Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
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Drama being an audiovisual medium of expression has been a very effective and powerful genre in world literature. The birth and development of drama in Greece, Rome, England and India emphasizes that it has always been an integral part of culture, highlighting and evaluating moral commitments, religious convictions, philosophical approaches, and social and political changes in various countries. Drama is a mimetic representation of life combining in itself the real and the fictional, art and reality and presenting the events and characters within a dimension of space and time. It is narrative made visible, as it combines the qualities of narrative poetry with those of visual arts.

Hailed as the Fifth Veda, drama in India has had a rich and glorious heritage. It embarks on its voyage with the Sanskrit plays. "Indian tradition preserved in the Natyashastra, the oldest of the texts of the theory of the drama, claims for the drama a divine origin, and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves,"¹ opines A.B. Keith. The origin of Indian drama can, thus, be traced back to the Vedic period. It is believed that the dramatic tradition of the ancient Hindus was fully developed even before the Greek drama came to their knowledge. Thus the Hindus of over two thousand years ago had their own theory of drama. With its splendid legacy and long history of two thousand years, Indian drama has assumed a phenomenal exclusivity in the literary cosmos. It continues to flourish in all regional languages and enjoys an equal status along with fiction and poetry. However, Indian English drama cannot register an appreciable growth. K.R. Sirinivasa Iyengar has pointed out the weakness of Indian
English drama, when he says: "Modern Indian dramatic writing in English is neither rich in quantity nor, on the whole, of high quality. Enterprising Indians have for nearly a century occasionally attempted drama in English but seldom for actual stage production." So, compared to other genres of Indian English literature, the drama has not developed as the novel or poetry. Many factors are responsible for the sluggish and stunted growth of Indian English drama.

Despite the individual limitations, some Indian English playwrights have made their best efforts to write serious plays in English. Indian English drama saw the first light of the day when Krishna Mohan Banerji wrote *The Persecuted* in 1813. However, the real journey of Indo-English drama started with Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s *Is this Called Civilization?* in 1871, though it was not followed by any sustainable creative effort for decades together. After a long hiatus of a few decades, it was only by the early twentieth century that Indian English drama gained momentum under the influence of British drama. The pre-independence era saw some stalwarts such as Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T.P.Kailasam, A.S.P. Ayyar, Lobo Prabhu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Bharati Sarabhai, who contributed substantially to the evolution and development of Indian English drama.

It was Rabindranath Tagore who pioneered in investing Indian drama in English “with lyrical excellence, symbolic overtones and allegorical significance.” His best known plays such as *Sacrifice, Chitra, Mukta Dhara, The Post Office, The Kind of the Dark Chamber* and *Red Oleanders* display a bold and creative experiment to synthesize some of the techniques and dramatic usages of Sanskrit theatre and the traditional
modes like the Jatra with the methods of the Western theatre. Though his plays abound in great variety and richness, they tend to be too suggestive and symbolic thereby "lacking in dramatic action." Tagore was more of a poet than of a playwright. His hallmark was philosophical complexity conveyed through lyrical simplicity. His plays are "vehicles of thought rather than expressions of action." However, Tagore's plays, though translated into English, often by the author himself, belong properly to Bengali drama.

Carrying forward the tradition of the Elizabethan poetic drama, Sri Aurobindo holds a place of distinction among the modern Indo-Anglian playwrights. His dramatic genius is amply revealed in his five verse plays--Perseus the Deliverer, Vasavadutta, Radogune, The Viziers of Bassora and Eric--which were written originally in English. "His intimacy with the Elizabethans and Milton makes him produce plays in blank verse which have little or no connection with Indian situation." Nevertheless, the plays reveal Sir Aurobindo's exquisite skill in the portrayal of characters. In all his plays, he has "created wonderful human characters by developing psychological element which endows his plays with inexhaustible human interest and significance." Above all, the plays reveal Sri Aurobindo's great learning of Sanskrit and the Greek masters and, of course, Shakespeare as K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar observes: "But all five plays are steeped in poetry and romance, recalling the spirit and flavour of the distinctive dramatic type exemplified in different ways by Bhasa, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, though, of course, all have Aurobindonian undertones." So he is successful in language, poetry and idioms of theatre but his plays are hardly staged as they cannot meet the demands of the stage and are
often labelled "closet dramas." Commenting upon the weakness of Indian English drama, H.H. Anniah Gowda says: "Both Tagore and Sri Aurbindo make their plays vehicles for their ideas and action gets lost in the midst of words. They are poetic but far removed from the vigorous, living colloquial stage."

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, the third member of "the great Indian playwright trio," added a new dimension to Indian English drama with his "social consciousness, flair for realism" and "revolutionary zeal." In his devotional plays--Raidas, Chokha Mela, Pundalik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva, Eknath and Tuka Ram--the evil of caste system and sincere devotional love come as the basis of conflict in the lives of the saints. His Five plays are in prose and strongly coloured by "the writer's socialist bent of mind." If The Window and The Parrot deal with the lives of the poor and the exploited, The Sentry's Lantern comes down heavily on the evils of imperialism. While The Coffin and The Evening Lamp are ironical descriptions of two young romantics. Writing of his social plays, K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar telling remarks: "Although these plays are two heavily coated with purpose, they have a tautness and intensity that are seldom found in our dramatic writing. These plays were indeed manifestos of the new realism." Thus, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya was the first playwright to make common men and women the object of attention in Indian English plays. He brought to India the Marxist theme of the need for economic and social revolution for the upliftment of the dispossessed and the deprived.

The fourth significant dramatist of pre-independence phase of Indian English drama is T.P. Kailasam. His English plays include The Burden, Fulfillment, The Purpose, Karna, The Brahmin's Curse and Keechaka.
Though his English plays are inspired by Puranic themes taken from the \textit{Ramayana} and the \textit{Mahabharata}, "he renders them brilliantly in the intellectual idiom of our own day."\textsuperscript{16} Kailasam himself was an actor and a performing artist so one finds detailed directions in his plays. With Adya Rangacharya, Kailasam has revolutionized the \textit{Kannada} drama and theatre which was deeply mythological tradition. He has blended the best of the Western theatre with the Sanskrit tradition and Indian ethos. Bharathi Sarabhai is the first most distinguished woman dramatist who imparted a Gandhian touch to Indian English drama. Her \textit{The Well of the People} deals with the theme of untouchability. Actually, the play has been a direct outcome of her association with Gandhian ideology. With A.P.S. Ayyar and Lobo Prabhu, the vigorous critics of contemporary life, the Indian English drama received a touch of realism and purpose.

Although the pre-Independence Indian English drama is "notable for its poetic excellence, thematic variety, technical virtuosity, symbolic significance and its commitment to human and moral values, it was by and large not geared for actual stage production."\textsuperscript{17} Very few Indian dramatists so far had shown a great interest in producing drama for the stage. Asif Currimbhoy is the first significant playwright of the post-independence era whose plays have a tendency to react to contemporary situations. He has written and published more than thirty plays on a wide range and variety of subject matter. He has written on historical and political subjects, East-West relations, social problems, religious themes, psychological conflicts, philosophy and art. The philosophical basis of his plays can be easily recognized in the very titles of his plays---\textit{An Experiment with Truth, Om Mane Padme Hun, The Doldrummers, The Hungry Ones} and \textit{The Captives}. 
His dramatic corpus has covered all possible varieties of dramatic kinds. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar appreciates the surprising range of Currimbhoy: “Farce, Comedy, melodrama, tragedy, history, fantasy: Currimbhoy handles them all with commendable ease.” He shows nearly perfect stage sense and necessary craftsmanship. Faubion Bowers aptly sums up his dramatic art when he says: “Currimbhoy is India’s first authentic voice in the theatre.”

Quite a few contemporary playwrights have made a significant contribution to the growth of Indian English drama. One such playwright is Partap Sharma who has left a definite mark on the Indian drama by handling the theme of sex in his two plays. His first play, *The Professor has a War Cry*, exhibits the mental anguish of son Virendra who becomes aware of his illegitimacy. In his second play, *A Touch of Brightness*, Sharma takes brothel in Mumbai as his setting. Both these plays were staged abroad successfully though they could not be staged in the country. However, these plays have been commended for their “thematic boldness, character delineation and technical triumph.” Gieve Patel’s plays have also greatly strengthened the cause of Indian drama in English through their unique idioms and intense portrayals of family relationships. His main characters are Parsee, the community Gieve Patel belongs to and understands intimately. Patel stresses the tensions across gender, generation and group. The doyen of Indian poetry in English, Nissim Ezekiel, has also enriched Indian English drama in his own characteristic way. In his plays like *Nalini*, *A Marriage Poem* and *The Sleep Walkars*, Ezekiel reveals and portrays his observations of the oddities in human life and behaviour, providing glimpses of a cross section of a convention-bound contemporary
society. However, he is best remembered for his poetic creation and not for his dramatic craftsmanship. It is pertinent to quote H.H. Anniah Gowda in this context: “All Ezekiel’s plays—*A Comedy, A Tragi-Comedy* and *A Farce* are slight sketches; they are hardly dramas and the audience would feel attracted if they have affinity in situation, and identify with characters and the speech that has the appearance of familiarity.”

In spite of the great efforts of the Indo-Anglian playwrights, the Indian drama originally written in English could not flourish in any considerable measure. It is, however, regretted that the achievement of Indian drama is not so rich and impressive either in quality or quantity as is that of Indian English poetry or Indian English fiction. Referring to the uniqueness of drama as a literary form, M.K. Naik has pointed out: “...drama essentially is a composite art involving the playwright, the actors and the audience in a shared experience. On the stage has its own problem of which the other literary forms are free.”

The paucity of Indian drama in English is attributed to several reasons, the first and the foremost being the want of a living theatre. Drama is meant to be staged in which the written word of the playwright attains artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken word of the actor on the stage and through that medium reacts on the mind of the audience. A play, in order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience, thus, needs a real theatre and a live audience. It is quite in the fitness of things to quote R.K. Dhawan here:

It is a well-known fact that the real success of a play can be tested on stage. A playwright needs a living theatre to put his work on acid test, evaluate its total effect on the audience and thereby get a
chance to improve upon his performance. This handicap has not allowed him to pursue playwriting in a systematic and comprehensive way.\textsuperscript{23}

Furthermore, the form of drama in English still awaits Indianization. The form of the novel, though, originally borrowed from the West has got so well assimilated into Indian writings not just in English but even in regional languages that it no longer remains a foreign form. The forms of novel and poetry in Indian English are successfully presenting Indian sensibility in a typically Indian style. In this context, K. Venkata Reddy and R.K. Dhawan further comment: “It is generally felt that Indian playwrights in English have failed to draw upon the rich and varied Indian dramatic traditions, as also to make creative use of the rich fund of Indian myth and Indian historical heritage.”\textsuperscript{24} However, the major hurdle and setback in the development of Indian English drama is language. Natural conversation is the most important aspect of drama but when two Indian characters speak English on the stage, conversation is bound to sound artificial. Since English is not the mother tongue of Indians, it fails to create a palpable effect or the required impact on the audience. Only when the characters are shown to belong to the urban elite does a dialogue in English sound convincing. However, the natives find English language to be an inadequate medium for expressing temperaments, sensibilities and realities, which are essentially Indian. Thus, it is the lack of these essentials which has hampered the natural growth of Indian English drama from the very beginning. As M.K. Naik opines: “A play, in order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience, needs a real theatre and a live
It is precisely the lack of these essentials that has hamstrung Indian drama in English all along."

Unable to accept the challenge of drama in the vernacular, the Indian English drama went on slowly but surely losing ground to the native language drama and theatre. The regional languages enjoyed status with the end of the British Raj. Even after the establishment of National School of Drama and Sangeet Natak Akademi in Delhi after independence, so much importance was not given to the performance of English plays as the development of regional language theatres. In this situation only one or two English plays were being staged every year and those too in the big cities like Bombay only. The Indian English drama continued to live and survive, but "remained in the backseat." In the later half of the 1950s, it was Indian drama in the translation of the vibrant plays from the native languages that has registered a remarkable growth. The regional dramatists were able to blend all the three traditions—classical, folk and contemporary Western theatre and create modern Indian drama and theatre. Veena Noble Dass makes an illustrative comment in this context:

... most of the contemporary playwrights have used elements from the classical tradition, folk tradition and modern theatrical concepts specially western concepts, like the existential absurd and concepts like realism, symbolism and expressionism to delve into the psychological aspects of their characters. Though the themes and concepts are western, the way they are handled gives the play a theatrical innovation which is altogether Indian.

A good number of plays written in many Indian languages, especially in Bengali, Marathi, Kannada and Hindi have been translated into English and these have established an effective cultural link between the East and the West. Arundhati Banerjee notes the emergence of the
regional dramatists: “In 1960s four dramatists from different regions of India, writing in their own regional languages, were to have ushered modernity into the sphere of Indian drama and theatre. They were Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi and Girish Karnad in Kannada.” These four dramatists made bold innovations and fruitful experiments and contributed to the totality of Indian drama. With the translation of their works into English, other Indian languages and foreign languages, they have achieved a worldwide attention and recognition, integrating Indian stage with the stream of world theatre. One of the reasons of the popularity of their plays was that all these Indian playwrights have tended to explore and dramatize various facets of reality of Indian scene of post-independence period.

Mohan Rakesh is a rare dramatist from Hindi, who made a departure from the traditional stranglehold of Hindi drama to “the drama of non-communication: he projected modern man’s failure to understand himself or to understand each other, which is the real tragedy of modern life.” Rakesh in his plays such as Adhe Adhure (Half-Way House), Ashadha, Ka Ek Din (One Day in Ashadha), and Laharone Ke Rajhansa (The Great Swans of the Waves), has depicted the internal conflict in the minds of his characters. He has made an effect to come to grip with the problem of man-woman relationship through different periods of man’s history. The intention of Rakesh in delineating our predicament by means of a historical theme is to suggest that the tension is rooted not in time, but in human nature. In all the three plays, “the breakdown of communication is handled with a concentration, intensity and subtlety, rare in the earlier Hindi drama.”
While Rakesh used historical characters to project modern man’s 'breakdown of communication,' Badal Sircar, the great Bengali playwright, uses contemporary situations and social problems to project "the life-in-death attitude of modern life." The central theme of his early plays is a sense of utter meaninglessness in our existence which leads to a state of anguish and depression. This anguish is in fact closely embedded in the Bengali middle-class psyche, the tearing up of which was Sircar's constant concern since his early theatre career. One of the important plays of Sircar is *Evam Indrajit*, in which frustration, self-division and impotence engulf the characters. The play is a scathing attack on a grave world of mediocrity where hypocrisy is the order of the day. Veena Noble Dass observes: "The play is about those who are enmeshed in the day-to-day struggle for survival." The playwright here portrays the philosophy of existentialism. In point of fact, "the play is an Indian version of *Waiting for Godot.*" The questions Sircar handles in his plays are political, social and psychological ones. His Third Theatre is the rejection of the wealth and acceptance of the poor. His drama and theatre is known as "a genuine people's theatre," a theatre supported and created by the people, and not merely performed by the people.

The next noted playwright to emerge in the sixties is Girish Karnad from Kannada. Unlike Badal Sircar, who delved into the problems of the middle class man, Karnad goes back to Indian myths, folktales and history and makes them the vehicle of expressing his new vision. "By using these myths, he tried to show the absurdity of life with all its elemental passions and conflicts, and man’s eternal struggle to achieve perfection." He has been in the West and has been influenced by the drama of Giraboux,
Anouilh, Camus and Sartre in his search for new forms of drama. His
dramatic corpus, not only in Kannada or English but even in Marathi, Hindi
and Bengali languages, is an integrated part of modern repertoire of most of
the Indian theatre groups.

Karnad’s *Yayati* has been characterized as a self-conscious
existential drama on the theme of responsibility. The dramatist reveals the
conflict between tradition and modernity. His next play, *Tughlaq*, based on
a historical figure, becomes meaningful because of its contemporaneity.
The political chaos which Karnad depicts in the play reminds many readers
of the Nehruvian era in Indian history. In the play, there is a conflict
between idealism and pragmatism, where the mad king’s all ideal plans
fail, but the same plans with a dash of practicality are made successful
selfishly by the rogue Aziz. So the ideal *Tughlaq* is deflated by the
practical Aziz. The result is extreme loneliness, disillusionment and
dissatisfaction. Along with *Tughlaq*, *Tale-danda* reflects the strife within the
society. It is a scathing commentary on the caste system and religious
fundamentalism as prevalent in our present-day society. Both the plays are
reflective of Indian political scenario where politics and religion are
intricately interwoven. In this context, Arundhati Banerjee feels that “the
realpolitik of contemporary society had moved him to write *Tale-danda* as
it had inspired him to write *Tughlaq.*”

The next play *Hayavadana*, based
on the story of *Kathasaritasagaram*, presents modern man’s effort towards
achieving a sense of completeness and a search of human identity in a
world of tangled human relationships. L.S. Gill points out: “Tension in
Hayavadana is between the idea of completeness and incompleteness, from
human to semi-human characters, none is complete and everyone is in
search of completion in one way or the other. But none reaches the desired end and this pursuit of completion leads them nowhere." Naga-Mandala is a commentary on the position and status of women in our society and it also makes a pertinent comment on male chauvinistic attitude in our conventional society. The play uncovers the injustice of patriarchal moral code which demands the faithfulness of a woman to her husband but not the faithfulness of a man to his wife. In The fire and the Rain, a reenactment of the Puranic myth from the Mahabharata, Karnad tries to fathom the mystery of evils residing within man himself. He says: "The tale of Arvasu and Paravasu fascinated me as an unusual variant of this Indian obsession with fratricide." The play is a parable of love, betrayal, seduction, murder, ambition and sacrifice. In his plays, Karnad deploys the conventions of motifs of folk art like masks and curtains to project a world of intensities, uncertainties and unpredictable denouements. Using folk theatre techniques, Karnad gives new dimension to Indian theatre.

Unlike most of his peers--Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh and Girish Karnad--noted Marathi playwright, Vijay Tendulkar, is one of the most influential dramatists, who virtually changed the face of Indian theatre, leading it from its early colonial antecedents to the modern times. While talking about contemporary Marathi theatre, Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni points out: "Vijay Tendulkar leads the vanguard of the avant-garde theatre that developed as a movement separate from the mainstream." In the course of his illustrious creative career, Tendulkar penned nearly twenty eight full-length plays, twenty-five one act plays and eleven plays for children. In addition, his works include short stories, novels, essays, translations and various scripts for television and cinema. In spite of his success in every
genre, this versatility as a writer has been overshadowed by his fame as a dramatist since drama has been his forte. Barve’s observation seems to be apt: “His extra-dramatic writing also reveals his pure taste for drama which tries to capture the different tensions and through them, finds the “dramatics” accurately.”

A close examination of Tendulkar’s life and works reveals that he takes up drama as a critiquing tool to analyze the most problematic contemporary issues of the Indian middle class like sex, violence, power-politics, conventions and ritual rites. He does not crave for outdated ideals or impossible aims. His literary tendency is of “realistic” expressions. “He is drawn towards “the real,” with all its limitations. Human existence, the deep understanding of human psychology and expressing them through drama is an obsession with him.” He has revealed the pain and trauma of the middle class like no one else has.

Tendulkar has two distinct phases in the output of his dramatic corpus. The first starts with his play, *Grihastha* (1955) and ends with, *Ek Hatti Mulgi* (1967). The second begins with *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* (1968). But the early plays constitute a complete contrast to the later plays. Most of the plays of the first phase are “concentrating on the travails of the ‘little man’ essay a more or less conventional dramatic form.” The present study is mainly concerned with the plays of the second phase, which are experiments of an intense deeper impulse and not just a matter of superficial innovation. With *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar’s art of playwriting takes on a new turn. In this and many of the plays that followed, he unveiled the shocking and horrifying inner realities of human being, especially the exploitation and oppression of women in the
patriarchal system. His later plays share a preoccupation with sex and the spirit of violence. Veena Noble Dass rightly observes: “Tendulkar’s imagination is preoccupied with the exploration of the real and, therefore, his plays may be described as realistic exposures of middle class moral and psychological dilemma. It is said that Ibsen and his realistic technique have exercised a profound influence on Tendulkar.”

In fact, a new wave begins in the Marathi theatre with the production of Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakharam Binder* and *Ghashiram Kotwal*. His *Silence! The Court is in Session* earns him a place among the leading Indian playwrights in the late sixties while *Ghashiram Kotwal* wins him an international fame in the mid-seventies and gives him a recognition as the vanguard not only of the Marathi theatre but of the Indian theatre also. Recipient of many prestigious awards and honours such as the Maharashtra State Government Award (1956, 1969 and 1973), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1971), the Film Fare Award (1980 and 1983), the Padmabhushan (1984), the Saraswati Samman (1993), the Kalidas Samman (1999) and the latest recognition, for lifetime literary achievement, the Katha Chudamani Award in 2001, he was a fighter for cultural emancipation, a liberty, which was stifled by various forceful hurdles.

But this path of achievements was not without pains and privations. Tendulkar was bitterly criticized and was even attacked by people for his plays. He shocked the conservative Marathi audience with his taboo themes of deviant sexuality, violence within family and outside and the treatment of women in traditional society. His *Ghashiram Kotwal* was branded as an anti-Brahmin play and his *Kanyadaan*, as an anti-Dalit play. Talking about
the reaction to his *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar says: "You are honouring me with the Saraswati Samman today for a play for which I once had a slipper hurled at me. Perhaps it is the fate of the play to have earned this honour and that insult. As a creator, I respect both verdicts." As Arundhati Banerjee puts it: "Winner of several national and International awards and fellowships, he is both a venerated and a controversial figure in the country's theatre scene."46

Like any other writer, Tendulkar is also a product of his upbringing and his environment. Little Vijay grew up in a house full of books and read avidly as his father, a head clerk at a British publishing firm, was also a small-time publisher. Tendulkar has written about himself in one of his own insights and glimpses into his childhood and the makings of a writer:

Writers often came home, so I grew up in a kind of literary atmosphere. Father had very enthusiastically published a few books by his writer friends. Since he had no bookshop, he could not sell them. They lay in dusty piles on a wooden stand at home. Those books became my playthings. When I became a little older, I found novels and short stories of leading writers at home. Even before I understood what I read, I became a voracious reader of good books. Much of it puzzled me, but somehow I never asked for explanations. I was six years old when I wrote something that was not part of my studies or homework. I wrote essays and stories which I showed my father. He loved me and so he probably liked my work. But neither then, nor later in life when I became an established writer, did he ever praise me to my face. It was against his policy to do such a thing.47

Tendulkar's undying love of theatre came from his father who was an enthusiastic writer, director and actor of amateur plays in his mother
tongue, Marathi. He took him to the theatre a lot and the boy Tendulkar was fascinated by the way men enacted women’s roles and then smoked beedis backstage. Tendulkar states: “From the time I was four years old, I was taken to these rehearsals. They were a kind of magic show for me. That’s where I saw living persons change into characters.”

Tendulkar watched several Western plays and some Hollywood films in his childhood. The visuals had a good impact on him. This exposure to the theatre at an early age had its strong influence on him as a successful dramatist. He felt inspired to write plays himself and wrote his first play while still in school and later worked as an apprentice in a bookshop. He took up journalism and was an assistant editor of Marathi dailies like Navbharat, Maratha and Loksatta. The violence, the oppression and the exploitation in the society that he witnessed made him restless and journalism could not quieten his agitated conscience. But with his exposure to Marathi theatre from childhood, and journalistic background, Vijay Tendulkar turned contemporary socio-political situations into explosive drama.

As a playwright, Tendulkar is deeply concerned with the problem of exploitation and victimization of the weak by the strong in a society that is absolutely hostile to them. The exploitative power used by the exploiter is always preserved by force, intrigue and manipulation. Though men as well as women are portrayed as the victims of exploitation in Tendulkar’s plays but his women are the worst sufferers in the male-dominated Indian society. The malignant forces of victimization which dominate his plays appear in the forms of hypocrisy, sensuality, treachery, masochism, adultery, avarice, murder, violence and a host of other ills. His plays are
effective dramatic expose of these evils inherent in human nature. Acknowledging his fascination for the ‘violent exploited-exploiter relationship’ as a theme for his plays, Tendulkar provides insights into the uglier side of the basic human passions. In his outlook, man is the sole perpetrator of all evils against women in the patriarchal pattern of our society.

The patriarchal system characterizes men as active, aggressive, bold, dominating, fearless, rational and strong having tendencies to rule and control. Women, on the other hand, are attributed qualities which tend to justify and ensure their inferior and subordinate status, for instance, they are supposed to be essentially passive, timid, weak, submissive, warm, sacrificing, nurturing, dependent and with the tendency to obey and follow. Patriarchy, based on the concept of hierarchical binaries of genders, seeks to ensure that man is superior and woman inferior, thus, allows man to use authority in all its forms to maintain stability of its social institutions such as marriage and family. India has traditionally been a patriarchal society.

Traditional Indian society which has accepted the laws of Manu places in the hands of men all forms of power which tends, by implication, to disempower woman. This clearly reflects our modern-day society too, where despite all the claims of empowerment and equality of genders; women are still dominated by men, in their personal as well as public life. Women are treated either as inferiors, or where they have proved their worth, as superiors with grudging admiration. In our still alive traditional society women are put under a strong pressure to succumb or at least to conform to the pattern of values or the system, which threatens to engulf
and destroy their identity. A man basically enjoys the patriarchal authority over woman and many times it leads to brutality. This enslavement of woman runs counter to the principles of human equality, liberty and dignity.

Feminist movement in its different colours, shades and nuances aims at restoring to woman her rights to freedom and equality in all aspects and walks of life. This aims to do away with gender discriminations, oppression and exploitation of woman. Mary Wollstonecraft, who had suffered in her own life horrendous domestic violence, vindicated through her actions and writings the rights of woman to education, self-reliance, economic independence and respect. Virginia Woolf in her *A Room of One's Own* questions and protests women’s enslavement to domestic duties. She suggests that women must get an economic independence and should create their own literary canons to carve a space of their own. Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* challenges the essentialist conception of womanhood and asserts that “One is not born but becomes a woman.” She opines that the relationship between man and woman should not be like the one between master and slave; the owner and the owned; the dominant and the dominated. She stresses that recognition of woman’s freedom and human dignity can lead to a mutually fulfilling and reciprocal relationship which will be in the interest of man as well. Besides Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Grierre and Friedan too have made significant contributions to the feminist cause. They have exposed and attacked male strategies of sexual politics to subjugate women to masculine control. In fact, it is this theme of the suppressed and stifled status of women in tradition-bound Indian society, which has engaged Tendulkar’s most frequent attention. He reinforces the
all pervasive nature of male power by showing it working in various ways in the lives of women characters in almost all his major plays. In a way Tendulkar goes with the feminists in voicing women’s concerns, their sensibilities, and their subjugation as well as their silent protest. He draws his characters from the lower middle class and middle class society and delves deep into the psyche of these characters and let them appear in their natural shape or forms without any authorial imposition.

A brief critical appraisal of the available criticism on Vijay Tendulkar reveals that his plays have triggered a tremendous critical response not only in his favour but also against his themes and techniques as playwright. But it is also the fact that the playwright has not been accorded the amount of critical insight and acknowledgement that he deserves for altering the contents and contours of the Marathi theatre. It is also a surprising fact that only a few full-length studies have been carried out on his plays since his emergence on the Marathi theatre about more than fifty years ago. Except a few full-length studies of such critics as Shailaja B. Wadikar and N. S. Dharan, the studies carried out by V.M Madge and Amarnath Prasad and Satish Barbuddhe are in the form of articles and research papers, presenting only a lopsided and parochial view of his themes and concerns. Apart from these studies, we find a passing reference of his predominant themes and concerns in the scanty articles on his selected plays in the studies on Contemporary Indian Drama as edited by Sudhakar Pandey, Urmil Talwar, Neeru Tandon and Shubha Tiwari. What is more, none of the critics have made a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the various manifestations of the predicament of women characters, which consistently underlie his dramatic constructs.
B. Wadikar analyzes Tendulkar’s plays largely from the psychological point of view. Her study is chiefly focused on the theme of “alienation of the individual” in the fast-changing socio-cultural scenario of contemporary Indian society. Wadikar holds the view that the playwright paints a gloomy picture of martial life, focusing “not on the happy, gleeful aspects of life, but on human weakness, follies, and foibles.” The critic finds that *The Vultures* exposes “the evil tendencies inherent in human psyche that render people blind and transform them from human beings into loathsome animal.” She further observes that most of his characters are “the victims of chance and circumstance. Their actions are determined by the forces, which are out of their control.” On the whole, the critic comes out with the perception that most of his plays purport to bring to light “some of the most complex and vital issues of our existence, inner and outer.”

Dharan has carried out a commendable and comprehensive study of Tendulkar’s plays, interpreting his plays in terms of techniques and themes. In the dramatic world of Tendulkar, as Dharan remarks, “women are at the centre. It is around women that most of the action revolves.”

But his study is principally focused on variety of themes such as alienation of the modern individual, contemporary politics, complexities of human behaviour and reinterpretation of historical episodes, thereby diluting the theme of the predicament of women in his plays.

Apart from the above studies, the bulk of the studies on the playwright, nevertheless, exists in the form of articles and research papers, presents only the lopsided and parochial view of his art and vision as a playwright. Amarnath Prasad looks at *Ghasiram Kotwal* from the historical point of view and holds the view that the playwright’s principal concern in
this play lies in “an aesthetic presentation of history which is suffused with melodious music, scintillating imageries, metaphoric exuberance.” Satish Barbuddhe in his study of Ghashiram Kotwal focuses on “the political and moral decadence due to indulgence in vulgar sexuality.” Neeti M. Sadrangani terms Ghashiram Kotwal as “symphony of darkness in shades of blood and lust.” Ashok Kumar Sharma comments that Ghashiram Kotwal primarily deals with the theme of “sex and violence.” Ram Sharma in the study of Silence: The Court is in Session finds that the play is based on the theme of “power, its sources and manifestation” in the context of contemporary political system. Chandershekar Barve attempts to interpret his plays by applying psychological approach. Brave finds the playwright obsessed with the themes of human psychology: “Though his eyes are focused on the middle-class and its suffocations, his chief targets are the human mind, and the ways of life and complexities therein.” Santosh Chakarbarti finds Ghashiram Kotwal as “a discourse of power, power grabbed through the nastiest of barter arrangements.” Smita Mishra finds that Ghashiram Kotwal is “a musical historical play...recounts the power games played out in terms of caste ascendancy in politics.” No doubt these scholars have analyzed the degenerated contemporary socio-political scenario in their studies, but they have failed to examine the sensitive issue of woman’s predicament in detail in the context of marriage and family in the fast-changing socio-cultural scenario.

It does not mean that Tendulkar’s principal themes and concerns have not been recognized and interpreted. There are several critics who have attempted to investigate his plays, focusing on some aspects and areas of the life of women in the contemporary Indian society. For example,
Vijay Kumar Sinha, while examining the dramatic world of the playwright, opines that it is the hypocrisy of the contemporary society “that excuses men and prosecutes women for the same offence.” Shibu Simon finds that the women characters in his plays are “victims of chauvinistic oppression.” Shanta Gokhale asserts that Tendulkar’s primary compulsion in the treatment of female characters “is and has always been humanistic.” Maya Pandit observes that in Tendulkar’s plays “women are equated with the ‘inner’ or ‘the private’ domain whereas ‘the public domain is reserved for man.” Katherine Thankamma is of the view that the patriarchal system in his plays has “effectively stifled the female voice for centuries.” Kalindi Despande remarks that the women characters in his dramatic constructs are “helpless and have no alternative, but to go through the way that life has chosen for them.” Neeru Tandon shows the playwright exposing “the hypocrisies, promiscuity, dishonesty and such other vices existing in the society.” Anshul Chandra finds that the playwright has explored “the position of women in contemporary Indian society through his female characters” Veena Noble Dass finds that his male characters are “frustrated flops of society who are lashing out their failure in an assault on young woman.” E.Renuka holds the view that the playwright presents “the picture of a brutal perpetrator and wretched victim of all that is bad in society regarding the man-woman relationships.” Sudha Rai observes that the playwright pointedly directs our attention to “the close domestic, private spaces, of marriage and family a volatile sites for conflicting, masculinities and feminities where there is more urgent need for social change.” Nishi Upadhyaya finds how “women are looked
upon as instruments of joy judged solely on the basis of the extent to which they satisfy the man.”

The preceding survey, thus, reveals that the entire body of the existing criticism done on Tendulkar is restricted only to a few aspects such as sex, violence, exploitation and dramatic nuances, and themes of alienation, evil, existentialism and absurdity. Besides the critics have circumscribed their area of assessment only to the examination of his plays such as *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Sakharam Binder*, thereby pushing to the periphery the import of his other plays such as *Kamala, Kanyadaan, The Vultures* and other plays in the evolution of his themes and vision as playwright. More of less these studies have failed to provide a comprehensive view of the wide-ranging sweep of Tendulkar’s subject matter and vision of life. There are numerous facets of his creative genius that remain to be explored fully. The present study seeks to explore one such aspect i.e. Tendulkar’s concern with the predicament of woman in traditional patriarchal milieu. Most of the studies either completely ignore or give merely cursory glance at the role and status of women characters, portrayed sensitively and realistically, in his plays. It is more than manifest that the available criticism on Tendulkar suffers from imbalances as well as distortions in evaluating the wide ranging sweep of his subject matter and vision of life. A detailed study of his plays in the context of the travails and tribulations, victimization and exploitation of women in a male-dominated society can dispense justice to his art and vision as a playwright. It can also enable us to appreciate his significant contribution to Indian drama.

The physical and mental tortures to which women are subjected with an avowed intention to muffle their voices in a patriarchal order of Indian
society are abiding concerns in Tendulkar’s major plays like *Silence! the Court is in Session*, *The Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*, *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan*. The present study seeks to make an humble effort to fill the gaps in Tendulkar’s criticism in this direction and it does not pretend to say the final work on the topic. For the purpose of this study only the major plays which have a direct reference to the topic have been taken up for an in-depth critical examination.

A critical examination of his plays reveals the fact that Vijay Tendulkar has created significant and memorable male and female characters but it is his women who on account of their unique position in society help to reveal his deep and probing treatment of his themes of social conscience and complex human relationships and it is they who emerge as the columns and beams on which he builds his dramatic structures. The roles Tendulkar’s female protagonists play eclipse those played by the men figuring in them. As characters, Tendulkar’s women are among the most convincing in Indian theatre. He does not impose or idealize a character but rather makes them look quite natural as they are. In most of his plays, Tendulkar presents women in pairs. They are quite different from each other in behavioral traits, class and character. But underneath these superficial differences there lie lives that resemble each other in the ultimate truth of being commanded by men, for their pleasure and under their laws. It is through the portrayal of female characters that the playwright exposes the exploitation, humiliation, objectification and oppression of women, thereby exploring the pitiable position of women in contemporary Indian society.
The brief analysis of Tendulkar’s plays suggests that an in-depth examination of his plays ‘with a special focus on plight of women in a male-dominated society can yield new insights into the mind and art of this major playwright of our times. His plays provide a wide variety of women characters who are first and foremost realistic human beings of the contemporary society. His women are not romanticized and idealized. Tendulkar, in fact, is a playwright of human experience with all its richness, diversities and complexities which impart to his characters a timeless, universal and human relevance. It can also enable us to appreciate the range and scope of the women issues which he has dealt with in his dramatic constructs in a realistic manner. Tendulkar’s concern with the dramatization of human values of love, dignity, equality and liberty can emerge more strikingly than have so far been recognized by his critics if the motives behind his implied social criticism fully available in his plays are examined critically. A detailed study of this logic, thus, can help to arrive at a more balanced critical judgment and estimate about Tendulkar’s thematic canvas, art of characterization, vision of life and his significant contribution as a playwright to contemporary Indian drama.

Tendulkar selects his women characters from the cross section of Indian society. Despite differing in age, status and background, they are meted out, more or less, the same treatment in various situations in the male-dominated Indian society. Leela Benare in Silence! The Court is in Session is, a bold woman, teacher by profession, Jyoti in Kanyadan, an educated young, but timid girl from a rich family, Lalita Gauri in Ghasiram Kotwal, is, a poor girl, grinded between two males—power-drunk ruler, Nana, and power-hungry father, Ghashiram, Sarita in Kamala, an educated
but submissive wife, is a slave like Kamala, an uneducated woman in this play, who is from Dalit community, Laxmi in *Sakhram Binder* is a conventional and timid woman, whereas Champa is unconventional and bold, Rama in *The Vultues*, a submissive and sensitive victim, and Manik, an advanced woman—all are humiliated and tormented by males in one way or the other.

Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a teacher by profession. Though she is a teacher by profession, and a member of the amateur theatre group, she is placed in a situation where she can neither get sympathy nor legitimacy for her illegitimate child. Through the character of Leela Benare the playwright exposes the pitiable plight of educated women in an oppressive middle-class male-dominated society. In the name of this so-called game of a mock trial, the other members of the theatre group grab every opportunity to expose and dissect her private life revealing her illicit love affair with a married Professor Damle. She, possessing freewill and a natural lust for life, ignores the social norms and dictates. But she soon discovers that her life, will and wishes are not hers at all. During the court proceedings, her objections and protestations are finally swallowed up by the silence imposed upon her by her male aggressors.

All of these vultures in the guise of males around Benare are hypocrites, unkind and cruel. Ironically enough, her immediate persecutors are the men who are failures in their own fields but they have the so-called male authority by virtue of which they recommend her dismissal from her job even though she has been consistently an excellent teacher. Not satisfied with this meagre punishment they also brutally order that the foetus in her womb must be destroyed. It is quite interesting to note that
Professor Damle who is equally responsible for her plight remains absent throughout the play, suggesting thereby that man can go scot-free and remain the victor. By portraying the middle class males as hunters and sexually oppressed woman as the quarry, Tendulkar probes into the unfathomable depths of human existence at social, domestic and psychological levels. Through Benare’s frustration and powerlessness, Tendulkar highlights the ordeals that a career woman has to undergo in her societal interactions with males. Mrs. Kashikar, on the other hand, is a middle aged and conventional housewife who disapproves of ‘free’ women like Benare. The most important thing about her is that she is childless. Mrs. Kashikar’s belief that her husband has an automatic right to do what he pleases with her by virtue of his being a man and her husband underlines the unenviable position of women in general in Indian society.

Jyoti in Kanyadan, an educated young, but timid girl from a rich family, but her education and parental prosperity fail to save her from an inhuman treatment from her husband, Arun Athwale, a Dalit boy. Through this marriage the playwright reveals how the patriarchal system of marriage unleashes a reign of terror, misery and violence on Indian woman for whom husband is Pati-Parmeshwar, a socially given construct since ages. Jyoti demolishes the societal divisions of caste, power and affluence to marry Arun, but what she gets in return is total negation of her identity and individuality through the revolting behaviour of her husband who wants to seek vengeance on high society people whom he considers responsible for the age-long deprivation and marginalization of the dalits. He persecutes his wife, beats her mercilessly, kicks her when she is pregnant and uses filthy language. Moreover, he does not want to work, and wants to drink
wine everyday, wasting his wife’s money, brings his friends for drinking, but Jyoti, a submissive woman, never blames her husband; rather she blames her father who has taught her to march ahead as a soldier and never run away from the field. It is a question of a female being a passive receiver of wrong notions and ideals from a male. Patriarchy lays a great stress on the rule of the father. However, the father in this play does not realize the impact on the moulding of a young and receptive mind. She becomes an oblation in the fire sacrifice of social change because of her father’s aggressive encouragement which stands out. Her situation is like that of a plant which is uprooted and replanted in alien surroundings.

The victim-victimizer, the hound and prey relationship between Jyoti and Arun reminds us of John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* wherein Jimmy takes his wife, Alison, as hostage from the enemy camp to settle score with the powerful, privileged and affluent class of the British society which he considers to be responsible for denial of opportunities to him to move upward and forward in life. Tendulkar is constantly at pains to show that even educated women in Indian society are treated as objects to be licked and kicked at pleasure by men who wield the centre of power in patriarchal society. Not to talk of Laxmi or Champa or Kamala who find it inescapable to be dependent on men because of their illiteracy and ignorance, even educated and independent women life Benare, Sarita and Jyoti find it almost impossible to carve a niche for themselves not only in the male entrenched outside world but also in the immediate environs of their own families.

Lalita Gauri in *Ghasiram Kotwal*, an innocent girl from poor family, is grinded between two males—the power-drunk ruler, Nana, and the
power-hungry father. By using historical period and characters, Tendulkar is at pains to show that the process of objectification of woman is not peculiar to our times; it has remained constant in our society with the passage of time. The play deals not only with the issue of marginalization and exploitation of women in a patriarchal culture, but also with the mockery of the institution of marriage. In Ghashiram Kotwal, Lalita Gauri is bartered for power by her own father to even the score with Nana and the Brahmans of Poona. Nana Phadnavis, the powerful ruler, is a great womanizer. Even in the place of worship Nana's lust does not leave him and he 'leers' at worshipping women without paying any attention to the religious discourse. Nana chances upon hapless Gauri while she is praying and wastes no time in trying to seduce her. When Gauri runs like 'a frightened deer' and escapes from Nana's grip, his reaction vividly reveals his erotic mood and lusty temperament. Ghashiram does not display any hesitation while bargaining the chastity of his only daughter to achieve position of power but she cannot satisfy Nana's insatiable urge for long. The pregnant Gauri is soon discarded by Nana. She dies a lonely and ignominious death. The much married old man soon finds his new prey, a girl of fourteen, who has been bought by Nana by giving 'three hundred gold coins' and a great big gift of land' to her father. The way Nana expresses his carnal desire towards women in general and Gauri in particular reduces man-woman relationship to bestial physicality.

Tendulkar's treatment of another woman, Gulabi, a courtesan, is a classic example of how, under the veneer of civilized behaviour, highly placed men in the society use and humiliate women to cater to their physical desires. Gulabi entertains the lusty Nana and his followers with
her song and dance. Whatever Gulabi does, she does for her existence only. Gulabi’s position is no better than that of Gauri. Though the two women belong to different strata of society but they share the common fate of a woman. Gulabi is outside the pale of middle and upper-class respectable society, and Gauri is a poor Brahman’s daughter in a city dominated by class-conscious, self-righteous Brahmans. Yet their fates are remarkably similar—both are victims of the powerful and both are denied a voice. Throughout the play these women have no individuality of their own and their lot is no better than that of the dumb, driven cattle. They never express their views and feelings nor make their own decisions. Gauri does not express her feelings when she is handed over by her father to an old man to be used sexually to further his own interests. Tendulkar attempts to unveil the exploitative system in which women are used only pawns to gain power or as objects to satisfy the carnal desires of men like Nana. The Brahman women are a powerful attempt to expose the futility and degradation of the institution of marriage. Ghashiram Kotwal, thus, tears away façade behind the ugly reality of the so-called civilized culture and mocks at the sacredness and seriousness of the life-time bondage of fidelity expected in marriage between husband and wife. Through the treatment of sexual aggression and exploitation of women in Ghashiram Kotwal, the playwright exposes the fact that the concern of every woman is of personal survival.

Sarita in Kamala, an educated but submissive wife, is a slave like Kamala, an uneducated woman, in this play, who is from Dalit community. The play explores the precarious status of so-called modern women within the patriarchal institution of marriage and reveals at the same time how in a
success-oriented male-dominated society women are often victims or stepping stones in men's achievements. Kamala, characteristically topical and intensely sensational play, is based on a newspaper story and Tendulkar has used the exploitative social institution of journalism to make known the fact that trafficking in women is not only an economic exploitation but also a sexual one. The play is about the woman, Kamala, who is purchased by a journalist, Jai Sing Jadhav, to disclose to the world that this kind of bondage still persists in India. The self-seeking journalist treats the woman he has bought from the flesh-market as an object that can buy him a promotion in his job and a reputation in his professional life. Jadhav does not allow Kamala to take bath, to sleep and takes her to press conference against her wishes in a torn Sari. He never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this expose.

It is through Kamala's frank and innocent description of her understanding of man-woman relations through the idea of 'purchase,' 'sale' and 'slavery' that Sarita, the journalist's wife, realizes with a 'shock' that her own position is no different from that of Kamala. Whereas illiterate village women like Kamala are trafficked in an open market, educated women life Sarita who belong to respectable middle-class families become mere sexual objects under the garb of marriage. In this play, Tendulkar successfully juxtaposes the characters of Kamala and Sarita to analyse the complex question of subjugation and discrimination that woman faces even today in modern India. Sarita becomes aware of Jai Singh's domination over her body, mind and life only when Kamala enters their household. If Kamala becomes an object for Jai Singh to steal headlines in newspapers which will ultimately help him rise in his profession, Sarita is a decoration
piece for the drawing room and also an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort. Through Kamala, Tendulkar questions the value system of a male-oriented society which views women as mere victim of male oppression.

Laxmi in Sakhram Binder is a conventional and timid woman; whereas Champa is unconventional and bold. Laxmi has been abandoned by her husband because of her barrenness, and Champa has deserted her husband because he is lecherous and impotent. Despite their apparent differences in temperament, character and behaviour, there is a common denominator between the two and that common denominator is their strong urge to survive in the face of heavy odds of their lives. When Sakharam, the womanizer, brings Laxmi to his house, it becomes Laxmi’s duty to please, entertain, gratify, flatter and satisfy Sakharam. But poor Laxmi is never able to ask ‘why’ about anything and she is kicked and belted mercilessly when Sakharam is even slightly annoyed. The way Sakharam cancels the ‘contract’ soon after satiating himself on Laxmi’s limited sexual resources underlines the deep-rooted woman’s exploitation in the lower middle-class Indian society in which a woman is objectified, used and tricked out.

In the portrayal of Champa’s character, another Mistress of Sakharam, the playwright shows her as a woman who is strong enough to non-plus Sakharam by not behaving like a destitute dependent. Though she is younger, slightly plumper and more attractive than Laxmi, but she is the one who has suffered most on account of her voluptuous body. So it is on account of her own revulsion against the tortures she has undergone that she can be physically close to a man like Sakharam only under the
influence of liquor. She is a woman who will not let a man use her body simply because he is her husband or her patron. A total contrast to Laxmi, Champa is shown to be a woman who draws her strength from her being an independent and self-respecting individual.

There is an interesting development in Tendulkar’s delineation of female characters when he shows that women can be as selfish, shrewd and competitive as their male counterparts are it comes to the question of their survival. In the end of the play, in a dramatic reversal of roles, it is Laxmi—conventional and timid—who turns out to be wily and vicious when her survival is threatened by the presence of Champa, an conventional and bold leaksout Champa’s snfidelity with Dawood and, thus, succeeds in securing a place for herself in Sakharam’s house by getting Champa killed. Tendulkar has depicted highly realistic portrayal of women characters by presenting them clever manipulators and how woman becomes the torturer of another woman for the sake of her existence.

In *The Vultures*, Rama is a submissive and sensitive victim, whereas Manik is an advanced woman, but both are humiliated and tormented by males in one way or the other. Manik is a classic vulture, who for her lust for money, inflicts untold miseries and violence on her widowed father, Hari Pitale, with active help and aid of her brothers, Ramakant and Umakant. Tendulkar’s treatment of conventional woman becomes explicit in the characterization of Manik. If Manik is one of the vultures, Rama, the wife of Ramakant, is the exact opposite. She is an embodiment of innocence, goodness and wiling subservience. It is fascinating to note that both Rama and Manik bear illegitimate babies with the difference that for Manik it is the result of licentiousness; whereas in the case of Rama it is the
result of passion for the body and soul of the outcast half-brother of her husband, Rajaninath. Among the demons and vultures of Pitale family, Tendulkar has created the helpless, submissive, sensitive and kind-hearted victim Rama who wishes to lead a normal and peaceful life. Disgusted with her husband’s drunken lovemaking, she finds emotional fulfilment and sexual satisfaction in the arms of her husband’s half brother, Rajaninath.

The passionate emotional bond between Rama and Rajaninath succeeds to some extent in mitigating the stifling and murderous atmosphere of the Pitale family. But vultures will remain vultures and they can relate only to death, blood and dead flesh. Rama’s child is killed before birth by her husband Ramakant, who suspects it to be his bastard brother’s child, whereas it is the brutal greed for money and property that makes Manik’s wicked brothers kick her unborn child out of her womb in one of the goriest scenes of the play. The end of both Rama’s and Manik’s illegitimate babies is, thus, almost similar. Towards the end of the play, both women are found in a worsening situation and a distressing plight.

Screaming terrifyingly, Manik runs out of the hollow of the Pitale’s house, fearing for her own life. Though, we do not hear Rama’s scream when her husband takes her away from the house of vultures. The chauvinistic male vultures of Pitale family treat women merely as objects to be picked and kicked at their sweet will without bothering about the feelings and emotions of the lesser being—the women folk—be it their sisters or wives. The play is, thus, a ruthless dissection of inhuman violence and demolition of human relations even within the institution of family.

Tendulkar’s plays primarily deal with subjugation and exploitation of women in middle-class contemporary Indian society. All his women
characters, irrespective of age, status and background, undergo travails and tribulations; pains and privations; sorrows and sufferings; troubles and tensions; subjugation and subservient; slavery and submission. But this portrayal does not mean that he keeps a cynical view of the world. He is a humanist and like a humanist his vision is positive and aimed at better world. The way he highlights the pitiable plight and predicament of women in his plays emphasizes the need of human values to provide women space and opportunities for a decent life. He raises his full-throated voice, through his plays, against the life-denying features of the patriarchal system that force her to lead sub-human life. In fact, his plays are a strong critique of patriarchal system that denies women their due status and opportunities for self-development.

The second chapter analyzes the precarious position of educated Indian women in the middle-class male dominated society in Silence! The Court is in Session and Kanyadaan. The third chapter discusses Ghashiram Kotwal and Kamala to study the objectification of women by male members of the society to attain fame, power and reputation. The chapter also discusses the hypocrisy inherent in the institution of marriage and religion in Indian society.

The fourth chapter deals with the multifarious forms of violence inflicted on women within or without family and its impact on their sensibility and reproductive power in Sakharam Binder and The Vultures.

The fifth chapter sums up the findings of the study. The chapter also seeks to determine the contribution of the playwright in the growth and development of Indian drama.
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