Chapter-2
Forms of Violence

Literature on violence is vast ranging and reveals that the process of understanding it in a comprehensive way is difficult and complicated. It suggests that violence takes extremely varied forms and may possess many different features. Hence, to comprehend those multiple facets, the issues of violence can be approached on the basis of broad distinctions of types and forms. Nevertheless, as an academic concept, violence as such can be a vehicle for understanding human relations and especially those aspects that correspond to the evil side of the human condition as portrayed by Tendulkar. “Violence can be seen as a form of communication between people, through the meanings transferred by them in their interaction.”

For Tendulkar this violent interaction does not mean merely physical violence or torture. It also means interpersonal relationship of dominance and violence--not only male dominance over female but also vice-versa. Sometimes it is the powerful vs the weak but sometimes the weak too acquires power out of that very same weakness. For Tendulkar human relations are power relationships and therefore are based on in-built violence. He believes that there is politics in man-woman as well as in other relationships, as every individual consciously or unconsciously tries to gain power over the other. It doesn’t matter whether the domination sought is physical, intellectual or the one emerging from experience or age. Now, this power game, whether subtle or overt, takes many forms. Looking at how violence occurs or is practiced, one finds that some use physical force while others use words, some people aggress directly and openly while others engage in passive aggression. The range of abusive behaviour is extremely wide as it encompasses a collection of different types of assaults and abuses. However, the nature of abusive behaviours, which are employed by victimizers against their victims, can be catalogued into four broad categories that are often combined to form complex set of tactics. A close study of violence recognizes physical, sexual, psychological and verbal violence that individuals inflict in realms of domestic, personal, political and social life. However, in domestic realms, the relationship of husband and wife is regarded by Tendulkar as the most complex of all, for it has innumerable shades. “Most men,” says Tendulkar, “wish to beat their wives” as circumstances and occasions come. But here, he does not differentiate between good or bad man, as he believes,
“It is most probably a trait of the species, from the time of primitive man.” No doubt, the culture also plays a part, because he sees a filthier form of it amongst the middle classes as compared to lower classes. Violence among middle classes might not be physical, but it is very often psychological in nature, and that is “more despicable, more perverse form.” Psychological violence is expressed rather than perpetrated as it is based on “words, gestures, pictures, symbols, or deprivation of the necessities of life, so as to force others into subjugation through intimidation and fear, or specific ‘rewards’.”

A lot of this kind of violence goes on in the white collar class. But such is the middle class woman’s nature that she keeps mum. She learns to live through it and gets used to it. The middle class men may hide their perversity or even glorify it, but to Tendulkar’s mind, it is a dirty form of violence. This form of violence is manifested each time he depicts a man-woman relationship. This type of violence or psychological abuse can be verbal or non-verbal. Its aim is to chip away at one’s feelings of self-worth and independence. Emotional violence is worse than physical violence, since physical violence can send one to the hospital and leave one with scars, but the scars of emotional violence are very real, and they run deep. It may be construed that it is more insidious than other abuses and just as damaging. Through this type of persecution, partner attacks the soul using words and mannerisms that cause much pain and suffering. Overtime he systematically erodes self-confidence and self-worth and hurts one deeply.

Tendulkar in his plays depicts that such domestic violence with psychological implications occurs when a person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person. An abuser doesn’t play fair. He uses fear, guilt, shame and intimidation to wear one down and gain complete power over the partner. He may threaten her, hurt her or hurt those around her. An abusive individual needs to feel in charge of relationship. He makes decisions for the family and tells one what to do, and expects one to obey without questions. He may treat the partner like a servant, child or even as his possession. Having the last word about everything, the abuser acts like a master. He defines and rigidly abides by the traditional roles of men and women. And in doing so he emotionally hurts his partner.

Tendulkar exhibits such psychological and emotional violence in a very subtle form in his play, *Kamala*. Here, through the character of Jaisingh, he gives a hint of the manner in which women are treated as insensitive beings in the patriarchal system. Sarita, the wife of the journalist, Jaisingh, though highly educated, is very timid and extremely sensitive to her
husband’s needs and tastes. She is always eager to pamper him to his whims and fancies and runs about in the house carrying out all his instructions, like taking note of all phone calls and looking after his physical and domestic needs. But Jaisingh regards none of his wife’s good qualities as particularly meritorious, as they are implied by the institution of marriage itself. He fails to realize that his wife is no machine which works without complaints and feelings, but a real individual of flesh and blood, having a mind and heart of her own. He takes her patience, her desires, and her propriety for granted. He is still more profoundly ignorant of her dreams, her fancies, her nostalgic yearnings of the emotional climate in which she had spent her days in Phaltan.

Jain, one of his friends and colleagues, has always felt what Sarita suddenly realizes so late in her life. He sees Jaisingh’s abusive behaviour as destructive and inappropriate, and usually supports her by saying, “This warrior against exploitation in the country is exploiting you. He’s made a drudge out of a horse-riding independent girl from a princely house …shame on you!” (K:17).

Sarita is indeed a “lovely bonded labourer” (K:17) as Jain calls her, because as a domestic servant, she looks after all his comforts, but still she is not allowed to have an identity and will of her own. Jaisingh remarks sarcastically when she shows her unwillingness to go to the party: “Your will? Never noticed any sign of it before” (K:45). She is considered as a woman living a life as a silent victim of silent violence.

To complete his ventures, Jaisingh often goes off anywhere and comes back at odd times, not telling Sarita about his whereabouts and gets angry if anyone complains about his callous and irresponsible behaviour. Above all, he never cares to take a serious note of the terrible threatening phone calls which become a constant tension for Sarita to handle.

He keeps so many things as secrets and even shows distrust of his own wife, saying, “I am not sure about you” (K:15). Kamala’s sudden entry in her life and the purpose behind it is quite jarring on Sarita’s mind. She is afraid, he might also be put to trial and sent to jail for this crime of flesh-trade. But it is the sensitive soul of Sarita that has to take all this, for Jaisingh seems to be least bothered about such trifles which have become a part of his occupation. Tendulkar also shows that in masculine hands logic is often a form of violence, a sly kind of tyranny. Jaisingh, older and better equipped, assumes feelings of masculine superiority and gives no weight at all to Sarita’s opinions and accomplishments, trying to prove that he is always right.
When Sarita says that Kamala can stay with them, Jaisingh gives reasons that are “completely shallow ones.” (K:42). He says, “I can’t keep Kamala at home …. She has to stay in the orphanage. It will fortify our arguments in court….” (K:42). She doesn’t grasp what is vital behind the pedantic logic with which her husband overwhelms her. She has no recourse save silence. Though, sometimes, she tries to continue the struggle by taking a stand, but she is made to realize her place in the house and in the life of Jaisingh, who asserts: “It’s I who takes decisions in this house” (K:42).

Tendulkar here hints at the natural tendency of every husband, like that of Jaisingh, to dominate his partner. Because part of a male’s belief system is a feeling that they own their partners and are entitled to demand absolute obedience from them be it physical, emotional or sexual in nature.

As per age old tradition woman is treated as property of man at marriage and her husband has sexual access to her, even if it violates her own desires. But when this right is denied to him, it leads to uncontrollable rages, resulting in abusing his partner. Sarita has been shown as a sexual and domestic servant but when she, in the grip of heartfelt aversion regarding press conference issue, says no to Jaisingh’s overtures, he is not able to take it: “[Slamming his fist into his hand.]” (K:32) he calls her a bitch.

Another form of psychological abusive behaviour that Tendulkar deals with includes fear, which is a key element in domestic and family violence and is often the most powerful way whereby a perpetrator controls one’s victim. Fear can be created by looks, gestures or any other behaviour which can be used to intimidate and render the other person powerless. The terror that Sarita lives under becomes evident when Kakasaheb questions Jaisingh about Sarita’s security:

KAKASAHEB. What are you planning to do about this girl?
JAISINGH. This girl? Why?
SARITA. I haven’t said anything to him….
JAISINGH. She seems to have told you quite a lot.
[He doesn’t seem very pleased about it.]
SARITA. It was he who asked me.
JAISINGH. [Rather sourly] why don’t you admit that you told him? (K:10).

Sarita always feels like she has to walk on eggshell around her partner to avoid a blow up, for she feels afraid of Jaisingh much of the time and usually avoids certain topics out of fear of
angering him. Tendulkar exhibits, at many places, the fear that is real, but not necessarily actualized in events, which comes to constitute the ecology of fear in everyday life. And this becomes a constant source of psychological distress to Sarita.

Furthermore, when in isolation, the constant negative reinforcement and violence she experiences make her more confused about what is happening. She begins to feel numb inside as her perceptions of herself and her relationship become more and more distorted and painful. Such pains and sufferings are evident from her speech in which she resents vehemently at being exploited and oppressed by Jaisingh:

*I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. I have no rights at all in this house. Because I’m a slave. Slaves don’t have rights….They must only slave away. Dance to their master’s whim. Laugh, when he says, laugh. Cry, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up. When he says, come to a party, they must go. When he says, lie on the bed--they [She is twisted in pain.](K:46).*

It shows how she resents the way she is treated as no better than a dumb driven cattle, forced to fulfill all his demands as a wife just like a slave. This sudden realization is achieved when Kamala out of innocence asks Sarita: “How much did he buy you for?”(K:34).

Tendulkar here focuses on the experience of what lies behind being hurt, and thus enables us to understand violence against her by filtering it through the inner world of her psyche. The deep rooted feelings, embedded in Sarita’s heart for a long time constitute the trauma, which ruptures the inner narrative and interrupts her life badly. This trauma now comes to surface suddenly when Kamala’s question wakes her up with a shock making her realize that she is just another Kamala in this house. She realizes that she too is a pawn in his game of chess and a mere object of use at his disposal. Tendulkar’s aim here seems to describe how feelings of humiliation come to be embedded within a frayed everyday life and that even the sense of belonging to educated, rich class is also not capable of repairing this sense of being betrayed by everyday abuse.

Another character in this play, Kamala, the innocent victim of flesh trade, also gets emotionally abused, as she has been bought by Jaisingh without letting her know the motives behind it. She, after seeing Jaisingh’s house, starts imagining and dreaming about her future life. Jaisingh, too, incites in her heart the feelings of enjoying a luxurious stay in such a big house

He doesn’t realize what for him is just another ladder to success might shatter one’s dreams and cause emotional distress. She is many a time emotionally blackmailed or even ordered like a slave, to do what her master, Jaisingh, expects from her. Kamala, after a long journey, is tired and doesn’t wish to go to the press conference. Jaisingh’s expression and tone of voice hardens:

JAISINGH. You will have to come, Kamala.
KAMALA. I’m your servant, master. But I won’t come today….
JAISINGH. Then I won’t go, either.
KAMALA. No, no. You must go. Don’t do this because of Kamala, master.
JAISINGH. I’ve said that I’ll bring you, Kamala. If you don’t come, that will make me a liar. It’s better if I don’t go.
KAMALA. [After a pause]. Then let’s go another time. That’s it. [Jaisingh in a dilemma.]
JAISINGH. Kamala, you won’t obey me?
KAMALA. How can that be? You are Kamala’s master.
JAISINGH. I order you to come there with me. Today (K:20).

He doesn’t even let her know all that is in store for her in the press conference, rather, he lures her by telling that it would be a “grand reception”(K:20) in her honour and doesn’t even let her change her clothes which are “torn and dirty”(K:21). At press conference, she becomes a laughing stock for the reporters, who entertain themselves at the cost of her ignorance and vulnerability. The questions related to their free sex life are really humiliating and disgusting. One asked, “You must be having free sex too. How many men have you slept with? You must have had some free sex with this new Seth? How did it compare?” (K:29).

Tendulkar’s construction of this situation exemplifies the degree to which women are commodified as objects, rather than treated as human beings in a capitalist patriarchy. Though Kamala could not comprehend anything and she, too, laughed with them at her own cost, but Sarita is not able to digest such irresponsible behaviour from Jaisingh and his colleagues. She feels ashamed when she hears Jaisingh and Jain, discussing all this in such a light manner. As Kakasaheb rightly says about the press conference, that Jaisingh “sold a woman to them”(K:31) to expose criminal sale of human beings and had fun “At that poor woman’s expense!”(K:30).
What interests Tendulkar here are the ways warmth and welcome can co-exist with violence or even be constituted through it; and how violence can be normalized into the mundane to the point of becoming invisible. The whole episode of Kamala is a comment not only on certain communities of India and the miserably poor status of women in their patriarchal set up, but it also reveals how it destroys the life-spirit in women and reduces them to the sub human level. Women in such structures are treated as mere commodities which man could trade in freely at their will. They are deprived of every human right. They are alienated from their own self and have no freedom to think and act independently, and their womanhood is defined in terms of their submission to male authority.

There are numerous other characters like Jyoti in *Kanyadaan*, Rama in *The Vultures*, Laxmi and Champa in *Sakharam Binder* and Gauri in *Ghashiram Kotwal*, who also suffer the same psychological oppressions, at the hands of their partners and family. These women have to face a system which seeks to perpetrate violence not only at their bodies but also at their minds and souls treating them as no better than animals. They are deprived of all opportunities-economic, social or cultural. It disables them in a number of ways and is largely responsible for their miseries and sufferings. This oppression of women at the mental level has been treated with critical insight by Tendulkar in many of his plays. Psychological violence can’t be separated from other forms like sexual or physical violence as every form of violence is accompanied by psychological implications of harm leading to the psychological fears of being oppressed more in future.

Another aspect of psychological violence that Tendulkar deals with is one of “violation of the boundaries and intrusion in the personal space, whether physical or psychological” of an individual. The experience of having been subjected to such violence has been critically analyzed by Tendulkar in terms of gender politics. Whether in normal times or during crises, it is woman who faces the agony, and the perpetrators include her own family, as in the case of Sarita, and outsiders, as in the case of Kamala. Various psychological fears, problems and violence a woman has to face and the extent of trauma which she undergoes is portrayed through the character of Benare, who is a victim of psychological violence in Tendulkar’s play, *Silence! The Court is in Session*.

In the course of this play, Tendulkar shows how the privacy of a woman is violated and her individuality is splintered into ruins. An amateur theatre troupe, which goes to a village to
perform a play, thinks of whiling away their time by creating an imaginary court case against a fake accused. In this theatre group, there is one school teacher, Benare, a social worker, Mr. Kashikar and his wife, Mrs. Kashikar, an ambitious lawyer, Sukhatme, and inter-failed clerk, Ponkshe and a flop actor, Karnik. There is a young boy Balu Rokde, who has been adopted by the childless couple, Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar. They, all being failures in their life, envy the young and successful, independent Benare. They all decide to take Benare as an accused in that mock-trial and whisper some plan to each other, gesticulating and pointing every now and then to the room where she is. This may or may not be labeled as violence, but there is the feeling or a pre-verbal experience that there is something wrong, which is going to happen. At first they accuse Benare with the charge of infanticide leaving her stunned and later, they accuse her of getting pregnant without marriage, but that’s what Sukhatme repeatedly calls “just a game”(SCS:71), for it is only a mock-trial to pass their time. In the name of this mock-trial, they expose her private life, humiliate her and hurt her feelings through the verbal and sexual harassments which result in psychological trauma leading to her break-down in the end.

Benare is fully aware that these people are jealous of her economic independence and would be very glad to make her a butt of joke and entertainment even by robing her of her right to live independently with dignity. In love, Benare has already been cheated twice. First, in her teens, she is seduced and sexually exploited by her own maternal uncle who runs away and doesn’t marry her. He is supported by her mother who holds the flag of patriarchal values. Later in her life, she falls in love with Prof. Damle whom she respects for his scholarship and intelligence. Though married, he exploits her sexually, for he doesn’t care for her worship and devotion but cares only about her body. The “intellectual god took the offering and went his way”(SCS:118), leaving her pregnant. When she is compelled to face the reality, she desires to hide it by attempting to give her child a father’s name. She suffers intensely from a psychological fear of getting thrown out from her job which is her only passion and solace. Benare refers to this psychological turmoil of hers even before all the characters are introduced. The school officials are holding an enquiry against her and she is not ready to take that because her “teaching’s perfect” and she has put her “whole life into it,” worn herself “to a shadow in this job!” and given the “last drop of ...blood to teach them”(SCS:58). She hasn’t hurt anyone other than herself, but that is no “reason for throwing” her out of her job. It is this fear of stigma for herself and her child that makes her crave for marriage and beg even the undeserving men to
marry her and give a father’s name to her child. In the vain attempt to do so she gets entrapped
amongst her co-actors, who because of jealous and vengeful nature violate the boundaries and
intrude in her personal life. They ask her age and wonder how she remained unmarried till such
an advanced age. Kashikar makes sweeping generalizations over how the new modernized girls
are a nuisance and a “sinful canker on the body of”(SCS:112) the society. Mrs. Kashikar
wonders, “Why must she have Prof. Damle, and Damle alone, to see her home after a
performance?”(SCS:100). She opens the door to a series of piercing darts on Benare. And
evidence after evidence is produced against her. Mrs. Kashikar mercilessly reveals that Benare
had made overtures to Rokde, much younger than herself. Ponkshe, in spite of Benare’s
implorations not to expose her, blurts out how she had asked him, in the name of a friend, to
marry a woman who was with a child.

Karnik also discloses her child love for her uncle. Rokde makes a devastating statement
that he had seen Benare in Prof. Damle’s room in the college hostel. Once Damle’s name is
disclosed with evidence, it no longer remains a mock-trial. Everyone now openly starts
humiliating her more and more with stinging statements about her character. Concluding the
trial, Sukhatme says that accused Benare has “made a heinous blot on the sacred brow of
motherhood—which is purer than heaven”(SCS:114). For that any punishment, however great that
the law may give her, will be too mild. They call her character “appalling” and “bankrupt of
morality”(SCS:114). She is accused of being a “public enemy number one”(SCS:114) and they
ask the court to take a stern action without getting sentimental.

Psychological trauma is inflicted on her as charge after charge is leveled against her,
leaving her no route of escape, build in an atmosphere of grim execution. They disguise their
snide or cutting comments as humor. Tendulkar shows that even their subtlest comments hurt her
as much as their stronger, louder and more obviously denigrating statements. Tendulkar shows
how the language of the gestures, malignant tones and biting sarcasm used by the so called
educated middle class cut her deep within. Dialogues utilized in the mind game characterize the
verbal and psychological violence increasingly becoming a part of modern life as witnessed by
Tendulkar in this real hard world. The fears that Benare was already suffering from, regarding
her job, take up frightful shape when Kashikar himself informs her that he had heard Nanasahib,
the chairman, ordering angrily for her dismissal: “It is a sin to be pregnant before marriage. It
would be still more immoral to let such a woman teach, in such a condition...this woman must be dismissed" (SCS:113).

Mr. Kashikar, who also accuses Benare of immorality, further accuses her of planning to impart such immorality to the youth of tomorrow. They, calling themselves saviours and protectors of humanity and human values, try to rob her of her reproductive possibilities and her only comfort, i.e. her job. They are able to contradict themselves with careless cynicism, but Benare feels these contradictions in her wounded flesh. She, in herself, embodies in concrete, man’s fault; he commits the fault, but gets rid of it by leaving her alone to suffer its consequences. She becomes the target of orthodox social and moral values and as a result becomes a victim at the hands of “cultured men of twentieth century” (SCS:117). The mock-judge, Kashikar, pronounces the final savage judgment:

Marriage is the very foundation of our society’s stability. Motherhood must be sacred and pure....The crimes you have committed are most terrible....Your sin must be expiated....No memento of your sin should remain for future generations....school officials have done a work of merit in deciding to remove you from your job (SCS:118-19).

And so she would lose her job, her only solace, and the child would be destroyed in the womb itself. Here, as Matthews says, “aggression becomes moralized and morality becomes a form of violence.” This mental agony suffered by the girl throughout the play is in no way less than a legal punishment. Here, these co-actors represent the society as such and prove, as repressive agents, more violent than even the machinery of law.

The whole of the mock-trial prepares a ground for psychologically bombarding an innocent, hapless Benare who is entrapped in their cynical, sadistic pleasure-seeking game. Their trial completely ruins her self-dignity and esteem and reduces her to a mere criminal or sinner, who ought to know her place. Benare bears her violated psyche in the monologue which forms a microcosm of the entire psychological violence women face. It reveals how there was “wail like death” in her heart and “storms raged” (SCS:116) in her for so many years. She had a lot to say but kept her lips tight which combined the gestural fury of the opening tableau with verbal and psychological violence, as well as notions of the past, the present, and the future. This formed an ever repeating cycle of violent repressions and submissions, unattainable freedom, and the centrally linked metaphors of life and death. A new age girl who is highly resistant to
conforming to the rules of society is made so helpless that she seems to be completely broken at heart and thus collapses. Benare’s final collapse leaves one with a feeling of pity and horror.

Sexual oppression and social ostracism leading to psychological violence that Benare faces is more extreme and immediate than the emotional abuse that Sarita suffers at the hands of her husband in *Kamala*. This kind of violence perpetuates the stereotyping of gender roles that denies human dignity to the individual and stymies human development.

Tendulkar, thus, shows how psychological violence can lead to a trauma that completely shatters one’s hopes and desires and proves destructive in the form of deep scars that it leaves on the soul of the victim. This further becomes evident through Rama, a character in *The Vultures*, who undergoes great suffering due to cruel and greedy nature of her family members. She does all her work dutifully and still everybody is critical of her. She always becomes the target of their wrath which emanates from their own frustrations. But all this emotional and verbal violence stands nowhere in comparison to her burning desire of becoming, a mother, which remains unfulfilled. Now and then, she is taken to a swami, an astrologer or a doctor, stretching hands to beg them to answer the same question, and doing all sorts of useless rituals, making her feel pathetic. But it is only her heart that knows the hard truth. She holds her husband’s excessive drinking responsible for this: “Can all the liquor that this world contains, ever be finished? This soil is rich, it’s hungry. But the seed won’t take root. If the seed’s soaked in poison, if it’s weak, feeble, lifeless, devoid of virtue then why blame the soil” (*TV*: 241). She suffers the extreme psychological turmoil for she has a “raging thirst” to become a mother but what she faces is the “fast of harsh drought” (*TV*: 242). This has happened to her, season after season and year after year. How much more can a person endure, when every minute brings million deaths and the person gets maddened with pain. She suffers even more when Ramakant, her husband, always talks about having a baby and blazes up the hunger for becoming a complete woman, but is again “starved by fasts” as he makes “disgusting drunken love” (*TV*: 242) to her. She feels humiliated and degraded by being forced to undergo the sexual ordeal which always proves to be fruitless.

Such demanding emotional and sexual oppression can destroy one’s self-worth which leads to anxiety and depression. When a woman learns to endure this kind of pain, it even makes her all the more pathetically dependent upon her spouse and is thus, subjected to the demands and abuse of her mate. Though Rama acknowledges her miseries and the reasons behind it, she feels utterly helpless and benumbs herself to the acute agony of motherlessness and of the stigma
of barrenness. Thus, through the character of Rama, Tendulkar portrays a voiceless victim entrapped in a vicious cycle of violence, perpetrated by the family members and the cursed fate. Though Tendulkar’s female characters are usually shown to be the silent victims of the psychological pain and fear but he also sensitively portrays certain male characters, who too face the agonies and pains and suffer psychologically. This might be caused by their own misfortunes or unexplained circumstances which they fail to comprehend. But mainly it is due to their own emotional bondage with other persons who become part and parcel of their own miseries. If a woman, because of her illegitimate pregnancy suffers the social censure and gets punished for no fault of hers alone, Tendulkar reveals that a child too gets subjected to an undeserved disgrace and lifelong psychological torture for his illegitimate birth. Being an illegitimate child is a curse in this insensitive world which leaves no room for filial love and care that such a child needs and deserves.

It is through the character of Rajaninath, in The Vultures, that Tendulkar attempts to delineate the deep psychological pains that an illegitimate child suffers at the hands of his cruel family. Rajaninath, the illegitimate son of Hari Pitale, is a much neglected, much hated and lonely character in the house of vultures. He is made to live an isolated and lonely life in a garage, outside, in the garden of the house and is not even provided with the basic amenities that a child needs. When he grows up, his food is also stopped and Ramakant even objects to the tea, Rama takes for him and calls Rajaninath “another bottomless pit” that “hogs all that’s in the house”(TV:216). The treatment that he gets from his family members is full of contempt and he is always abused by being called “A bastard!” and “A kept woman’s bloody son!”(TV:216). He is, sometimes even threatened by Ramakant to be shot with a rifle and to be blasted if he ever begs for his share in the property. He is regarded as a writer of “filthy poems” who is gutless and has a “bloody pen”(TV:216) for a sword. His cursed illegitimacy constantly haunts him and he always feels the corrupt in his blood which is there in the family itself. The psychological trauma that he goes through is expressed in his blood curdling phrases: “First your blood rots. Then your brain decays. And then throughout the body, it’s as if a wild animal’s rampaging. Thirsting for blood. Your humanity itself gets destroyed”(TV:238).

It is the curse that has infected his life – the curse of being illegitimate, of being a part of such rotten family that burns him day and night and leaves him restless. The reason is the same as with Rama: “The seed’s diseased. All else is good. But the vital core that takes root, that’s
rotten”(TV:243). Rajaninath further undergoes lot of psychological pains when he has to witness the miserable condition of Rama. He even flagellates himself for being a passive, impotent witness to her victimization and sufferings. This is evident from his poem:

Their torture, their neglect of her,  
Their cold despising, her tormented struggles, I surveyed.  
I stood,  
A living corpse, a watchful stone.  
Like a worm, I watched and watched her (TV:205).

He regards her as a lovely cuckoo bird amongst the vicious vultures and has an unnamed attachment of love with her, which ultimately gets extended into a sexual association. But this association is mainly with the purpose of fulfilling the ever cherished desire of Rama, to become a mother. This act which is criticized by many of the critics as immoral is only an unconscious effort on the part of Rajaninath to help Rama get free from the curse of being childless. But the fate of these two innocent characters shows no mercy on them. Being an illegitimate, Rajaninath is, by birth, cursed. But Rama has to suffer agonies for being condemned to live her life in the midst of villains. Naturally, the audience has compassion for both of them as they are the only humane characters in the house of vultures.

Just as Tendulkar deals with the concept of violence at psychological and emotional levels, he also takes into account the aspect of sexuality which usually evolves into another form of violence seen in power relation. Theories that examine how social forces inflect this sexuality, better explain how sexuality is expressed in a given socio-cultural context. Michael Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality* states that, because sexuality serves “as an especially dense transfer point for relations to power,” it has necessarily been discursively constructed to facilitate such transfers, examples of which occur between different relations, be it men or women. But when one’s sexuality violates “an individual’s rights over one’s body” it can be termed sexual violence. Woman has always been regarded as the necessary complement to the operation of male sexuality. But as sex object, she is usually portrayed as a submissive object of abuse and violence, be it in any age, era of literature or any other form of art. This is mainly because the socialization patterns, which adhere to a rigid code of gender roles and behaviour, show unequal power relationships between men and women. This results into inequitable gender status in
Explaining sexual violence can be complicated by the forms it takes and the context in which it occurs. Usually, sexually abusive behaviour can be seen as “behaviour intended or unintended to hurt or embarrass a woman/man in a sexual manner through various forms of verbal and non-verbal communication.” But a more servile form of sexual abuse, in respect to its context, is seen when a victim in a certain oppressive situation is “forced to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity.” Thus, sexual violence against women is considered as one of the most crucial societal mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position.

Tendulkar has also dealt with the varying forms of sexual violence in many of his plays. In order to fully comprehend different forms of sexual violence, Tendulkar makes an effort to delineate through his characters’ various sexual abuses that they exhibit through their distorted behavior and relationships. Women characters of Tendulkar, who have been shown as victims of psychological violence, at some point or the other, also suffer the sexual oppression at the hands of their partners. There is found a considerable overlap between forms of sexual violence and intimate physical violence as is witnessed in Sakharam Binder. Sexual harassments merging with psychological violence, sexually humiliating situations and most horrid verbal violence with incestuous overtures are portrayed in the plays Silence! The Court is in Session, Kamala and The Vultures respectively. And the most prominent relation between power and sexuality, in context of male hegemony, can be traced in Ghashiram Kotwal. In A Friend’s Story, depiction of lesbian passion tends to give sexual desperation a different dimension, leading to self-humiliation and self-destruction.

There are number of Tendulkar’s characters who often use their sexual ventures to define their sexuality and manhood. Lecherous Nana in Ghashiram Kotwal is the one who wants to direct sexuality into the channels that preserve power and glory. He associates his glory with having Gauri for himself, as he says, “Our grandeur’s gone, if she’s not had”(GK:380). This is how he seeks to reinforce his self-image as a conqueror powerful enough to reduce the girls to such a dire fate, like that of a nation, by conquering them sexually. Gauri is seduced and used to fulfill his carnal desires leading to her pregnancy. And then, as a useless object, she is sent to Chandra, a midwife, and forced to go for an abortion with crude methods, as a result of which she dies in ignominy. An innocent blossom is devoured and is soon forgotten by malevolent Nana in order to get married for the seventh time with a girl who has ‘just-this-year-

ripened”\textit{(GK:400)}. This practice of polygamy in order to camouflage the inherent lust in male is portrayed by Tendulkar as another form of sexual violence. Young girls are sacrificed at the altar of lustful beasts in greed for “a great big gift of land”\textit{(GK:402)} and ruin their lives. This cold and merciless male authority, presiding over the whole system which manipulates women’s sexuality to the interest of male hegemony is critically presented by Tendulkar in this play.

The most servile form of sexual violence that a woman may experience is portrayed by Tendulkar in \textit{Sakharam Binder} through the character of Sakharam in his relationships with respect to his women. He doesn’t believe in marriage and brings home cast off women whom he doesn’t keep for long. He takes them as domestic servants and exploits them sexually to satisfy his itch while remaining oblivious to the emotional and moral implications of his exploits. Sakharam calls it a game and says to Dawood: “While it lasts, she has a roof over her head, and you get home cooked food. That’s a cheap way of fixing all your appetites”\textit{(SB:129)}. He gives importance only to his sexual appetite forcing all his women to get moulded according to his fashioned cast.

The play starts with bringing home Laxmi, who is thrown out by her lawful husband due to her barrenness. She, in Sakharam’s house, is expected to demonstrate fidelity and wifely submission to her new master as he says: “You’ll have to be a wife to me. Anyone with a little sense will know what to make of that”\textit{(SB:126)}. On the first night itself, Sakharam warns her that her religious fastings should stop for she will need all her strength to serve him. He says, “I am warning you, you won’t last long in this house if you go around looking like a corpse. Mine is no ordinary appetite”\textit{(SB:135)}. He feels sexually jealous when she shows love towards a crow and pets a black ant at home, which rouses his anger. That is why, when the burning coal falls on her feet, he just leaves her to suffer in agony. Furthermore, he wakes her up from her sleep and forces her to laugh the way she laughs with “the black ant”\textit{(SB:138)} while they make love. She feels sleepy and dead tired for her foot is double with pain, but all he wants is to satisfy his itch: “You laugh for the ant. But you won’t laugh when I ask you to. I’ll twist that foot of yours, you get me?.... No, you can sleep later. Get up and laugh. Laugh or I’ll choke the life out of you. Laugh! Laugh! Go on laugh!”\textit{(SB:141)}.

Tendulkar’s interest in domestic space and its relationship to sexuality is a repeated theme in his plays and therefore deserves a closer examination. Domesticity, for the women forms a symbolic house of physical and sexual oppression. Physically and spiritually oppressive
functions of domesticity are reinforced through the normative heterosexual expectations of patriarchy and specifically through men’s attempts at sexual control over women. Tendulkar illustrates both, the patriarchal stronghold over female sexuality and the attempts some men make in order to maintain this stronghold. Excess of work and sex makes Laxmi scarecrow of a woman and compels her to react to this oppression as she suddenly bursts out: “How much more can a person bear? It’s a year now since I entered this house. I haven’t had a single day’s rest. Whether I’m sick or whether it’s a festal day. Nothing but work, work; all the time. You torture me whole day, you torture me at night. I’ll drop dead one of these days and that will be the end” (SB: 146).

Tendulkar shows that Sakharam not only sexually exploits his women but also takes them for granted as they have no other place to go. Justifying his behavior, he belligerently says, “Once a woman is thrown over, nobody calls her respectable. Remember that. I at least took you in” (SB: 147). Seeing no spark left in Laxmi and getting fed up with her passive resistance and wifely expectations, Sakiram decides to send Laxmi out, and again justifying his action says to Dawood: “She was tired out after all that hell her husband had given her. She was getting on in years too. And you know what I am like… there’s the body, the home of all our appetites…. No point in troubling her any further” (SB: 153).

After Laxmi, Sakhram brings another woman, Champa, who is much younger and strong built. He is infatuated with her body, but she doesn’t let him come near her because she doesn’t like “all that man-woman stuff” (SB: 168). He abuses her and threatens her either to sleep with him or else leave the house. He shouts, “You’ll be driven out of here. That’ll put some sense into your head. You’ll have to live like a bitch then. Sleep with every fellow you meet. Yes, sleep with all of them!” (SB: 171). At last, Champa, too, decides to yield to his lust, but only when she gets fully drunk and thus desensitized: “Then you can take me. Do what you like with me” (SB: 169).

Next day Sakiram comes back from work early and forces Champa to leave her food. Showing her the bottle, he wants to have fun. She insists to let her eat first but he gets violent and says, “No, ‘it’ first, ” (SB: 170) and authoritatively demands as a right to have what is there in his house. “In this house what I say goes, see? You’ve got to do what I say. [Champa continues to eat]. My orders have to be obeyed. I can turn nasty otherwise. I’ll thrash the life out of you.
There’s no stopping me”(SB:171). Sakharam’s sexual abuse of Champa stems not only from his sense of male privilege, but also from a desire to break her will, essentially preventing her from rebelling against the manly image that he has cultivated.

Tendulkar believes that though coerced sex may result in sexual gratification on the part of perpetrator, but its underlying purpose is frequently the expression of power and dominance over the person assaulted. Champa has already been a victim of sexual violence at the hands of her husband, Fouzdar Shinde. He had brought her from her step mother’s house even before she had become a woman. He married her when she didn’t even know what marriage meant. He would torture her all night. He would brand her, and struck needles into her and make her do awful, filthy things. She had run away, but he brought her back and stuffed chilly powder into “that God-awful place, where it hurts most”(SB:167).

It is not only the violence experienced on her body, but also the loss of self-worth that constitutes a sense of being violated. In Champa’s harrowing experience of sexual abuse, Tendulkar sees the most vivid illustration of how damaging the cultural perception of girls’ permeability can be. Shinde here has been shown as a perverted impotent sadist, who tortured his wife and forcibly tried to trade her body leaving her no option other than to leave him.

But her sufferings didn’t end after leaving her house as Sakharam too proves to be a hard task master. As a result, Champa has to get drunk everyday to get along with the hectic and humiliating sex, and as with the other forms of rape, she begins to lose her sense of identity. She, getting intoxicated and fully hysterical, feels herself not herself. Wrenched from her own personality, she acts like a sex maniac: “You’ll have your fun…. Wait. I’ll give it to you. [Keeps on drinking and making him drink. Laughs uncontrollably.] Fun for anyone who comes along. A dog. A corpse even….“(SB:171). Every morning, her head and body are just a bundle of pains and aches, for Sakharam drives her “crazy at night” and when Laxmi questions her about how is she getting along with Sakharam she says, “Once you drink, you get along fine. But your Sakharam, he really takes his money’s worth out of a woman. I’ve managed to last out here. What else can I do? Go out in the streets? Face half a dozen animals everyday! Easier to put up with this one”(SB:181). Sexually, Sakharam’s behaviour communicates to his partner that she is there to satisfy him, that her own satisfaction and willingness is immaterial, and that she is an object for release of his aggressive sexual urge only. When Champa really gets fed up with all this, one day she resists and dares to say ‘no’ to him:
CHAMPA [fiercely]. No... I don’t want it today... I can’t bear it any more... My body can’t take it, not any more.

SAKHARAM. Your body can go to hell. I haven’t kept you here to pamper your body. Come on now... I’m the master here. My word goes.

[In the dim light he is seen pouncing on her...Champa is about to scream. He puts his hand over her mouth. Sakharam’s grunting. A bang and a crash. Champa whines like an animal]

Drink—drink—drink some more—Open your jaws—don’t spit, you slut—Drink.

[Then the struggle ends](SB:193-94).

Sometimes, this sexual violence goes to the extreme forms of physical violence as Tendulkar depicts in the case of Sakharam. The presence of Laxmi makes him impotent which creates a fear of emasculation in him. Champa’s covert infidelity changes Shakharam’s fears into the ferocity of impotent violence; and imbued with sexual jealousy, he strangles Champa to death.

Tendulkar has also hinted at Sakharam’s experiences at home which exposed him to violence in the family sowing its seeds in his own psyche and behaviour. And now, when his sexual power is threatened, Sakharam is confused and lashes out viciously, taking a life. This play is certainly an expression of Tendulkar’s protest against patriarchal brutalities as manifested in the form of physical and sexual violence. But by depicting a cause and effect relationship between the psychological factors and the man’s violence, he makes even the cruelest of his characters look like a real human being. Sakharam, at the end of the play, just looks like an empty shell; it seems that all the sap has been squeezed out of him and he becomes a “frozen statue”(SB:198). This is a sign of his humanity which is shocked at the unintended murder and which rouses audience’s pity and sympathy for the once “a terror”(SB:126) i.e. Sakharam.

Tendulkar, apart from laying bare the sadistic sexual violence of Sakharam towards his women, also depicts the sexually dominating behaviour of a lesbian character, Mitra in A Friend’s Story. He, in this play, deals with the complicated psychological conflict between Mitra’s ‘id’ and socially constructed consciousness which results into her restlessness, leading to the covert sexually abusive behaviour with psychological implications, towards Nama. It also
explains Mitra’s aggressive behaviour towards Bapu, who, too, undergoes psychological pressures of trying to understand Mitra as a person.

Tendulkar portrays Mitra’s restlessness, growing from a realization of the difference in her sexual urge from a normal heterosexual one. This begins with her first flush of feeling for Nama, the young girl, who acts with her in the college play, and finally turns into a consuming passion, almost a hunger, that drives her to desperation. As her passion grows, Mitra’s violence takes a form of sex demanding attention, an expression of her aggressive desires or intentions. But Dalvi, Nama’s sadistic male lover, who pursues to the end his own single minded hatred of Mitra, is equally violent in his passion. The play suggests that passion in the case of both Mitra and Dalvi is not a manifestation of love but of power they seek over Nama. Dalvi emerges as a ruffian who uses girls to his own interests and exploits them sexually. When he gets bored, he ditches them callously to suffer their lot.

Mitra’s love for Nama is devouringly demanding and possessive. This aspect of the relationship has been presented by Tendulkar through the use of animal imagery. Mitra is compared by him to a wild and ferocious animal and Nama as her prey like a helpless sparrow. As Bapu says about Nama: “She was trapped. Mitra seemed like a monster to me now, with an easy prey in her jaws” (AFS:473). Mitra’s love for Nama becomes too constrictive in nature and she becomes pathologically jealous in her relationship. As once, when Nama joked about getting married, she strangles and nearly chokes the life out of her. She sexually abuses her and asks embarrassing things regarding her sexual ventures with Dalvi. Nama tells Bapu:

Whenever we are together…she …asks me about Dalvi and myself…that is…that is how we …we … enjoy.

(Finding it extraordinarily difficult to speak but comes out with it.) She can’t take it if I refuse to….her whole face changes… I get scared…. I don’t like all this… (Wipes her eyes.)” (AFS:470).

Nama sometimes gets “fed up even with her love….Too much of it” (AFS:469) as Mitra is highly controlling in nature and Nama feels afraid of her and suffers from a psychological turmoil — whether to respond to Mitra’s love or dare to break free from her. Mitra tries to manipulate in all possible ways to get her love consummated and for that she sometimes becomes abusive and inconsiderate towards the feelings of her partner, Nama. As Nama complains of Mitra, “She insists I must like everything she does…she doesn’t allow me to edge
in a word, as if she’s always right, what she likes is the best….Everything has to be decided by her. And I must agree without any reservation”(AFS:470). Nama feels reluctant to disclose much information about violence in this relationship because of the fear of further societal stigmatization. Mitra, thus, tries to sexually blackmail her to “hold her in palm”(AFS:471). She, showing sadistic attitude towards Nama, tells Bapu that “Nama can’t get away. She knows that if I want, I can make her eat dirt….I can break her marriage proposal…make our relationship public….If she leaves me”(AFS:471).

Tendulkar shows that it is homophobia or negativity associated with homosexuality that Mitra uses as a weapon to intimidate Nama. But Nama has been suffering for long this sexual and psychological abuse and thus betrays Mitra after their relation is made public by sadistic Dalvi. Betrayal of the passive Nama, who on her side, in fact suffered from a haunting consciousness of social censure, believes herself to be degraded and perverted. This step taken by Nama proves that often the “less deeply smitten partner” feels “resentment against the woman who brings all this upon her.”12 But paradoxically, Mitra herself becomes the victim of sexual abuse in the end when in her vain attempt to be like a real woman, she tries to experience heterosexual relation. She is ready to give pleasure to men at the cost of her own frustrated self and, the men; they get her drunk and really get their money’s worth by exploiting the situation.

Mitra, already suffering from depression and conflict regarding her sexual orientation, is totally dissatisfied with the social support. People like Dalvi and Pandey represent the violent homophobic world which symbolically presents a society that enacts violence against such Mitras, who are thus stigmatized and marginalized to a violent fate. Her family, friends and even Bapu fail to understand her. The resultant acute frustration makes her feel forced to free herself from this harsh and humiliating life and violent world by committing suicide.

Tendulkar has dealt with the various forms of violence prevalent in all man-woman relationships which play important role in determining the underlying power politics i.e. the need to subjugate in every relationship. The most immediate and brutal form which can be seen in many of his plays, is the physical form of violence. Gelles and Straus defined physical violence as “any act carried out with the intention of, or perceived intention of, causing physical pain or injury to another person.”13 This is perpetrated through the use of physical force in the form of beating, pushing, kicking or hitting with blows, slaps or with weapon.
Tendulkar endowed with dramatic insight, and a keen observer of the society and human nature, repletes his plays with different forms of physical violence coupling with the crude language that captures the ambience of the characters they belong to. He shows physical form of violence in its bare form as in *Sakharam Binder*, it is exhibited in the ruthless beatings and battering of Laxmi, like an animal. In *The Vultures* it is the shameless domestic violence in the crudest verbal and physical forms, inflicted upon each other by the family members. And in *Ghashiram Kotwal* Tendulkar presents the goriest of all inhuman physical violence in its cruelest form which reminds one of the revenge tragedy dramas of Jacobean period. In intimate relationships the problem of violence against woman is frequently characterized as one of coercive control that is maintained by tactics of physical violence along with its psychological and sexual forms. The concern is with the array of behaviors practiced to dominate woman. Physical violence is regarded as the ultimate method of enforcing subordination when other ways prove to be insufficient. Women are also treated roughly by men in compliance with a fairly common myth in our society that “women enjoy being controlled by physical means.”

Tendulkar too presents this concept through his character Sakharam who believes that women like Laxmi are “impossible creatures” and “you have to kick them and clout them”(*SB*:140) to make them do their work properly. He has no scruples regarding inflicting physical pains to his women partners and proves to be more brutal than any of the typical cruel husbands whom he usually criticizes. In his own words, “This Sakharam – he’s a terror…. He is not scared of God or God’s father”(*SB*:126).

Sakharam usually gets provoked over trifles and blames Laxmi for the beatings she gets and warns her “just be careful about what you say or else….”(*SB*:148). He threatens to increase the use of violence towards her if she does not obey him at all costs. This terror reaches its peak, when on the occasion of Ganapati Puja, Laxmi objects to Dawood’s singing of Aarti saying “he’s a Muslim and we-we’re Hindus”(*SB*:144). Sakharam slaps her hard, but when he sees her stubbornness, he hits her again and again and there is no stopping to this. He takes a belt off the peg and lashes at her with the belt. Her body convulses with pain but Sakharam doesn’t stop till she is half dead: “Form within the dark kitchen the sounds of blow upon blow. Laxmi’s agonized moans, but no whining…. beating continues.”(*SB*:144)

Men often think that battering is a powerful and effective form of control, but any person experiencing this type of violence is likely to become temporarily immobilized. Being fully
aware of this fact, Sakharam uses this method to assert his authority as a man and thus reassures himself of his power. But Laxmi, now, is like a dead hen, who dreads no fire, and she reacts to Sakharam’s threats of beatings:

LAXMI. In any case my body is one big sore—with all that beating I get from you. What else do I get here?... I’ve never heard a kind word here. Always barking orders. Curses. Oaths. Threatening to throw me out. Kicks and blows (SB:148).

Laxmi was in great pain after she had been belted but Sakharam wanted her to laugh. She was almost on the verge of collapsing but was supposed to laugh to gratify his whim. Laxmi feels that hell must be a better place, and she would better die than endure all this. But Sakharam is still quite heartless to say “Stay if you are ready to put up with all this, or else go your way”(SB:148). He blames Laxmi for all her miseries as usually all the perpetrators do by naming it as “victim precipitation” which says that it is the victim who provokes anger in a victimizer and thus victim deserves the beatings that he gets. Sakharam says, “You always rub me the wrong way with all the things you say and do”(SB:151).

He throws her out of the house calling her an “ungrateful wretch”(SB:149) and is even ready to go to gallows for killing her. Laxmi leaves the house but soon comes back to this hell after being thrown out from her nephew’s house. Sakharam’s mind goes berserk seeing her and he again gives her a hell of beatings, for he doesn’t want her in his house. But Laxmi, now determined, is ready to accept all the brutalities of Sakharam in a hope to die as his wife. She falls at his feet but Sakharam kicks her away and “clenching his teeth, he now begins to rain blows on Laxmi. She doubles in pain, but she will not let go his feet. He swears at her, hits her”(SB:183). On Champa’s objection that “she’ll die” he hits her more in a fit of “impotent fury”(SB:183) and greater brutality. Sakharam in his madness simply is not aware of where all he hits her. He just misses the eye and hits her in the belly below. He gives her inhuman beatings but she has decided not to say a word of complaint and endure all pains with a hope of getting a roof over her head.

The depiction of Sakharam’s sadistic tendency to use such violence suggests that the impulse to aggress against others increases in the absence of the probability of deterrent resistance with sufficient severity. Tendulkar seems to emphasize clearly that Laxmi’s passive resistance of insults and beatings only feeds the fire of his rage and emboldens him to use more
appalling forms of violence against her. Sakharam’s agitation and explosion of brutality to Laxmi at the end of the play is also concomitant with a sub textual statement of his impotency which he feels in the presence of Laxmi. It is this insight of the playwright into the complex working of the human mind that makes his characterization of Sakharam and his aggression so effective, without mitigating the horrors of his brutalities against women.

Apart from depicting intimate partner brutalities at the domestic level, Tendulkar also delineates various forms of violence that are inherent in the complex relationship of family members in this modern capitalistic world. While the ideal image of family life is one of warmth, affection and mutual support, reality shows that a range of serious, often prolonged, forms of violence occur within the family setting: the physical, sexual and emotional forms and also the problem of elder abuse. It cannot be surprising that more violence is directed against those with whom one is in more intimate contact. As they are the main source of our pleasure, they are equally the main source of frustration and hurt.

Tendulkar, too, has presented a background of a family that is imbued with vulturine tendencies and portrays all the overlapping forms of violence which are usually found in a deteriorating atmosphere of a morally bankrupt family. Romanticized and moralistic images of the family determined the predominant content of theatre before Tendulkar. But he dared to expose the brutal reality with equally brutal language that shocked the audience. Here, through the characters of Ramakant and Umakant, Tendulkar has shown the humiliating and brutal physical violence that human beings can be capable of. As Tendulkar believes that humans have basic animal instincts of violence and beastliness, these characters are shown to reflect barbaric, selfish, sensual, violent, wicked and sadistic tendencies. Tendulkar realistically portrays these baser aspects of human nature through their actions, manifested in the forms of physical and verbal violence.

The play starts with the brutal violence inflicted on a poor gardener by Ramakant. The obscenities, “…exchange of shouts. The sound of blows. Of beating”(TV:207) intimate the violent destructive process at work, stifling and strangling the normal rhythm of relationships that normally works in a family.

Violence accumulates and proves fatal for all the members of the family. Violence, in this play, works on an axis of greed, on which revolve the relationships between children and father, brother and brother, brothers and sister, which ultimately takes them to their inevitable
doom. The fire of violence raging in their psyche gets verbalized through the high voltage expressions of greed, hatred and anger. All the characters in the play have only darts of curses, swear and abuses on their lips and leave no occasion of directing even horrid obscenities towards their own relations with such ease and shamelessness. The way they casually refer to their uncle and father is simply unimaginable. Papa for them is “poor rascal Pappa,” (TV:226) “crafty old swine” (TV:229) and “uncle’s a bloody mannerless brute” and both papa and uncle are “absolute swindlers” (TV:226). They all address each other with words like bastard, pimp, buggers, bloody ruffians and devils. The most horrid verbal violence with sexually incestuous overtones is heard when brothers do not even hesitate to humiliate their sister, Manik, in calling her an experienced prostitute who spies out good victims and “goes and rolls all over town” like a cow, “and then sits scrubbing herself” (TV:214) occupying the bathroom for long.

Tendulkar symbolically presents their violent verbalization with the screeching of vultures, as they obnoxiously interact with each other in such an abusive language. For people like them, words alone, it seems, are not enough. They also resort to physical measures to get what they want, even by manhandling their elders.

When Sakharam, their uncle, comes home to live with them, it is too hard for them to keep that “old wreck” and Manik suggests throwing him out: “He’ll writhe to death with cold all night. On his own!” (TV:220). Umakant too suggests shamelessly a way to dispose him off: “Let me- hmm! - Chop him! And you dispose of him. One piece here one piece there” (TV:220). They drag his body down to the floor so that, he doesn’t spoil the sofa while he is asleep and fully drunk. Next morning, Ramakant frightens him with an air gun and their uncle runs away for his life. As Sakharam’s demanding of money from papa had roused their suspicion that their father still has some money stacked somewhere, so after driving away Sakharam, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik make their papa drink to extract the truth about the money. It is indeed shocking to see that one’s own sons and daughters can inflict so much of violence and abuse on their father. The sons pretend to fight, each scheming to entrap the father and beat him up:

RAMAKANT [going to the side board, taking an empty soda bottle and smashing it, shouts]. Umya! Come on…. If you have got bloody nerve! I’ll finish you! Saying no to papa’s bloody wishes! [Winks at him.] UMAKANT [picking up the tin opener from the side-table]. Let go of me, Manik! Let go! [She is only pretending to hold him back] I’ll knock the bastard’s block off! I’ll crack him open like a cockroach!... I’ll kill
the pimp! Let go!

[Umakant goes towards the chair on which Pappa is sitting. He catches hold of Ramakant who is behind the chair. Putting Pappa between them, Ramakant makes his chair topple. Ramakant, Umakant and Pappa, all the three fall to the ground.]

PAPPA [bellowing like a bull]. Let go of me! Help me! Help! Quickly! Murder! They’re murdering me! Run! Mother! Ah! Ah!

[There is a gash on Pappa’s head, from which blood is streaming. The old man is half-dead with fear. He is trembling violently] (TV:228).

Papa gets injured and shouts for his life: “Please don’t kill me! I am your father, you pimps! Your father!”(TV:230). His refusal to part with the money enrages his children, who try to kill him. But he too manages to run for his life. When the brothers think of black-mailing Raja of Hondur, they make safe plans by not letting Manik meet him and expose them: “Ramakant-Accident! …We’ll manage it. Supposing Manik breaks her arm… or her bloody leg? Then how’ll she go out? Not a leg in plaster!(TV:237). They break her leg with a heavy object but in vain, because they soon get the news that Raja of Hondur is dead. Now, the unborn child of Manik, who was to bring them fortunes, looks to them a “Bastard bloody breed! Traitor’s brat!”(TV:247). And they both think of forcing brutally the abortion of the child that Manik is carrying: “Ramakant- Let’s abort him! Let’s knock him bloody out! Let’s kick him out… finish him!”(TV:247). They brazenly associate their violent and cruel venture of taking a life with an adventure of game as Umya laughingly says: “I’ve no football practice. You’ll be able to kick. Ramakant- come on, I’ll give such a kick, and he’ll fly up to the bloody skies”(TV:248).

While the violence in their mind accumulates, it becomes more and more brutal, climaxing in the brothers violently aborting their sister’s child: “[Then, in a moment, a horrific scream from Manik. In another moment, Manik, screaming terrifyingly, comes half-crawling down the stairs. One leg in plaster. Her white sari is soiled with blood. Pressing one hand to her abdomen, writhing in pain]”(TV:248).

It seems that Tendulkar exhibits physical violence in its raw form with all its intensity and shows through this incident, what violence such reckless human beings are capable of. Tendulkar also shows how such people face the fury of the cursed fate as happens with
Ramakant. His child too meets the same fate as that of Manik’s. It is either through Manik’s efforts to take revenge by aborting Rama’s child with the help of black magic as she had rubbed the ash and cut a lemon on Rama’s stomach saying “Your brat’s going to abort!” (TV:261) or it was sheer sexual jealousy of Ramakant against his step brother, Rajaninath, who was the target of suspicion of being the real father of the child that instigated his impotent fury to destroy the child he and his wife had craved for so long. Tendulkar through the presentation of these revolting physical tortures and verbally abusive situations seems to present a critique of the modern day realities of social and individual life, totally bereft of human and spiritual implications. He brings out how it dooms these vulturine humans to almost unrelieved alienation from life itself because of their inability to understand, empathize or connect with others. If, on the one hand, it shocks the audience and generates feelings of revulsion for this side of human nature, it also, at the same time, makes them feel concerned about the lost souls with some feelings of pity for their hellish states of damnation. This is what is conveyed through the poem of Rajaninath at the end of the play:

Oh, show them some compassion!
Show a path to them.
Hold out to them
A merciful hand
That will bring release (TV:265).

Though the plays of Tendulkar deal at length with varied forms of violence in the domestic sphere, he seeks to unveil the truth of this phenomenon in different situations and areas of human life, including the political and social ones. The use of violence, it is indicated, has always been legitimatized by the perpetrators as a means to enforce discipline, justice and well-being of both the individual and the society. He exposes unsparingly the hypocrisy and brutality embodied in the social and political institutions which are used as tools of exploitation, oppression and destruction of those very men and women whom they are supposed to serve and protect.

Police is one such visible form of force employed by those in power in political realms who quite often use it to perpetuate their exploitative and oppressive rule by eliminating all possible challenges of threats to them. Though the police are supposed to be custodians of law and order, morality and justice, but it is one of the ironies of state administration that the police
have universally become the symbol of cruelty, arrogance and oppression. They are supposed to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression, the peaceful against violence and disorder, and thus to respect and safeguard the rights of all.

Tendulkar presents this corrupt and cruel police of the state, who shake hands with the thief and falsely accuse and abuse innocent men creating circumstances that the abused man is forced to react in an abnormal way. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Ghashiram, a Kanauj Brahman, is falsely charged with theft and is publically hurt and humiliated. Tendulkar, through Ghashiram’s character, portrays the extraordinary bestial instinct to react violently at his victimization. Smarting for revenge, Ghashiram becomes the Kotwal of Poona and especially a cruel one who delights in ruthless enforcement of his authority. Slapping, abusing, whipping and lashing people for trivial reasons become common scenes in the streets of Poona. He delights in adopting coercive methods to extort confessions out of innocent people. He callously harasses people moving late in the city without his permission. And thus he imposes endless restrictions on the people of Poona. His totalitarian reign is made explicit in the play through the words of Sutradhar:

Ghashiram Kotwal says to kill a pig, to do an abortion, to be a pimp, to commit a misdemeanour, to steal, to live with one’s divorced wife, to remarry…to commit suicide, without a permit, is a sin… Ghashiram Kotwal started making the rounds of Poona at night…. Started ruling in person. Accosted anyone he met in the streets. Whipped people. Arrested people. Demanded people’s permits. Imprisoned people. Sued people (*GK*:387).

Ghashiram’s atrocities are boundless and people tremble at the mention of Kotwal’s name, as severe punishments are meted out to the people, caught under mere suspicion. Prisons overflow with prisoners. Thus, Ghashiram in a role of avenger lets loose a reign of terror in the city. The ruthlessness of Ghashiram, when he forces a Brahmin to admit his crime, borders on the tyrannical medieval practices of punishment for witchcraft, when authority used to punish the offender without giving a chance to prove his innocence. Similar physical tortures are depicted in gory details in the ordeal scene, where innocent Brahmin’s nails are pulled out, his hands washed in lemon juice and soap and the heated iron balls placed in them. Ghashiram orders his soldiers to make sure that the smell of burning flesh is felt. Then the victim’s hands are cut off and he is driven out of the city. Guilty or not, either way he is tortured. Ghashiram’s brutal tactics to extort
Brahmin’s confession of the theft suggests violence of the worst kind. This ritual of the ordeal, which is quite elaborate, depicts Ghashiram the Kotwal’s cruelty and the way he relishes the details, marks him as a monster. This scene shows that cruelty crosses all the limits of reasonable human behavior, and under the sway of his vindictiveness, he becomes a savage sadist. Various hellish acts of Ghashiram, after the death of his daughter, the tortures, killing of Chandra and suffocation and death of the innocent Brahmins in the prison, at his behest are some of the violent deeds which give a raw picture of cruelty of the tyrant Kotwal. His morbidity becomes so perverted and bestial that it leads him to his doom and fall.

The use of “physical force is a significant means of control,” but it also “depends for its long-term effectiveness upon the consent of people to such coercive arrangements.” Since “authority is legitimate power,” the path taken by Ghashiram of control-coercion-violence-tyranny in an ascending order, becomes unacceptable and unbearable to the angry Poonaites who, ultimately, revolt against him. Nana, too, perceiving the institutional discrepancies, hands him over to the blood thirsty crowd, which kills him after giving him inhuman treatment:

They beat him.
They shaved his head.
They *sindur*-daubed his head.
They rode him around on a camel.
They tied him to the leg of an elephant (*GK*:414).

It is death worked out bit by bit with the same attention to detail as the scene of the ordeal. He is thrown in front of the Brahmins with one hand tied behind his back. The Brahmins crouch like hunters, and shouting, throw stones at him. The mob relishes the sense of justice in killing Ghashiram who had made their life so miserable. Again, the physical tortures are presented by Tendulkar in their morbid forms, but now it is the sanctioned outlet or venting out of mob fury which symbolizes the collective violence manifesting in nauseating inhuman means. Revenge, whether of Ghashiram against the Poonaites or of the people against Ghashiram, is enacted in physical form in the play. The playwright, through an “all-out assault on the senses,” gears to bring to the surface and expose all the passions and instincts hidden within man’s psyche and incorporates them in a performance.

Tendulkar through the example of Ghashiram’s violence lays bare the violence inherent in the institutions like state and its law enforcing agencies, particularly when they are abused for
vendetta. This form of violence is used not only against citizenry but also against one’s political opponents in the ruthless struggle to gain and perpetuate one’s hold on power. Tendulkar through his plays *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Encounter in Umbugland* discloses the secrets of the ways of power game wherein “each one is the devoured, and each the devourer”(*GK*:307). The former represents the defeat and dreadful end of the individual in conflict with the ruling power and the society whereas the latter shows the victory of the individual against the rival political group.

*Ghashiram Kotwal* is a powerful dramatic statement of the violence that humans are capable of when actuated by lust, revenge and power. Tendulkar features the corruption, intrigue, hypocrisy, greed and brutality which are inherent in today’s power politics. Through this play Tendulkar points to the ever recurring pattern of power politics manifesting in deceptions and manipulations of deputation as is seen in Peshwa-Phadanavis-Kotwal relationship. Though the play has its origin in history, it represents universal human situations which are relevant to all times and climes.

The political violence and evil depicted in this play is mainly perpetrated by a lecherous ruler who is responsible indirectly for the material and moral decadence of his society and who creates an avenging demon to cover up his amorous life. Nana Phadnavis is a lustful politician shown to be degrading himself before a power crazy alien, Ghashiram, by raising him to the level of Kotwal of Poona for having his daughter, Gauri, in return. But he knows that his defeat is only temporary and with his Machiavellian stratagem he justifies his decision that he has two bullets in his gun. With the first, he’ll fell on the “luscious daughter” of Ghashiram and with the second he will “make the city of Poona dance”(*GK*:384). His political shrewdness knows no bounds when he says: “We just raised a dog at our door to the position of the Kotwali! …What’ll happen is that our misdeeds will be credited to your account. We do it; our Kotwal pays for it”(*GK*:384-85).

Nana has put Ghashiram on “Poona’s back” so that he can countercheck “all those conspirators”(*GK*:384) and because, he is a stranger, no one will ever trust him and let him join them. Ghashiram straightens out the city of Poona and then wants to marry off his beloved daughter, Gauri. Nana, having exploited her sexually, sends her to Chandra, the midwife, where she dies. Ghashiram is almost mad with rage and like a wounded tiger, tries to destroy Nana. But Nana again like a shrewd and manipulative politician hypnotizes Ghashiram by philosophizing the Vedantic concept of life and death and is successful in calming down Ghashiram. But the
fear of Ghashiram still lurks as he seems to develop a penchant for blood and might prove dangerous. Ghashiram fails to realize the treacherous way of the culprit Nana and is reduced to a stooge in Nana’s power game. After the death of Gauri, Ghashiram is of no use to Nana and soon an opportunity comes to get rid of the disease. Ghashiram’s turning into a fiend and plunging into career of bloodshed and subsequent death of twenty two Brahmans by suffocation leads to a revolt by Poona Brahmans. Poonaites want “an order to behead Ghashiram Kotwal” (GK:413) and Nana immediately grabs the opportunity and hands over a written order. He muses delightedly like a seasoned politician: “Use a thorn to take out a thorn. That’s great. The disease has been stopped. Anyway, he was of no use any more”(GK:413).

Tendulkar, through Nana’s malevolent power, shows how hypocrisy of these politicians manipulates the public to serve their own interest. Here, Nana justifies the end of the demon Ghashiram with the grace of the Almighty: “The demon Ghashya, who plagued all of us, has met his death… The mercy of the gods is with us always”(GK:415-16).

Thus, Nana, through his hypnotic exercise of power in the name of social custom, responsibility and authority, proves a real string puller, the veritable power wielder of the city of Poona. Through the scot-free life of Nana, the intention of the writer is to show the realistic world of modern politics where the crafty, licentious and law-breaking politicians prosper and flourish. Ghashiram is dead only as a person and the play becomes a symbolic political statement made on the creation of monsters by political parties in power for temporary gains, leading to inequity, brutality and ultimate destruction. The pages of history are replete with such living examples since times immemorial to the present age: “The Ghashirams of the world die, but the situations, which give birth to such forces, recur and are personified in the character of Nana. Beneath the superficial changes in history the larger dynamics of power are cyclic.”18 Tendulkar appropriates history to create a powerful play that raises questions about the politics of power that have relevance to Indian society today. It challenges contemporary values by exposing them.

Another play through which Tendulkar challenges the contemporary corrupt political values, by exposing them to our critical gaze, is *Encounter in Umbugland* which also exhibits the underlying political violence motivated by power motives. He, in this play, suggests by the title itself that conflict or encounter between the ruling queen and wishing-to-rule ministers is at the heart of the play. This play is indeed a fine and amusing portrayal of political intrigues and the resulting violence. Tendulkar portrays the ministers as typical, dishonest and corrupt politicians
who want to rule the kingdom of Umbugland after the death of the king. Tendulkar gives a peep into their psyche through their small conversations. They are all aware of their own shrewd behaviour as is evident when Vratyasom justifies his corrupt practices:

Let us not open our mouths too wide about principles and honesty. To observe these two virtues in politics is as inappropriate and stupid as celibacy after marriage. You and I are politicians and ministers: ...It means we are partners in a most profitable game of skullduggery (EU:273).

These ministers show no concern for the common tribal people who have been exploited for so many years. The previous rulers also had been ignoring the wretched conditions like hunger, poverty and diseases that they had been facing. They are dubbed as traitors if they revolt against their oppressors and are thus subjected to more heinous exploitation. The disregard for the betterment of the common man is seen when their dictionary of politics refers to them as “unprincipled, defective, spineless, vapid, stupid and baseborn faces”(EU:334), which is a telling proof of the attitude of present day politicians towards those who vote them to power. They are all equally selfish and mean and, therefore, unable to win support of people necessary to rise in power. They all finally decide to make princess Vijaya their new leader, who can be used as a safeguard and they can keep their guns on her shoulders as Vratyasom says, “This one in front, five of us behind. She’ll be the rule, we’ll be the rulers!” (EU:293).

The political conflict starts when queen refuses to become a puppet in their hands and works on a plan to uplift the tribe of Kadamba and to rehabilitate it. Karkashirsha, Vratyasom and Pishtakeshi openly oppose her and walk out of the meeting showing their resentment, and thus the confrontation begins between her Majesty and the ministers. The implementation of the plan infuriates the ministers who decide to incite the mob against their queen:

We must gather a mob! We must incite the people! We must loose upon her the tidal wave of an infuriated mob. That’s what’ll rock her! She’s still raw… an inexperienced child. She’s calling like a jackal; she hasn’t as yet seen the angry roaring tiger of the mob. Brave men tremble when they see this fourteenth wonder of the world rushing towards them, shouting… attacking with stones… we’ll force her to surrender! We’ll make her submit! (EU:333-34).

By means of the ministers’ conspiracy against the Queen, Tendulkar offers us an insight into the dirty games that politicians have ever been playing and still play to capture power by
exploiting the unsuspecting common men and women. When the palace is besieged by the mob, the ministers watch with delight the stone throwing from a room in the palace. Their inhuman delight in witnessing the killings of people, beastly attraction for the “bright red colour” of blood and enjoying of the “most violent spectacle” speaks volumes of their incorrigible motives to gain power at the cost of poor men’s life, whom they now call “the Martyrs” (EU:349). They want the “golden page” of their victory to be “inscribed in blood” (EU:349) in the history of Umbaland. Thus dreaming about the prospects of a victory for themselves, Vratyasom shouts: “Death to the Queen! Death to the Queen! Forward, all of you! Victory to the people! Victory to the Martyrs!” (EU:349).

But when they see the Queen, they pretend to be angry with the mob’s behaviour, calling it, “Lamentable!,” “Pitiful!” “Infuriating!” and “bestial behaviour!” (EU:349). They want the Queen to go out and pacify the crowd, as per their plan, but Vijaya instead, orders one of the Ministers to be sent amidst the mob and cleverly, turns the tables in her favour.

Tendulkar, in the play, shows the minister’s relationship with the crown which is based on suspicion and intrigue, indicative of covert violence underlying political life in the highest echelons of power. It is also seen with respect to the relation of ministers with the common masses, whom they use as mere instruments to fulfill their own ambitions. The ministers, through their agents, sell stupid ideas to the mob and buy their anger to use it for political purposes and bring great strifes leading to the destruction of innocent lives and valuable property. In this great encounter between the Queen and the Ministers, it is the common man who suffers the most, as these political masters play with their dreams, emotions and life for fulfilling their own ambitions. Tendulkar in this play exposes the ugly nature of power games, where people are used as pawns. It is for this reason that it is so relevant to our contemporary social and political situation.

The way Tendulkar exposes the disruptive and destructive effects of different forms of violence on one’s life — personal, domestic, political and social - indicates that he does not justify this phenomenon but reveals it as a basic trait of human beings. His aim in dramatizing various forms of violence is to shock his audience into an awareness of the reality of human nature and the world they live in. He thus also seeks to enhance the understanding of his audience about the factors and forces responsible for various ways and forms of violence ranging from the subtlest and covert to the crudest and crude ones. The way he provides critical insights
into the complex dynamics of violence, therefore, becomes necessary for a better understanding of his treatment of this theme, a subject of detailed study in the next chapter.
References


3 ibid.

4 ibid.


6 Milena Georgieva Stateva, p. 127.


10 ibid., p. 179.


ibid.
