CHAPTER II

GENDER DEFORMITY:
KAMALA, NAGA-MANDALA AND HALF-WAY HOUSE

SARITA... Listen to the story of how he bought the slave Kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free - not just free - the slave's father shelled out the money - a big sum ....

- Kamala

In the beginning, this universe was nothing but the Self in the form of a man.... He was as large as a man and woman embracing This Self then divided itself into parts; and with that, there were a master and a mistress.¹

Quoted from Brhadaranyaka Upanishad by Campbell, this symbolizes the split of a whole human being into a man and a woman. The same symbolism can be found in the creation of Adam and Eve by God as described in the Bible.
We are born whole human beings, but gender-based division of labour breaks us into male and female fragments. Each fragment retains only half of the human potential. The retained part overgrows to compensate for the other part which remains under developed. These two polarized, deformed fragments are called men and women. These gender deformities are thus caused and gradually 'canonized' by socio-cultural programming of sex roles. They are glorified and children are trained to attain them through socialization since their birth. Hogie Wyckoff, a Transactional Analyst, writes:

As women and men we are socialized to develop certain parts of our personalities while suppressing the development of other parts. This programming promotes a predetermined, stilted, and repetitive way of acting life.\(^2\)

Every human being has the potential for nurturing, controlling, rationality, intuition, spontaneity and adaptation. To be masculine, men develop the faculties of controlling and rationality while suppressing those of nurturing and intuition. To be feminine, women develop the faculties of nurturing and intuition while suppressing those of controlling and rationality. To be cultured, both men and women developed the faculty of adaptation to culture (but not to Nature), while suppressing that of spontaneity and so neither enjoy life. Nurturing and intuition help women perform their culturally allotted function, child-rearing and house-keeping while controlling and rationality help men perform their culturally allotted function, bread-earning. Adaptation to culture and the lack of spontaneity make both of them obedient to their masters. Thus, men and women have become different, except in their obedience. These differences cause alienation and antagonism between men and women. So, they find each other mysterious and hostile.
Gender deformity not only makes men and women incomplete human beings but enslaves them to the exploitative and oppressive society. Men are exploited and oppressed in the society while women are exploited and oppressed in the house. Men are content with their power in the house while women are content with their power over children and daughters-in-law. Like men, women are also divided and hierarchised class-wise and relation-wise. This causes alienation and antagonism between the women of the higher rungs (rich/higher castes/mother-in-law) and those of the lower rungs (poor/lower castes/daughters-in-law). Men and women imbibe the exploitative and oppressive culture and perpetuate it. So, they never realize the reality. They blame one another for their miserable life and quarrel among themselves. But they are not united and do not collectively try to eradicate the morbid culture that brought about this pathetic state. That is why Claude M. Steiner talks about the liberation of men and women from sex role scripting. Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad are particularly provoked by gender deformity in Indian Society.

Though all the plays of Tendulkar are concerned with gender deformity, his Kamala treats this cultural malady more elaborately. The play was inspired by a real life incident - the Indian Express expose by Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented at a press conference. Jaisingh Jadav is a brilliant, brave journalist. He and Sarita, his sophisticated wife, remain ignorant of their being exploited and oppressed until Kamala, an uneducated tribal woman, triggers their awareness. In the play, Kamala becomes a powerful symbol of being exploited and oppressed. Talking to Sunil Shanbag, Tendulkar observes:

... Kamala after a time becomes a symbol. The wife of the journalist becomes 'Kamala', and ultimately even he [the journalist] becomes 'Kamala'.
STRUCTURE OF HUMAN MIND

INTUITION  ADAPTABILITY  RATIONALITY  CONTROLING  NURTURING

A WHOLE HUMAN BEING  A FEMININE WOMAN  A MASCUINE MAN

NURTURING  CONTROLLING  RATIONALITY  ADAPTABILITY  INTUITION  SPONTANEITY
Jaisingh Jadav is an agile, adventurous journalist. He takes risk, exposes scandals and feeds the paper with sensational news. His work greatly boosts the circulation of the paper and the owner increased his salary. Jaisingh feels happy and encouraged and takes much more risky tasks. He moves to a well-furnished, spacious house. Sarita, his sophisticated wife, takes care of his needs at home. She takes the telephonic messages and notes them for him. She keeps delicious food and drinks ready for him. She gives him sexual pleasure. Her intuition and nurturing faculties help her in this while the faculties of leadership and rationality help Jaisingh in his job. Jaisingh is obedient and loyal to his master while Sarita is obedient and loyal to him. In such a sexist and familial system, a 'good' wife refreshes her husband so that he may work hard for his employer. So Steiner aptly points out:

In order for a man to be optimally exploited in his labour he must live with a woman who, on his eight hours of off-work time, re-supplies him with energy.

Jaisingh goes to Luhardaga beyond Ranchi in Bihar and buys Kamala for Rs. 250/- at flesh market where women of all kinds are auctioned openly. He brings her to Delhi and keeps her in his house to present her at a press conference in order to expose the inhuman trade. He keeps it secret even from his best friend Jain who just visits him in the forenoon. Individualism and competition of his profession demands it. Jain knowing the hardships of Sarita casually remarks: "Shame on you! Hero of anti-exploitation campaigns makes slave of wife" and calls Sarita lovely bonded labourer while saying 'Bye'. This anticipates Sarita's sudden realization of her position in the family.

Kakasaheb, Sarita's uncle, who runs a paper, is there. He apprehends the predicament of Jaisingh. He forewarns him of the possible
future danger: "You may be caught in a terrible jam some time" (9) This proves to be true later though Jaisingh ignores it. Kakasaheb later tries to convince him to leave such a job because it is not only dangerous but also inhuman. Jaisingh is not convinced as he is under the illusion that he is fighting through press against exploitation and oppression. He also credulously believes that his employer will protect him.

SARITA. Supposing you're sent to jail?
JAISINGH. I don't mind. My editor is going to fight this case right upto the Supreme Court. (26)

Jaisingh meticulously executes his plan and succeeds marvellously at the press conference in exposing the inhuman trade by presenting Kamala as a proof. Kamala is asked certain unpleasant questions there. But Jaisingh lacks the faculties of intuition and nurturing in this context and does not take notice of Kamala's embarrassment. Jaisingh and Jain are very much intoxicated by drinks and success while Kakasheb and Sarita feel very sorry for Kamala. So Sarita, being annoyed, refuses to sleep with him that night.

Sarita is disturbed and cannot sleep. Kamala comes and talks to her. She asks: "How much did he buy you for?" (34). This unexpected question enlightens Sarita on her position in the family. Though Jaisingh took a handsome dowry in marrying her, she feels like saying 'Seven hundred'. Kamala remarks, 'It was an expensive bargain, memsahib.' (34). She then proposes that she will do all the housework while Sarita will look after accounts and such 'sophisticated' things. She adds that each of them will share their master's bed half a month each. Sarita agrees to this. She realizes that she is also a slave like Kamala. The realisation is shocking and painful to her.
Jaisingh receives many compliments in the morning and feels very happy. As the police are after him to take custody of Kamala, he hastens to take her to the orphanage. Sarita opposes this and requests him to allow Kamala to stay with them in their house. Then, the dormant male chauvinist in him wakes up and says: "It's I who take decisions in this house, and no one else." (42). He takes Kamala to the orphanage and attends a party in the evening. What Simone De Beauvoir says about the modern men applies aptly to Jaisingh here: "The men of today show a certain duplicity of attitude which is painfully lacerating to women; they are willing on the whole to accept woman as a fellow being, an equal; but they require her to remain the inessential"8 Therefore Sarita grows emotional and resentful at this. She proposes to hold a press conference to expose the tyranny of her husband. Kakasaheb tries to calm her by saying that it is common with men. He then confesses: "... I gave your aunt a lot of trouble. As if it was my right. I didn’t care what she felt at all ..." (47) Then he adds that men are as humanly weak as women. But Sarita is not pacified.

Later, Jain comes and says that Jaising has been dismissed from his job by the proprietor under the pressure of very big people who are involved in the flesh market. Jaisingh, being called, returns home and learns about his dismissal. He loses his temper, curses his employer and decides to expose all his crimes at a press conference the following day. The nurturing faculty in Sarita overcomes her resentment and she tries to console her husband. But being exhausted, he collapses onto the sofa and falls asleep. Sarita does not give up her proposal but postpones it.

Sarita represents educated and sophisticated wives. They do not realise that their education makes them sophisticated slaves. As will be seen in mental deformity, education impoverishes our awareness. Jaising repre-
zens educated liberal middle class men. They cherish the illusions of their freedom and liberalism. In crises, their hidden male chauvinism comes out. They do not know that they are exploited and oppressed by their employer as their wives are exploited and oppressed by them.

Arundhati Banerjee in ‘Introduction’ makes a concluding remarks: "... Kamala is an indictment of the success-oriented male-dominated society where women are often victims or stepping stones in men's achievements" (XVIII). But it can also be concluded that Kamala is an indictment of the business-oriented capital-dominated society where men like Jaisingh are victims or stepping stones in a capitalist's success.

Women are oppressed and exploited more than men in our society as it remains culturally patriarchal in spite of democracy. Women bear and bring up children; do all the housework and some of them do jobs additionally. Yet they are considered a debit to the family. They are ill-treated and tortured by their husbands and in-laws for various reasons. Ambedkar points out, "A woman under the laws of Manu is subject to corporal punishment and Manu allows the husband the right to beat his wife." Indian society which has accepted the laws of Manu denies women education and thus mental growth. Manu says, "Women have no right to study the Vedas." In Modern India, women are allowed to study so that they may become sophisticated slaves.

The plight of Hindu women is peculiar. Sudhir Kakar, a psychoanalyst, points out, ".... the mother - whore - partner-in-ritual trichotomy is crucial for understanding the culture's public and official attitude towards women and wives." A Hindu wife is honoured as a mother to bear progeny for her husband and as a partner to him in performing religious rites. So Manu himself says, "Where women are honoured, there
the gods are pleased. But, she is feared and loathed as a whore. That is why Kakar observes:

... It is only as a 'woman' a female sexual being, that the patriarchal culture's horror and scorn are heaped upon hapless wife. It is clear from its context that the oft-quoted verse, 'Her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth and her sons protect her in old age; a woman is never fit for independence. refers to a protection not from external danger but from the woman's inner, sexual proclivities ... yet guarding her by force is not realistically possible and perhaps it is better if she is thoroughly engaged in house-hold work and thus fancy free....

She cannot thus even think of sex as she feels completely exhausted by the end of the day. More over as Dr. Jandhyala points out:

With woman's sexuality so closely bound with marriage and her role as wife and mother, there was no possibility of considering her sexual needs and desires ....

The essence of Hindu culture tacitly conveys, "No sex in marriage please, were Indian" as Kakar rightly puts it. So "This pleasure was to be sought by men from courtesans well versed in the arts, women by definition did not fit into the socially accepted norms of the respectable family women." as Dr. Jandhyala aptly points out. Therefore Appanna in Naga-Mandala visits his concubine though Rani, his wife, is very beautiful and Brahmins in Ghasiram Kotwal go to the courtesans.

Thus women are sexually oppressed. It is reflected in the concept of chastity, a patriarchal value. It is one of the most powerful yet invisible cultural fetters that have enslaved women for ages. There has been enough literature, both oral and written, glorifying this enslaving value and deifying the women characters who observed it faithfully. The Ramayana in which
Sita undergoes the fire ordeal to prove her chastity to Rama has been cultural
guide to Indians for more than two thousand years. Extramarital enjoyment
for women is a taboo even in this ultra modern age. Dr. Jandhyala therefore
observes.

For emerging middle class culture, women's sexuality was subsumed
within her reproductive role. Any other expression which transgressed
this norm was perceived as vile and wanton.19

That is why Miss Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* is
mercilessly attacked verbally in the name of mock-trial as she has committed
fornication and Rani in *Naga-Mandandala* is accused of adultery while the
male culprits in both the plays are not found fault with. Condemning the
sexual oppression of women by men, Dr. Jandhyala says, "It is desired that
women have a choice, control over their bodies and lives."20 Benare says:

... Who are these people to say what I can or can't do? My life is
my own - I haven't sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own.
My wishes are my own. No one can kill those - no one! I'll do what
I like with myself and my life!21

This is exemplified in Karnad's *Naga-Mandala* and Tendulkar's *Silence! The
Court is in Session*.

*Naga-Mandala* is based on two Kannada folk-tales that Karnad heard
from A.K. Ramanujan.22 It was produced at the Guthrie Theatre in the U.S.A.
and dedicated to Ramanujan who was overseeing its rehearsals before his
death. The Story in the form of a beautiful young woman narrates it to a
playwright who is cursed with death for having bored his audience. She like
a Sutradhar or Bhagavata conducts the play. Her presence adds to the
feministic aura of the play.
Appanna marries Rani and brings her to his house when she reaches womanhood. She arranges for his bath and serves him lunch. After lunch, he locks her in and goes to his concubine. Rani feels lonely and miserable. Mentally she is still a child, craving for parental affection. So she moans, 'Oh Mother! Father!' in her sleep. The following day she expresses her fear of loneliness and Appanna discounts her feelings without any compassion:

APPANNA: What is there to be scared of? Just keep to yourself. No one will bother you. Rice! (Pause)
RANI: Please, you could —
APPANNA: Look, I don't like idle chatter. Don't question me. Do as you are told and you won't be punished (Finishes his meal, gets up.) (7).

He locks her in and goes away as usual. She does housework mechanically. She daydreams that she is taken by an eagle to her parents who caress her affectionately. She sobs when she comes into the real world. She is confined to the kitchen. She is deprived of the affection of fellow-human beings and the knowledge of the outside world. She is practically imprisoned in a solitary confinement. Her personality therefore remains underdeveloped. She is thus made the weaker sex. Her being locked in symbolizes the chastity belt of the medieval ages. The empty house that she is locked in stands for her apathetic in-laws according to Karnad."

Kurudavva, the friend of Appanna's mother, learns about Rani's suffering and gives her an aphrodisiac root. Rani follows her instruction and mixes the paste of the root in the curry to be served to her husband. Then the curry explodes and boils over, giving away coils of pink steam. She is afraid that it may harm her husband so she throws it on the anthill. Appanna does not tolerate her going out for a moment and slaps her so hard that she
collapses onto the floor. He, as a male chauvinist, expects his wife to serve him as a robot with absolute obedience.

Naga, a King Cobra, living in the anthill, consumes the curry and immediately falls in love with Rani. He assumes the form of Appanna and visits Rani at night. He commiserates with her over her pathetic condition and showers on her parental affection that she badly needs. All her-pent-up sorrow bursts out. She feels relieved and happy. But she cannot comprehend the situation since Appanna cannot be so compassionate. Yet, she willingly suspends her disbelief and enjoys Naga's love and care. She feels happy and secure in his company. Appanna and Naga represent the two unconnected roles of a husband -- 'as a stranger during the day and as lover at night' according to Karnad.\textsuperscript{24} Rajinder Paul rightly points out: "It is a play where a cobra plays the lover and proves to be better behaved than his human counterpart who is as insensitive as a husband as we read about in bad tales."\textsuperscript{25} Rani falls asleep in his embrace and Naga feels happy about his success. He leaves before dawn.

Appanna comes in the morning the next day. Rani goes to him happily, only to find an expression of distaste on his face. She therefore thinks that she dreamt last night. Naga comes again that night and assures her that what she sees is real. Then she asks him why he behaves differently at different times. Naga makes use of patriarchal authority to discount her reason and suppress her awareness lest his identity should be discovered:

\begin{quote}
NAGA : (Seriously) I am afraid that is how it is going to be. Like \textit{that} during the day. Like \textit{this} at night. Don't ask me why.
RANI : I won't (23)
\end{quote}
This injunction of Naga proves to be so powerful that Rani does not know his real identity until she sleeps with her own husband.

Rani enjoys Naga's affection and forgets herself in her happiness. Naga feels encouraged and makes love to her. When she realizes what Naga has done to her, she feels aghast. She at once moves away from him and weeps in a corner. She feels cheated into committing the horrible sin of sex. Naga is shocked at her erotic ignorance. He explains her how natural love-making is:

Frogs croaking in pelting rain, tortoises singing soundlessly in the dark, foxes, crabs, ants, rattlers, sharks, swallows - even the geese! The female begins to smell like the wet earth. And stung by her smell, the King Cobra starts searching for his Queen ... everywhere, those who come together, cling, fall apart lazily! ... It is there and there, everywhere. (25).

But Rani is not convinced and says that they unlike beasts should have some sense of shame. Gradually Naga's regular nocturnal visits cure her of frigidity and she starts enjoying erotic pleasure.

Rani becomes pregnant and feels elated that her nocturnal happiness is real. Naga is shocked to know this and afraid that his real identity will be detected. To the great confusion and chagrin of Rani, he asks her to keep it secret as long as possible. She can neither hide her pregnancy of five months nor have it aborted so she feels crest-fallen and helpless. The next day, Appanna discovers her pregnancy and is sure that she has committed adultery. This infuriates him and he kicks and curses her. She pleads her innocence as she knows that she slept with her husband only. But Appanna is not convinced as he never slept with her. He tries to smash her with a boulder but the Cobra saves her. He swears and goes out to request the Village Elders to punish her.
Naga visits Rani that night as usual. He advises her to take the snake ordeal at the trial. When Rani innocently requests him to withdraw the case, he says that the trial is inevitable. He then assures her that everything will be all right:

All will be well. Don't worry. Your husband will become your slave tomorrow. You will get all you have ever wanted. (35).

She suddenly runs to him and embraces him. She notices that his heart betrays his great anxiety. The mother in her tries to console him:

... I mustn't let you go. I must listen to my heart and hold you back. Take you like a baby in my arms and keep you safe. (35)

As she talks, Naga leaves quietly.

The village Elders sit in judgement the next day. They listen to Appanna and Rani. They ask Rani to prove her chastity by taking the oath while holding a red-hot iron rod. But she requests them to permit her to take the snake ordeal. As they concede to her request, she puts her hand in the anthill and takes out the Cobra. While holding it, she swears that she has never touched anybody other than her husband and the Cobra. The serpent spreads its hood over her head, sways it for a while and goes away. All the people prostrate before her, adore her as a Goddess and seek her blessings. Appanna also falls at her feet and begs for her forgiveness. Now he is her devoted husband and his concubine becomes her servant maid. Later Rani begets a beautiful boy. Thus she gets all as promised by Naga.

_Naga-Mandala_ questions and exposes and gender-biased values and morals of patriarchy which have oppressed women for ages. This is effectively done by juxtaposing Appanna and Rani at the village court. Appanna enjoys extra-marital sex openly and unshamedly whereas Rani sleeps with Naga who assumes the form of Appanna. Everybody knows
Appanna’s relation with his concubine, yet the Village Elders try Rani’s case only. Thus the play uncovers the injustice of the patriarchal moral code which demands the faithfulness of a woman to her husband but not the faithfulness of a man to his wife. Raju therefore points out: “His name means any Man and is a wry comment on any man who tries to enforce chastity on his wife while he himself indulges in extra-marital relationships.”26 Marulasid-dappa expresses an opinion similar to that of Karnad:

... The irony of the term “fidelity” comes through in this sequence of events. Appanna and Naganna - two faces of one man, one seen at day, the other at night - symbolise the exploitation and double standards of man, while Rani is the symbol of a woman’s eternal endurance of this oppression.27

Indian culture considers marriage to be the supreme boon of a woman because it offers her salvation through her service to her husband. For her, chastity is superior and preferable to life. This reduces her to a non-living commodity that her father offers as a gift (Kanyadan) to a man in marriage. She is denied love, enjoyment and education which are indispensable to the growth of her personality. Rani’s situation is exactly this. So she is a simple, innocent and ignorant girl. She has grown physically but not matured mentally. She therefore behaves as a frightened child in Appanna’s presence. Naga gives her love, enjoyment and some education too; so her personality grows. Consequently the little, helpless, diffident girl that she was gets transformed into a confident, courageous lady. She says:

“... I was a stupid, ignorant girl when you brought me here. But now I am a woman, a wife, and I am going to be a mother. I am not a parrot ... (32).

Appanna himself is shocked to see her boldness.

RANI: (Snarling at Appanna) If you don’t let me go, I’ll - (Taken aback by her fury, Appanna lets her go.) (38)
After the trial, Appanna accepts her superiority and obeys her.

The snake ordeal proves Rani's innocence and divinity to the world. Yet Appanna is not convinced as he knows that he has never slept with her. He says to himself: "... Have I sinned so much that even Nature should laugh at me?" (41) As Rani sleeps with her own husband after the trial and as the bed manners of two men are always different, she discovers that Naga in the form of Appanna made love to her before the trial. Thus both Appanna and Rani know that she has lost her chastity. But they do not bother about it. Story aptly comments: "It is something one has to live with, like a husband who snores or a wife who is going bald". (41) The previous erotic experience perhaps makes Rani a better lover and Appanna enjoys marital bliss better than before. The loss of chastity therefore proves to be a kind of 'spell-break' to Appanna and Rani.

Vijay Tendulkar's Silence! The Court is in Session presents the same situation as that of Naga-Mandala. Leela Benare is a member of a drama troupe of amateur artists. In her teen age, she is seduced and sexually exploited by her own uncle. He does not marry her and her mother supports him. Benare overcomes the shock and completes her education. She becomes a teacher and earns good reputation as a teacher. Her academic interest takes her to Prof. Damle whom she respects for his scholarship and intelligence. Though married, he exploits her sexually and betrays her. She requests Balu Rodke and Ponkshe to marry her and save her from ignominy. But they are neither compassionate nor courageous to help her. Benare ridicules their diffidence. She is frank and open. She exposes the hypocrisy of people and laughs at their flaws. The other actors of the troupe are victims of her ridicule. So they plan to take it out on her. In the name of a mock trial, they expose her private life, humiliate her and hurt her heart. They do
not find fault with Prof. Damle, the real culprit who has spoilt her life. Concluding the trial, Sukhatme who is the counsel for prosecution in the mock-trial says to Kashikar, the judge:

Milord, the nature of the charge against the accused, Miss Benare, is truly dreadful. The woman who is an accused has made a heinous blot on the sacred brow of motherhood - which is purer than heaven itself. For that any punishment, however great, that the law may give her, will be too mild by far. The character of the accused is appalling. It is bankrupt of morality. Not only that. Her conduct has blackened all social and moral values. The accused is public enemy number one. If such socially destructive tendencies are encouraged to flourish, this country and its culture will be totally destroyed. Therefore, I say the court must take a very stern, inexorable view of the prisoner's crime, without being trapped in any sentiment ... Woman bears the grave responsibility of building up the high values of society. 'Na stri swatantra marhat' 'No woman is fit for independence' .... That is the rule laid down for us by tradition ... (114-15).

This is what our patriarchal culture makes us think. Like Appanna of Naga-Mandala, Prof. Damle is not punished for his sexual crime. Though men commit worst sexual crimes, people still say that women spoil the society. Men are tacitly permitted to seek extra marital sexual pleasure while women's sexuality is limited to their motherhood within their marriage as Dr. Jandhyala points out. Leela Benare strongly protests against this inhuman oppression and demands freedom and right over her life to live her own way. She says:

... Who are these people to say what I can or can't do? My life is my own - I haven't sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own .... (58)

She knows that jealous people are going to get her dismissed. Yet she is courageous. But the mock-trial has so severely hurt her that she breaks
down completely. Utterly exhausted and agonised, she says: "Na jeevan jeevanamarhati. 'Life is not worthy of life.'" (116) Even Mrs. Kashikar joins the men in attacking her without any compassion. Like most of the women, she supports patriarchal values though they harm women. That is why the cynics of feminism declare that women are the enemies of women. But this is because women are urged for their survival to absorb, observe and propagate patriarchal culture as aptly argued by Srilatha Batliwala in her brilliant article, "why do women oppress women?".

Tendulkar's other plays also throw light on the plight of women in various situations. The eponymous character of Sakharam Binder keeps unlucky women who either left their husbands or were left by them. Each woman has to do the housework and satisfy his sexual desire. He gives her food, clothing and shelter. Lakshmi is the seventh woman. Her husband leaves her because he thinks that she is sterile. As she cannot go anywhere, she accepts Sakharam. Sakharam criticises conventional husbands for their cruelty to their wives, but he himself proves worse than them. Lakshmi expresses this:

I have never heard a kind word here. Always barking orders, Curses. Oaths. Threatening to throw me out. Kicks and blows. [Wipes her eyes with the end of the sari.] There I was in agony after I'd been belted, and all you wanted me to do was laugh. Laugh and laugh again. Here I am on the point of death and I'm supposed to laugh. Hell must be a better place than this.

When Lakshmi could not bear Sakharam's torture any longer, she leaves him for her nephew's house. Then, Sakharam brings Champa. Shinde, Champa's husband, tortures her sadistically by doing such awful things as putting chilly powder in her genitals. She leaves him as she grows courageous. She learns that Sakharam "really takes his money's worth out
of a woman" (181). Yet she continues to live with him because "Instead of having ten beasts tearing at me every day, I'd rather do what one says to me". (184) Lakshmi accepts and observes patriarchal ethics while champa rebels against them. When Lakshmi, driven by her newphew, returns to Sakharam, Champa protects her from Sakharam and allows her to stay with them. But Lakshmi betrays Champa who is therefore murdered by Sakharam.

In Tendulkar's *The Vultures*, Ramakant and Umakant plan to blackmail the lover of Manik, their own sister, for money. When they learn the lover is dead, they mercilessly kick Manik on the abdomen and cause abortion. In his *Ghasiram Kotwal*, the eponymous character offers his own innocent daughter to Nana to satisfy his lust and thus buys power from him to avenge his humiliation on the people of Poona. In his *Kanyadan*, a Gandhian ideally gives his daughter in marriage to a *dalit* boy. The dalit husband illtreats his Brahmin wife who therefore returns to her father. The play shows that the position of women in India is worse than that of the dalits who have been oppressed, humiliated and exploited by caste Hindus for ages. Tendulkar's plays expose the oppression, exploitation and humiliation of women by their father, brother, husband, friend, colleague, officer and finally the other oppressed people who can be dalits or fellow-women.

Mohan Rakesh depicts gender deformity in *Half-way House*. It is about the half and incomplete life of a middle class family. Mahendranath is very convivial and his friends like his company. He marries Savitri. He enters into business with his friend, Juneja while she does a job. She urges him to get good furniture and other things for their house. He therefore withdraws his capital part by part, buys all the items one after another and furnishes the house according to the taste of his wife. Consequently he loses his business
and feels bad about it. His wife goes on nagging him for losing business. This adds to his frustration and he takes it on his wife. As he does not fit her concept of a masculine man, she considers him impotent. She blames his parents first and his friends later for this. She runs after several men but fails to establish a relation with anyone of them. She feels greatly frustrated and takes it on her children. All this makes their house a veritable hell.

The play starts with a prologue by the Man in a Black Suit. It conveys that all men behave alike in a given situation, a middle class family. The play proves this through Savitri, the central character. As the Act I begins, she is seen tidying the living room. Mahendranath neither does any job nor help his wife in housework. She says:

... Idle all day but he can't look after his clothes ... or even clear the table! Everything's left for me to do ...

Then the First Man (her husband) comes. She takes him to task for not helping her in housework. She then refers to his being lazy. He admits that he has lost business as he spent his capital. She requests him to stay and meet her boss but he refuses to do so. Meanwhile their Older Girl, Bina, comes, leaving her husband. She and her husband cannot live in harmony because she carries with her the sexist culture from her parents and because it causes alienation between men and women. Bina says to her parents:

That the longer two people live together ... the ... the more estranged they become from one another (4)

She cannot understand why this happens. After the First Man leaves, the Second Man (Savitri's boss) comes. He looks important and speaks some nonsense. Savitri requests him to get her son a job. After her boss goes away, she asks her son not to ridicule her boss and to respect him. She
feels annoyed as he does not show any interest. So she says to her children:

Very well, then. From now on I'll only bother about myself... you look after your own lives. (9)

In the Act II, the Older Girl and the Boy discuss the issues about their family. The Boy tells her that Juneja, their father’s friend, wants to speak to their mother. Their father has not come home and their mother has been in a bad mood. The Boy feels that it is ‘high time the situation changed’. The Older Girl feels like a stranger. Both of them think that there is something in their house that causes all this. Then the Younger Girl comes, quarrels with the Boy and leaves. Their mother comes and says that Jagmohan is taking her away. She is informed that Juneja wants to talk to her. She does not like it. She says to the Older Girl, "When you come next time I may not be here." (11) She goes out with Jagmohan when he comes. As he cannot accept her so late in life, she feels utterly frustrated and comes home. She therefore treats the younger Girl more harshly than her mischievous behaviour really deserves. Juneja comes and talks to her. He explains how her concept of a real man has marred her marital life. He points out:

The point is that if any of these men had been a part of your life instead of Mahendra, you’d still have felt that you’d married the wrong man. you’d still have encountered a Mahendra, a Juneja, a Shivjeet or a Jagmohan and thought and reacted in the same way. Because the meaning of life to you is how many different things you can have and enjoy at the same time. One man alone could never have given them to you, so no matter who you married, you would always have felt as empty and as restless as you today ... (16)

Thus she wants a masculine man who can provide her all material luxuries. This involves sexist culture on the other. But the woman does not accept it and still says about her husband contempnously: ". . . I’ve absolutely no need
for this 'pawn' as you say, this man who neither moves ahead himself nor permits anyone else to do so!" (17) To follow her idea, Mahendranath has to exploit others or let himself exploited by others. Thus the play thus shows how not only men but also women perpetuate gender deformity.

Sircar's miniplay, Marital also presents the banal and dishonorable marital life of middle class couples. Sircar is interested in the social dimension of the problems rather than the individual one. In his Stale News, the exploitation of women is hinted at.

THREE Offices are closed on Sundays, half days on Saturdays. But there's no holidays for me. I had to light up the oven at daybreak, and I've been on my feet ever since ...

The discussion shows that both men and women suffer on account of gender deformity. Tendulkar's Kamala illustrates how women are exploited at home while men are exploited at work. Karnad's Naga-Mandala and Tendulkar's Silence! The Court is in Session challenge the gender biased justice which favours men. Tendulkar conveys in his plays that women are oppressed by men irrespective of their relation to them - a wife in Kamala, a sister in Vultures, a daughter in Ghashiram Kotwal, a concubine in Sakharam Binder and a colleague in Silence! The Court is in Session are exploited and oppressed. Tendulkar's Kamala and Rakesh's Half-way House depict how men are also the victims of our sexist culture. This proves that not only women but also men are made by our culture. The alienation and the consequent breakdown of communication between men and women are portrayed in Half-way House. The violence of men on women in Tendulkar's plays brings out the fact that men become inhuman in order to be masculine. Thus gender deformity is very comprehensively exemplified in Tendulkar's plays.
REFERENCES

6. Steiner, 380-381.
7. Vijay Tendulkar, *Kamala, Five Plays*, Trans. priya Adarkar, (Bombay: Oxford UP, 1992) 17. (In subsequent references, only page numbers are given in parentheses.)
9. The victims or stepping stones in Jaisingh's achievement are Sarita, his wife, kamala bai, their servant-maid and Kamala, the tribal women that he bought.
11. Manu is an ancient Hindu Lawgiver and his laws are widely accepted and observed.
12. Quoted by Ambedkar, 431.
14. Quoted by Sudhir Kakar, 1.
15. Kakar, 1.
17. Kakar, 1.
18. Kameswari, III.
19. Kameswari, III.
20. Kameswari, III.
22. Girish Karnad, Preface *Naga-Mandala* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1993) (Only page numbers are parenthetically given in subsequent references)
24. Karnad, 17.
27. K. Marulasiddappa, "Drama’s turning point" Trans. Chaltanya, Spectrum, 11 June, 1994 IV.
29. Vijay Tendulkar, 'Sakharam Binder, Trans. Kumud Mehta & Shanta GokhaleFive Plays, 148 (Only page numbers are given parenthetically in subsequent references)