working for a social cause. But in reality, Jaisingh is after name, fame and money. He can go to any extent to achieve his ambition. He does not care a fig for the feelings of his wife, Sarita. He makes her work like a slave in the house. Tendulkar exposes the hypocrisy of Jaisingh through the 'Kamala' episode. He buys Kamala from a rural flesh market for Rs. 250. His intention is to present Kamala before a press conference to prove the rampant flesh-trade. He does not allow Kamala even to bath or change her torn sari as it suits his purpose. He wants to present Kamala before public in the most miserable and abject condition so that he can win applause for rescuing such a sufferer. He just wants to use Kamala as a ladder to get money, reputation and fame. Actually he is not concerned about the plight of helpless women. Shailaja Wadikar aptly observes, “Jaisingh uses Kamala as a means by which he can get a promotion in his job and win reputation in his professional career”. He does not concern himself with the thought of Kamala's future after his press conference. After using her as a use-and-throw object, he sends her to an orphanage.

Jaising's attitude fowards his wife is not much different as he uses her only as an object of enjoyment and as a slave to look after his house. He does not give any importance to the fact that Sarita's support and encouraging has helped him in building a successful career. Catherine Thankamma aptly comments, “Jaisingh remains totally indifferent to Sarita's feelings. He expects Sarita to submit to his desire for intercourse whether she wants it or not and calls her a 'bitch' when she refuses to cooperate with him. Jaisingh who victimises Kamala as well as Sarita, himself ends up as a victim at the end of the play. Thus he gets a treatment
of his own medicine. Some powerful elements in the society who do not like his expose of the flesh-trade pressurise Seth Singhania and Jaisingh is dismissed from the job. Through the character of Jaisingh, Tendulkar sheds light on the male egoism, domination, selfishness and hypocrisy of the modern success-oriented generation. Shorn of his usual arrogance and self-confidence, Jaisingh is a pitiable figure at the end of the play.

Nath Devlalikar is the male protagonist in Tendulkar's play *Kanyadaan*. Tendulkar depicts the transformation of Nath from an idealist to a realist as he realises the hollowness of his dream of creating a casteless society. In an interview, Tendulkar once said that Nath is himself and some other people of his generation. The playwright wanted to look critically at his own generation and its dreamy idealism as he was angry about what had happened to it.

Nath, an MLA, is a humanistic and liberal person who believes in the essential goodness of man and is of the opinion that even sinners and criminals can be corrected and reformed by treating them properly. He teaches his ideals and principles to his children-Jayaprakash and Jyoti. Under the influence of her father's idealistic thoughts, Jyoti informs Nath about her decision, he is overjoyed. Nath has been championing the cause of eradication of caste distinctions from society all his life. The decision of his daughter to marry in another caste gives Nath a chance to put his words into practice. Nath, however, thinks about this marriage only from the point of view of a social reformer and does not take into consideration the fact that there is lot of difference between the backgrounds and upbringing of Jyoti and Arun. The incompatibility of their culture and lifestyle may impede their consummation. Moreover, Jyoti confesses that she has not fallen in love with Arun. It is the spell of Arun's poetry her resultant sympathy for him which probably subsumes her decision to marry him. Though Seva, his wife and Jayaprakash, his son, are against Jyoti's marriage with Arun, Nath backs her whole-heartedly had gets her married to Arun.
After spending a few months with Arun, Jyoti returns to her parents' house complaining that Arun treats her in an inhuman manner and she has decided to leave him for good. For Nath, this marriage is an ideological experiment and is hell bent on making it work. Instead of realising Jyoti's plight and solving her problems, he exhorts her to save the marriage as it is a significant social experiment. Jyoti decides to go back to Arun. Thus Nath is under the mistaken impression that experimenting with somebody's life will change the society. He remains naive even after years of social work. His daughter has to bear the brunt of Nath's idealistic fervour. Arun kicks her in the stomach while she is in her sixth month pregnancy. Nath is completely baffled to hear about Jyoti's physical torture by Arun. He has recently read Arun's autobiography in which Arun has given a poignant expression to his humiliating experiences as a result of having born in marginalized family. Nath cannot understand how a person who has been victim of oppression can inflict tortures upon others. Jayaprakash opens his eyes by telling him about the newspaper report of the persecution of Palestinians at the hands of Jews who were once persecuted. He says,"...yesterday's victim is today's victimizer...therefore is no hope of a man's gaining nobility through experience, he can only become a greater devil." (Act II. Scene II. 547)

Now Nath realizes that Arun's torture of Jyoti is his way of taking revenge of the atrocities committed on his ancestors by upper caste people in the past. Nath is now forced to alter his philosophy of life and give up his belief in he essential goodness of man under the pressure of the changed circumstances in his life. Moreover, Jyoti blames him for teaching her wrong principles and not following them himself. She breaks her relations with him and leaves his house never to return. Thus Tendulkar has depicted the tragedy of a person's excessive and unrealistic idealism through the character of Nath. This also exposes the pernicious effects of social stratification which stare into the peaceful coexistence of mankind.
Talking about female protagonists, Leela Benare, Vijaya, Rama, Lakshmi, Mitra, Sarita and Jyoti, like Tendulkar's male protagonists, are also developing characters. The common thread that binds them is the their similar fate of getting exploited by men. Kalindi Deshpande writes:

It is saddening to know that almost all his (Tendulkar's) women characters meekly submit to the injustice, violence and harassment done to them. They seem to be helpless and have no other alternative but to go through the way that life has chosen for them. (91)

With the exception of Vijaya and to some extent of Sarita and Lakshmi, all other women protagonists are exploited by their male counterparts and end up as victims.

Likewise through the character of Leela Benare in *Silence ! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar has highlighted the plight of woman in an exploitative, male-dominated society. Benare, a school teacher, is a spinster in her early thirties. She is also the member of a drama troupe which gives performances of the mock law court to spread awareness in society. She is lively and enthusiastic by nature. In the beginning of the play, Benare is shown making audacious and amatory overtures to the docile villager, Samant. It seems as if she were ready to have an affair with him if he shows even the slightest inclination to it. Samant, being an innocent simpleton, does not understand her amorous moves and thus the matter ends there.

Benare's relations with the members of her group do not seem to be cordial. She expresses her contempt for them through her sarcastic comments to Samant. After their arrival, Benare begins making fun of them. An interesting thing to note is that her colleagues are failures in their respective professions and in some cases, even in their lives. They appear to be jealous of Benare who is quite successful in her career. They also do
not like the way Benare makes fun of them. They are looking for an opportunity to discipline her as they do not approve of her unconventional behaviour. The mock-trial gives them an opportunity to settle their scores with Benare. They gang up against her and hurt her feelings deeply by making her private affairs public.

Tendulkar gets into a probing into womankind's psyche through the character of Benare. Benare has committed the crime of indiscreetly offering her body to two men who entered her life at different times. When she was a teenager, she got enmeshed in liaison with a maternal uncle who used to praise her blossoming youth. She did not realize that her uncle was actually seducing her. When she insisted on marriage, he ran away. Benare's family members held her solely responsible and the deep shock and sense of shame which she got resulted in her trying to commit suicide but she was saved. Then she ventured into a love-affair with Damle at a mature age. He made her pregnant and refused to accept the responsibility of the child. Actually Benare had behaved in a very immature manner in this case. She knew that Damle was a married man and still she went too far in her relationship. Thus Benare's failure to keep a check on her bodily desires is responsible for her plight. Tendulkar critiques society for illicit affairs on the female rather than on the male.

Benare wants to give birth to her child knowing fully well that child must have a father's name attached to his name. So she starts begging for alms of marriage to men such as Ponkshe and Rokde who are inferior to her. Her flirting with Samant at the beginning of the play is probably an effort to entice him in a prospective romance and marriage. V.S. Pathak and Hemang Desai in an essay write:

Benare's flirtations are a proof of her inveterate belief that maternity outside wedlock is deemed abysmal from the social standpoint and that it can be legitimized only by trapping a
man in the bond of espousal irrespective of his low-browness and crudity. (10-16)

Thus it is Benare's maternal urge and her anxiety for the well-being of her anticipative offspring that leads her to propose to these men. Tendulkar, through this incident berates his strong vitriolic repugnance for the hypocritical attitude of the male dominating society which pretends as mute spectator. Benare remains completely silent during the dissection of her personal life by her fellow actors under the garb of a mock-trial. Even when she tries to speak, she is silenced by them. She is given a chance of defending herself at the end of the trial. Tendulkar shows that all the characters remain in a frozen state during her long reply. The playwright seems to suggest that her reply falls on deaf ears. Benare seems to have accepted the Court's verdict of the destruction of the feticide in her womb. Tendulkar's stage directions about Benare's condition at the end of the play unleashes the reality as "Benare feebly stirs a little. Then gives up the efforts."(Act III. 120)

Through the character of Queen Vijaya in his play *Encounter in Umbugland*, Tendulkar has depicted the indomitability and grit of human spirit. She is one of the rare human beings in Tendulkar's skilful portrayal of Vijaya who succeeds in turning the tables on her adversaries. Arundhati Banerjee observes:

There is a definite development in her from a headstrong, self-opinionated but politically inexperienced young princess to an intelligent yet whimsical ruler who devises her own (successful) methods of vanquishing her enemies. (*CP 574*)

Vijaya's freedom-loving nature and her lack of interest in the life of the palace is highlighted at he beginning of the play in her wish to leave the palace and live at a place where there won't be any restrictions on her. She
is extremely fond of playing games such as hopscotch. Prannarayan, the eunuch attendant, has looked after her since her childhood. Naturally, she trusts him and there is a lot of mutual affection and regard between them.

The untimely death of King Vichitravirya forces Vijaya into the arena of politics. Ab-ovo, she performs her duties according to the instructions of her ministers. But the training which she receives from Prannarayan soon transforms her into a seasoned politician. She refuses to be hoity-toity and spoon-fed by the ministers. She acquaints herself with their secret ambitions and deceitful nature; she learns to keep a check on them. The unending conflict with the ministers makes Vijaya miserable at times. She longs for the carefree life of her past. She confides in Prannarayan about her worries who bolsters her up to meet new challenges. He exhorts Vijaya that a ruler has to become insensitive in order to be successful. Vijaya succeeds in suppressing her humanity after learning to enjoy power. Though Vijaya becomes cunning and crafty with the passing of time, the human aspect of her nature is revealed through her affectionate relationship with Prannarayan.

After the successful completion of her first year at the helm, Vijay faces some grave crisis in her political career. But the motive of improving her own position in Umbugland is also hidden behind her pure motive of doing justice to the poor people. The ministers are unhappy with Vijaya as she has refused her consent to some of the laws they wished to enact and enforce. They realise that Vijaya needs their consent to her plan and intentionally refuse it. This leads to an encounter between Vijaya and her ministers for political supremacy. Vijaya de-facto decides to implement the plan. So she declares emergency and centralises the complete power of the state in her hands. The ministers hatch a conspiracy of getting Vijaya killed by inciting the mob to attack the palace. Vijaya has developed an efficient secret service and comes to know about the conspiracy in time. She turns the tables on the ministers by speaking to the mob in a clever manner and brandishing their anger against the ministers. The way Vijaya speaks her
mind in order to pacify the mob clearly shows that she has mastered the art of fooling the masses. This incident reminds the funeral oration of Antony after the assassination of Julius Caesar in Act III. The ministers give up and submit to her autocratic rule. Thus Tendulkar has depicted the modern liberated woman through the character of Vijaya who succeeds in the face of quite hostile circumstances with the help of her self-belief and strong will.

Similarly Tendulkar has sketched Rama's character in his play *The Vultures* in the mould of an ideal Indian woman - dutiful, kind and submissive. But she never received a kind word or an appreciative look from anybody. Ramakant, her husband, never considered her more than an object of enjoyment. Rama's unquestioning endurance of suffering in the face of severe mental torture inflicted on her by her family members establishes her identity as a typical traditional Indian woman. Though she does not like the words and actions of her family members, she endures inflectional atrocities silently. Through Rama's character Tendulkar seems to suggest that even the virtuous and innocent people have to suffer untold miseries because of the proximity of vicious people. Rama's suffering results from the vulture-like tendencies of her conservative family members. Describing her agonies while trying to survive in the house of vultures, Rama says to Rajaninath, "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" (Act II Scene II 240). This is how she has lived her life in her husband's house. Though it is extremely painful, she cannot think of any alternative either.

Rama's maternal longing remains unfulfilled due to Ramakant's impotency. She is fed up with the frequent visits to doctors and saints. She is fully aware of the cause of her barrenness which is her husband's excessive drinking. But she feels imbecile to tell him the factual position. Sometimes she thinks of committing suicide to end her miserable existence. Through her long and moving speech in Act II Scene II, the
playwright brings out the plight of Rama in the Pitale household quite clearly. She feels that her womb is sound and healthy. She was born to become a mother. It is the weakness of Ramakant, her boozy husband, who is fully responsible for her sterility. Rama's self-expression in her speech is just like the eruption of a volcano after years of silence.

Rama's intense yearning to be a mother leads her in having an illicit relationship with Rajaninath, her half brother-in-law. For the first time she comes out of her traditional and conventional way of life and tries to assert her individuality by becoming pregnant from Rajaninath. Her decision is morally incorrect. However, it can not be denied that it is the single humane relationship in the play. Rama and Rajaninath are bound by the common thread of goodness and innocence. It finally brings them together. Ab initio she succumbs to societal duress which she consciously thwarts later on notwithstanding ethical cannons. Rama who has been portrayed as timid and submissive throughout the play willfully seduces Rajaninath with a view to become pregnant. The playwright makes it clear that it is not lust but Rama's genuine grief at being childless which makes this happen. Rama's variant behaviour does not last long. Ramakant comes to know about her adultery from Umakant and forces her to abort this illicit child. It is as if the last hope in her life were gone. She becomes a totally lifeless body hereon. Ramakant becomes bankrupt. While running away from his creditors, he takes Rama with him. She follows him mutely to go wherever he leads her. It is clear that there is no joy or hope in her life in future. Through Rama's character Tendulkar brings out the lack of poetic justice in life and the unjust suffering of good people due to the wicked actions of unscrupulous people. Whereas Manju Kapoor advocates the notion of free will for women and vehemently underpins the extra marital relations, Vijay Tendulkar does not approve of this kind of modernity which is considered unhealthy practice in Indian Society.

Lakshmi, in Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder* is one of the most intriguing characters created by the playwright. She is Sakharam's seventh
mistress. Initially, she appears to be helpless, submissive, innocent and religious. She, however, gets transformed into a fearless and cunning schemer during her struggle for survival along with Champa in Sakharam’s house at the end of the play. When Lakshmi appears on the stage for the first time, she seems to be an average Indian woman who is religious, dutiful and docile; she looks after the household chores as per instructions in the most obedient manner. She also submits to Sakharam's demands for physical pleasure without any protest. Her habit of conversing with ants and crows establishes her as a sensitive and delicate human being.

The most dominant trait in Lakshmi’s personality is her unshakable faith in God and religion. She emotionally accepts Sakharam as her husband and even secretly wears a 'Mangal-Sutra' in his name. In observing the rituals, Lakshmi is almost a fundamentalist. She can go to an extent behaving as to what she believes to be morally correct. She cannot accept Dawood's presence during the worship of Lord Ganesha. Though she knows that Dawood is Sakharam’s bosom-friend, she objects to it and has to pay the price heavily. Sakharam beats her severely and drives her out of the house.

After leaving Sakharam's house, Lakshmi goes to live with her nephew and his wife from where they throw her out of the house on the charge of stealing. Lakshmi who still thinks of Sakharam as her husband returns to him. All the abusing and beating of Sakharam cannot change her mind. Realising that Champa has taken her place, Lakshmi agrees to play a second fiddle role to her. She accepts all the conditions imposed on her by Champa. She does not like the way Champa treats her husband, Shinde. She becomes sympathetic towards Shinde and tries to comfort him by offering food. She notices that Champa remains absent from home every afternoon and she becomes suspicious and starts following her. She finds out that Champa is having an illicit affair with Dawood. Her moral sense is outraged by Champa's behaviour. She cannot, however, tell this to Sakharam. It is only when Sakharam feels hurt because of Champa's charge
of impotency, decides to throw her out of the house that Lakshmi discloses Champa's secret to Sakharam. This leads to Champa's murder by Sakharam. A playwright's thoughts about life and his world view guide him, consciously or unconsciously, in the treatment of his characters. Tendulkar admits in an interview that when circumstances push a person to the wall, it is not only natural but even justifiable for him to become aggressive (Madge 171). There is no other option left to Lakshmi but to disclose the fact of Champa's unfaithfulness to Sakharam in order to save her from being thrown out of the house. Thus Lakshmi trapped by circumstances, changes from a simple, generous and sensitive woman into a cunning, ruthless and vicious lady and thereby becomes responsible for Champa's death at the hands of Sakharam. After the murder, Sakharam is in a state of shock, frightened out of his wits by his own action. By helping him in hiding Champa's corpse, Lakshmi manages to take him under her total control at the end of the play. There is, no doubt, a question mark over Lakshmi's future as it is bound with the fact whether Sakharam escapes from the clutches of law or gets implicated. Through Lakshmi's character, Tendulkar appears to suggest that a person who bravely fights against hostile circumstances can win the battle of life irrespective of whether his actions are morally right or wrong.

Tendulkar's delineation of Mitra's character in *A Friend's Story* bears testimony to his sensitive handling of a controversial issue. While portraying Mitra (Sumitra Dev) who is a lesbian, Tendulkar sheds light on the problems in the lives of individuals who are suffering from certain physical deformities. The playwright establishes Mitra's differentness through the portrayal of her thinking, action, manners and gestures. Bapu, the Sutrachar of the play and Mitra's sole friend in the world, describes his first impression of Mitra: "She was different from all the other girls... there was a masculine vigour in Sumitra Dev's stride and speech. She was carefree, her laughter came in loud bursts. She had eyes which met you in straight combat." (CP 419). It is through Bapu's observation of Mitra's
actions and his remarks on her behaviour that Mitra's personality is gradually revealed to us.

A major crisis in Mitra's life occurs when she becomes aware of her physical inferiority for the first time. She had enjoyed the company of boys and their games right from her childhood. But when she did not feel any physical thrill in the company of her prospective bridegroom, she did an experiment to check herself. She tried to have intercourse with the family servant. The truth dawned on her that she could never become a man's partner in the act. She was so greatly disturbed by the truth about her own nature that she unsuccessfully tried to commit suicide.

With the passing of time Mitra learned to live with the truth. When she was playing a male character in a college play and took Nama, the female lead, in her arms during a romantic scene, a new dimension of her personality became known to Mitra. She could feel the thrill and excitement that she had not felt in man's company. Mitra found herself falling in love with Nama. Without giving any thought to social norms, she decides to follow her heart and make Nama her girl-friend. After a while she succeeded in doing so. But Mitra's happiness was short-lived. Nama is already having an affair with Manya Dalvi, the college ruffian. Manya refuses to let Nama go. Mitra's failure in her affair with Nama and her conflict with Manya which leads to his publicly exposing her abnormality, ultimately results in her committing suicide.

It shows that the society cannot tolerate Mitra's violation of its norms and so much so that even her family members, except her friend Bapu, do not support her. Rohini Hattangady, in this connection, comments: “Bapu is aware of the great restlessness that is hidden behind Mitra's full-throated laughter and her ‘I don't care attitude’ and he tries to understand her and shows care and concern for her” (CP 593). But Mitra wrecks her friendship with Bapu due to her own actions. She tries to dominate Bapu and expects him to do everything for her. She exploits Bapu by frequently demanding money from him and also using his room
for her meetings with Nama. She does not feel any remorse when Bapu gets beaten by Manya due to Mitra's forging the handwriting of Bapu for an anonymous letter. Bapu advises Mitra against pestering Nama if she does not wish to continue her relationship with her. But Mitra does not listen to him, so their friendship is broken. Mitra becomes all alone in the world as Bapu was her only confident. Mitra's personality deteriorates rapidly after her separation with Bapu and becomes a prostitute and finally she commits suicide. Thus Tendulkar depicts, through the character of Mitra, the tragedy of an individual who becomes a victim of society's apathy as well as her own stubbornness and selfishness.

Through the character of Sarita, Jaishingh's wife, in his play *Kamala*, Tendulkar has given an interesting picture of a modern Indian woman who is caught between the opposite pulls of tradition and modernity. According to Shibu Simon, “Tendulkar exposes the chauvinism intrinsic in the modern Indian male who believes himself to be liberal through his delineation of Sarita's character” (157). Though Sarita is an educated urban lady, she is treated with scant respect by her husband, Jaisingh. Moreover, Sarita is not even aware of the slave-like existence to which Jaisingh has reduced her. While Jaisingh remains absent from home for long periods, she looks after everything dutifully and does everything that is possible to please Jaisingh. When she sees Jaisingh using Kamala, whom he has bought to prove the prevalence of flesh-trade, as a commodity, her eyes are opened. She understands Jaisingh's real attitude of looking at her as only an object of enjoyment and as a caretaker of the house. Shailaja Wadikar succinctly observes: “Sarita realises that she is bound to her husband in the wedlock to slave for him permanently after the entry of Kamala in her house” (77). Sarita decides to change her condition and starts asserting her individuality. Now she starts defying him; she objects to Jaisingh's decision to send Kamala to an orphanage and she refuses to accompany him to a party. She is so angry and frustrated because of her husband's behaviour that she thinks of arranging a press conference
to expose Jaisingh in front of the world. She even refuses to submit to jaisingh's desire for physical intimacy.

Thus Tendulkar has portrayed Sarita as a modern woman who can intellectually push forward her desires and ambitions. She is mentally prepared for the struggle with society to assert her identity. But she is also, in the words of Shanta Gokhale, “a compassionate human being who defers her rebellion against her husband as he is in an acute need of her moral support” (Madge 42). Sarita is a changed personality by the end of the play.

Through the character of Jyoti in his play *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar brings out the tragic end of a girl who is obstinate and does not retrace her steps even after realising that her choice of life-partner has gone horribly wrong. Jyoti is the daughter of Nath, a politician with socialist leanings. Obedient and dutiful, she has imbibed all the ideals and principles of her visionary father. She is determined to embark on a path of truth and goodness shown to her by her father. When Arun, a boy belonging to the backward class, proposes to her, Jyoti agrees to consummation. She does not realise that her belonging to an upper caste family and the issue of casteism deeply rooted in our society as well as in Arun's mind will wreck her marriage in future. Through the depiction of Jyoti's physical and mental torture at the hands of her husband, Tendulkar sheds light on the problem of casteism and its dangerous effects on our society.

Jyoti realises that Arun tortures her because he sees in her a representative of the upper class people who have exploited his ancestors in the past. She realises the inadequacies of the essential beastliness of man's essential goodness. Arun's brutal behaviour has convinced her of the essential beastliness of man. She is completely disillusioned with Nath as she understand the faulty nature of his approach towards her marriage. As a result, she disowns him as her father at the end of the play and prohibits him from meddling in her life. She decides to stay with Arun and meekly
suffers all the tortures inflicted by him. Thus Jyoti chooses a path of wilful self-destruction.

Tendulkar has delineated the character of Prannarayan, a eunuch, in his play *Encounter in Umbagland* as a person having a deep insight into human life and the intricacies of politics. He is the chamberlain of the Queen's Apartment. It is his tutelage which transforms Vijaya from an immature, novice girl into a cunning and resolute politician. Shailaja Wadikar aptly opines “Tendulkar throws light on the ugliness and futility of power game which is closely inked with conspiracy and treachery through the character of Prannarayan” (135). He introduces the play and acts as a neutral commentator throughout the action. The playwright seems to voice his opinions about life and politics through Prannarayan's philosophical utterances which are full of wisdom. Tendulkar makes the reader-audience aware of the ugliness and futility of the power game and the intricate intrigues and corruption involved in it through Prannarayan's utterances. N.S. Dharan aptly avers, “Tendulkar seems to have drawn heavily on his own observations of the world and its inhabitants in his portrayal of Prannarayan's character” (86). He teaches Vijaya that appearances are deceptive and one should not be misled by them. His guidance proves to be of immense help to Vijaya while coming with the falsity and treacheries of her ministers. Though Prannarayan is a eunuch, he is regarded by Vijaya as manlier than the false men that she comes across in the field of politics.

Tendulkar has sketched Rajanjnath as a sensitive, kind and good hearted individual in his play *The Vultures*. Being an illegitimate son of Pappa (Mr. Hari Pitale), Rajanjnath is cursed to live a pathetic life right from his birth. Pappa has neither completely disowned him nor looked after him properly. Rajanjnath was just a boy when Rama had entered the Pitale household after her marriage with Ramakant. She had great sympathy for Rajanjnath and looked after him in spite of her husband's instruction against it. It is natural that Rajanjnath has great affection for Rama, his
sister-in-law, who has supported him through his tender years. He is fully conscious of her suffering. But he cannot do anything for her. He says:

She laid on me
The burden of her oath.
Again and again.
It was her oath, and
I kept it. I didn't speak. (CP 205)

Rajaninath is fully conscious of Rama's intense longing to bear a child. That's why, he does not oppose her when she turns to him in order to become pregnant. It is his sensitivity towards Rama's yearning to become a mother that results in his having an illicit relationship with her. Arundhati Banerjee observes:

The sexual aspect of Rajaninath's relationship with Rama is merely an extension of his love for her and is the only redeeming feature in the morbid and claustrophobic atmosphere of he Pitale family. Deeply concerned with Rama's plight, he wants to make her happy. Though morally wrong, it is a tender and humane relationship. (CP 585)

According to Samik Bandyopadhyay, “Rajaninath gets a release from his sense of shame about his connection with the family of vultures through his illicit relationship with Rama” (CP 584). Referring to the piteous condition of himself and Rama, he quips:

A curse that's on us... On us all. If you at least can escape that curse-why shouldn't you? If I can be used for that, why should I say 'no'? Why? Virtue and vice are for other people! For us on whom this terrible curse has fallen, there is nothing but this curse. And a burning body. A burning mind. (CP 234)
This relationship results in the only act of creation in a world of degeneration and destruction in the Pitale household. Rama becomes pregnant with his child. When Ramakant comes to know about this, he gets her aborted. It suggests that Tendulkar sees the vision of World as a place where the forces of evil prove to be too powerful against the forces of good.

Rajaninath has a dual role to play in *The Vultures*. In addition to being a character, he also functions as a Sutradhar (Presenter and conductor of a theatrical performance). It is through his memories and poetry that we come to know about the incidents that transpire in a span of twenty two years. For the most part of the play, he is an aloof observer; he uses a gentle and poetic language while describing the good and pure Rama. While talking about the human vultures, he uses an ugly imagery and mentions mangy dogs, lepers death-heads, skeletons and nauseating noses. He stands for the playwright himself who champions the cause of the good people while criticizing those who destroy all that is good in the fabric of life. The objectivity and impartiality in presentation and compassion for the victims, the qualities associated with Tendulkar as a playwright, are found in Ramakant too. Thus he is a mouth-piece through whom Tendulkar presents his vision of the evil in life and his deep seated compassion for the victims.

Tendulkar has sketched the character of Bapu (Shrikant Marathe) in Friend's Story as a person who thinks of himself as a non-entity but who is very kind and generous by nature. Bapu is the narrator as well as a character in the play. Tendulkar admits that he has written the character of Bapu which is based on one of his actor-friends who had witnessed an incident in which a girl wrecked her life as a result of her having a same sex affair (*CP* xv).

Bapu stands beside Mitra through thick and thin and constantly forgives Mitra's wrongdoings though he quarrels with her at times. According to Rohini Hattangady, “Bapu acts almost like a mother to Mitra
who opens her heart to him which she had not even done with her real mother” (594). Mitra's selfish and insensitive behaviour breaks Bapu's heart and finally he deserts her. Mitra is unable to survive in the hostile world without Bapu’s mental support. She takes to drinking wine and becomes a prostitute. She wails; “I lied to my mother, but not to him. You know that? Told him what I didn't tell anyone. He-he was my mother. Mother-Bapu. Mother-Bapu”. (Act III- 492). Angry with herself as well as with Bapu, Mitra commits suicide. Bapu, however, cannot be blamed for her death. The playwright's understanding of the complexities in the lives of abnormal persons and his compassion for those who become the victims of their own wrongdoings comes out through the character of Bapu and the sympathetic treatment that he gives to Mitra.

Being a journalist himself, Tendulkar is aware of the defects that have crept in the world of media. Through the character of Kaka Saheb in his play Kamala, the playwright voices his opinion about the current state of this institution and also suggests remedies to rectify its faults. Tendulkar portrays Kaka as a journalist belonging to the old school for whom journalistic activity is a means of spreading awareness in society and removing the social gotchas. Throughout the play, Kaka Saheb keeps objecting to Jaisingh's sensational style of journalism. He suggests Jaising that if he really wants to solve the social problems, he should join a vernacular newspaper. The English newspaper is not understandable to majority of the people. Kaka Saheb clearly realises the selfish motives behind Jaisingh's adventurous journalism. According to Shailaja Wadikar, “Tendullkar throws light on the exploitation of women in society for centuries through the character of Kaka Saheb” (123). It seems that Kaka Saheb does not mind Jaisingh's insensitive treatment to Sarita, his wife, too much. When Sarita expresses the thought of rebelling against Jaisingh, Kaka Saheb tries to calm her down by suggesting that all men are like that. Kaka Saheb dichotomizes the personal and professional arenas and upholds
the patriarchal supremacy. Tendulkar contextualizes a thin layer between male dominating society and the debilitated feminine world.

There are numerous characters in Tendulkar's plays who are not fully developed individuals. These characters appear to be types and not complex human beings. The behaviour, thinking and actions of these characters make them representatives of certain types of people in society. The sensitive and tender-hearted characters represent tendencies such as simplicity, innocence and submissiveness. The insensitive and cruel characters represent tendencies such as selfishness, meanness and crookedness. Some of these characters are depicted by Tendulkar as working in a group. Most of them remain uninfluenced during the progress of the action and thus are stationary or static characters.

The members of the theatre group in *Silence! The Court is in Session*; that come to perform at a village includes, besides Benare, characters such as Mr. Kashikar, Mrs. Kashikar, Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Karnik and Balu Rokde. One of the members, Professor Damle, remains absent and we know about him through other characters. All these characters are outwardly respectable members of middle class society but they bring themselves into disrepute by their cruel and callous behaviour towards Benare. According to Arundhati Banerjee, “the thinking and behaviour of Benare's fellow-actors reflect their petty, circumscribed existences fraught with frustrations and repressed desires and they are expressed in their malicious and spiteful attitude towards Benare” (*CP* 571). Latent sadism exists in these ordinary, nondescript people though outwardly they are decent folk. They operate as a group and symbolise man's overt bestiality. Anju Bala Agarwal comments: “these characters represent man's hunting instinct at the deepest level and being members of the middle class, they think it as their right to sit in moral judgment over society” (208). Professor Damle makes mockery of the noble profession of teaching by indulging in an extra-marital relationship with Benare and then refusing to accept the responsibility of the child in her womb.
Through the portrayal of these characters, Tendulkar brings out the immense capacity for violence hidden inside ordinary people.

Tendulkar has sketched the character of King Vichitravirya in his play *Encounter in Umbugland* based on his observation of different national leaders as well as people belonging to royalty. Vichitravirya is immensely popular with the masses. He makes them do physical exercises during public meetings. He prefers indigenous medicine to allopathic. He displays a dictatorial attitude in his treatment of his ministers and keeps them completely under his control. He does not give enough time to his daughter, Vijaya which renders her melancholic. His untimely demise makes Vijay face the realities of life at an immature age.

Tendulkar has given interesting specimens of different types of politicians through his portrayal of the characters such as Aranyaketu, Bhagadanta, Karkashirsha, Pishtakeshi and Vratyasom, the ministers of Queen Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland*. These ministers represent various parts of Umbugland. They are not at all concerned about the welfare of people; they use their positions in order to fulfil their own desires and have nothing to do with honesty and integrity. Each one of them desires to capture power after King Vichitravirya's death. They discuss the issue but fail to come to a unanimous decision. So under compelling predicament, they decide to bring young and inexperienced princess Vijaya to power. They hope that Vijaya, being completely unaware of politics, will remain a titular head and they will de-facto exercise the power on her behalf. Queen Vijaya soon develops into an astute politician herself. She dares to oppose the wishes of her ministers. The complete disagreement between ministers and Vijaya over the Kadamba community upliftment plan leads to an encounter between them for political supremacy. Tendulkar exposes the hypocrisy and treachery of the selfish politicians through his depiction of the behaviour and thinking of these ministers.
Tendulkar has portrayed the character of Manik in sharp contrast to that of Rama in his play *The Vultures*. She is selfish and assertive against Rama who is sensitive and kind-hearted. She is a spinster in her early thirties. She is suffering from hysteria and lives in a constant fear that one of her family members may kill her at any moment. Such is the paranoia that she accuses her family members of trying to kill her by putting poison in her medicine while she was suffering from Typhoid sometime back. Thus Tendulkar has portrayed Manik as an unconventional and westernized type of woman. She becomes a victim of the cruelty of her brothers.

In Tendulkar's play *The Vultures*, Umakant stands for Machiavellian motives. Tendulkar describes his personality as flabby, shapeless, and comic as well as repulsive at the same time. He is portrayed as an active and dominant man of the world who is not prepared to give an inch to his elder brother as far as the distribution of the ancestral property is concerned. He resembles Pappa and Ramakant in the tendency to grab, destroy and live off the dead. Whereas Pappa and Ramakant end up as complete failures, Umakant is able to hold his ground. Through his character, the playwright seems to suggest that some people in the modern materialistic society indulge in all sorts of crimes and still come out successful in the battle of life. However, Umakant is able to prosper only economically. Pappa says that Umakant is fond of gathering the little boys in the neighborhood and playing the "Gopi-Krishna" game with them. This seems to be an oblique reference to Umakant's unusual sexual preferences.

When Ramakant is angry with him, he challenges Umakant. "If you're a man, swell a woman's belly for a change! " (Act I Scene II 213). Tendulkar has termed Umakant’s voice as effeminate in the stage direction. Selfishness, greed, indecency, violence and wickedness are the characteristic features of his personality. The reason behind such behaviour, to some extent, lies in his inner grief because of his physical
inadequacy. The awareness of his deficiency incites him to inflict miseries on others.

The chief function of Dawood's character in Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder* is to be the confidant to whom Sakharam pours out his heart and expresses his views about men and matters candidly. Tendulkar brings out society's critical attitude and disapproval towards Sakharam's unconventional lifestyle.

Tendulkar portrays the character of Nana Fadnavis in his play *Ghashiram Kotwal* as a prototype of the class of statesmen to which he belongs, i.e. the tyrannical ruler. It seems that Tendulkar's portrayal of the historical figure of Nana does not conform to the views of the historians who have praised Nana as one of the best administrators and prudent politicians in the Maratha history. Tendulkar has of course, projected Nana with his significant flaws only. No wonder, the play faced a lot of resistance as Tendulkar was charged of misrepresenting history. Tendulkar has portrayed Nana as a shrewd politician with a great sexual appetite. Though he has many wives, he is always in search of young girls to satisfy his inordinate lascivious desire. He comes across Gauri, Ghashiram’s daughter and his heart yearns for concupiscence. He is a shrewd politician who tries to kill two birds with a single stone. In addition to possessing Gauri, he uses Ghashiram as a lynchpin in the game of power. By allowing Ghashiram to become a dictatorial Kotwal, he exercises a restraint on his enemies. Thus Nana uses his power and position to fulfill his own velleity. He has no concern with public welfare. After using Gauri to his heart's content, he callously discards her and she dies while undergoing an abortion. But Nana, however, succeeds in pacifying him by exercising to his own powerful position and threatening Ghashiram’s expulsion from Kotwalship. Nana realises that Ghashiram may prove to be harmful to him in future. Neela Bhalla aptly comments:
If Ghashiram is the juggler naut hurtling throughout the play, Nana is the wily puppeteer, pulling the strings. The Machiavelli of Peshwas he outmaneuvers Ghashiram and the play testifies his mental agility and cunningness. He is the ace manipulator who makes Ghashiram the fall guy. ‘We do it and our Ghashiram pays for it’, when faced with an enraged mob, he again turns the situation to the dual advantage. By ordering Ghashiram’s execution, he not only pacifies the people but also comes through as the upholder of justice and goodness. The Peshwa is satisfied and Nana rids himself of a Kotwal for whom he has no more use. (132)

Various types of people from different stratas of society have been portrayed by Tendulkar in his plays. Most of his characters belong to the urban middle class society. Some of his characters are based on the people he knew or had heard about. A study of Tendulkar's galaxy of characters helps us to understand his vision of human life and his deep concern for it. Through his characters, Tendulkar makes a powerful statement on the vacuity of contemporary Indian life and the loneliness that torments individuals in a rigid society that insists on the strict following of its conventions and traditions and punishes those who deviate from its norms.

The cruel and vicious characters in Tendulkar's plays are representatives of certain evil tendencies and he satirizes them wholeheartedly. He brings out the dark side of human nature through the inhuman actions of these characters and creates abhorrence for evil in the minds of his reader-audience. It is Tendulkar's indirect method of removing the social evils by exposing them. He expresses man's inhumanity to man and the fundamental evil inherent in human nature. We find doomed individuals struggling against a hostile society as well as the flaws in their own nature in his plays. Tendulkar ruthlessly dissect human nature and exposes its baser aspects such as lust, greed and violence.
There is an objectivity and impartiality in Tendulkar's portrayal of both the virtuous as well as the vicious characters. He displays compassion for the victims. He avoids sentimentality and pretence while showing an empathy and fellow-feeling for his characters. The tenderness in the depiction of the characters who are victims and the empathy he evokes for them suggest the essential humanistic approach.

Tendulkar's characters cannot be divided into watertight compartments of good and bad human beings. Like real people, they constitute a fusion of good and bad qualities. On the contrary, the vicious and wicked characters have certain saving graces about them. Thus Tendulkar seems to have adopted a realistic approach towards characterisation moving away from the practice of painting characters in bold black and white shades of the Marathi melodramas. It endows Tendulkar's characters with an unusual subtlety that transports them beyond the confines of time and space.

Tendulkar's characters such as Sakharam, Champa and Mitra are some of the most unconventional and controversial characters in the Marathi plays. Such bold and unconventional characters had not hitherto been presented on the Marathi stage and jolted the tender sensibilities of the audience. Their language, beliefs and lifestyles set them apart from the conventional characters. Tendulkar was charged of having a flair for crude sensationalism. However, he depicts the varied aspects of human life as he finds them through these characters. He refuses to shut his eyes to naked realities of the contemporary times. Through his characters, Tendulkar gives a visible form to things that are constantly happening in our lives and makes the reader-audience confront the truth. He does not embellish the ugliness in life with any fancy trappings so as to make it glamorous, rather keeps it intrinsic and neutral.

A distinct feature of Tendulkar's characterisation is his use of some of his characters as the mouth-pieces. Unlike a novelist a playwright cannot convey his feelings, thoughts and emotions directly to the audiences. So he
resorts to the use of the speeches of some of his characters to convey his point of view to the reader-audience. Tendulkar's characters such as Prannarayan, Rajaninath, Bapu and Kakasaheb function as his mouth-pieces and make the playwright's motives on certain issues clear to us. They are commentators on human life and the speakers of truth as the playwright perceives them. Through these characters, Tendulkar's feelings, opinions, aspirations and his world view become known to us.

A study of the male and female protagonists in Tendulkar's plays reveals a consistent pattern of experience which embodies his view of human life. Each protagonist except Vijaya ends up as a victim, unable to conquer the hostile societal forces. They become sad victims of the outward circumstances as well as the defects in their own nature. The plays culminate in the protagonist's realisation of his inability to fulfil his dream. Tendulkar's tragic sense of life comes out through it. He does not seem to have faith in man's power to change his destiny. There is no ray of hope for redemption in many of his characters. It is because Tendulkar cannot close his eyes to the reality and become optimistic in today's chaotic milieu.

Tendulkar's protagonists such as Benare, Vijaya, Sakharam, Ghashiram, Mitra and Sarita, being unhappy with the circumstances of their lives, revolt against the customs and traditions of the society. The protagonists such as Rama, Lakshmi and Jyoti, however, remain insipid. With the exception of Vijaya, all the other rebellious protagonists do not get success in their endeavour. Ghashiram is killed, Mitra commits suicide, whereas, Benare and Sakharam are crushed by the society and end up as defeated individuals. Sarita, however, has a ray of hope that she may become happy by asserting her individuality against her domination by her husband. Thus individuals are shown as losing their battle against societal forces in most cases in Tendulkar's plays. The meaninglessness of existence is indicated through the futile efforts of his characters to get happiness. In play after play, the playwright has effectively presented the essential loneliness of man. Tendulkar seems to believe that suffering is an
inseparable part of the human condition. His belief that human beings are doomed to be unhappy and miserable whether they try to change their circumstances or not is reflected in the delineation of his characters.
WORKS CITED


