Chapter - V

KAMALA

THE THEME OF SLAVERY OF WOMEN
Today's modern writers have tried to transform the tradition image of woman as seen in the myths by portraying them in a wholly realistic manner. One such writer is Vijay Tendulkar, the avant garde playwright. Vijay Tendulkar in his plays like Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, The Vultures, Sakharam Binder etc. has portrayed women in a different way. He has allotted roles for women in these plays. And these roles are very different from the roles played by women in traditional literature.

For Vijay Tendulkar, the inspiration comes from the society around him. He is a keen observer of human relationships, especially in the lower and middle class society. Though his eyes are focused on the middle-class and its suffocations, his chief targets are the human mind, the way of life and the complexities therein. While depicting the human relationships, Vijay Tendulkar has shown something new.

Kamala was inspired by a real life incident reported in The New Indian Express by Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented her at a press conference. By using this incident as the launching pad, Kamala raises certain cardinal questions regarding the value system of the modern success - oriented generation which is ready to sacrifice human values even in the name of humanity itself. The innate self-deception of this standpoint is exposed dramatically by the playwright.

At the centre of the play is the self - seeking journalist, Jaisingh, who treats the woman he has purchased from the flesh - market as an object that can buy him a promotion in his job and a reputation in his professional life. He is one of those modern day individuals who pursue their goal relentlessly. Really Jaisingh never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this expose. Sarita, Jaisingh's wife is in her own way as exploited as Kamala. Here we can easily expose the male chauvinism intrinsic in the modern Indian male who believes himself to be liberal-minded. Like Kamala, Sarita is also an object in Jaisingh's life, an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort.

The following conversation between them, brings out this aspect of the relationship between them:
Sarita: She is asking me to lend her one of my saris.

Jaisingh: [Angrily]. Why? Kamala? Don't do anything of the sort. Don't give her anything of the sort. Don't do anything of the sort. Don't give her anything. I tell you, don't give her a thing without asking me.

Sarita: But I am asking you.

Jaisingh: That's exactly what I'm telling you. She will come to the press conference in the same clothes she's wearing now.

Sarita: She's is a woman, after all. And her sari is torn.

Jaisingh: (His voice rising). I know, I know! You don't have to tell me, understand? I have a very good idea of all that. I want her to look just as she is at the press conference. It's very important.

Kamala's entry into the household reveals to Sarita the selfish hypocrisy of her husband and the insignificance of her own existence. She does not have the spirit to rebel against her present condition. Instead, she extends emotional support to Jaisingh when at the close of the play he is treacherously deprived of his job. Sarita cannot unlearn what she has come to realize. But in the end of the play there is a faint hope of her attaining independence sometime in the future.

It combines social criticism with the tragedy of an individual victimized by society. In our society a woman is treated more as an object than a subject and in this process, she is denied of her freedom and dignity. Heaping insults on a woman is the accepted pastime of some men in our middle class and they go at it hammer and tongs.

Kamala has nothing new to contribute to Marathi theatre. But the evaluation of the role of an Indian woman within the institution called marriage, considered to be the holiest of the holy in our society, definitely provides a completely novel point of view showing that women are still mere slaves to their male owners in Indian society. Kamala is an indictment of the success-oriented male society in which women find themselves as mere stepping stones for a man.
Amongst contemporary Indian playwrights, Vijay Tendulkar is renowned for his complex and perspicacious handling of social concerns and even more so for his engagement with the palpitating pulse of female sensibility. *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* explores the clash points between the choices claimed and those allowed to young unmarried women with regard to their intellectual, emotional and sexual commitments. It questions the sexual politics of our society, defies male domination and explodes the myth that motherhood is sacred. In play after play Tendulkar problematizes the female body and shows how the power structures that dominate our society as well as deep seated fears of female sexuality dictate the need to control female bodies and minds. In *Baby* Tendulkar also uncovers the strategies by which power systems manage to condition their victims and by doling out myths of possible redemption co-opt their scapegoats. *Baby* hammers home the point that in a cynically patriarchal set-up there can be no light at the end of the tunnel for a disenfranchised woman.

Tendulkar’s women are remarkably alive. He portrays them as growing, evolving, dynamic beings. His women choose and dare to fight their own battles and, therefore, also lose sometimes as they must. Their efforts, however, whether culminating in utter distraught, anguish, or, in hopeful resolutions are profound expression of their quest. His screenplay *Umbartha*, retitled *Subah*, is also about a young woman’s quest to find meaning in her life beyond her domestic threshold. So too is *Kamala*, a play about a tribal woman bought by an investigative journalist to underscore the exploitation of women in this country. Over the years *Kamala* has emerged as a seminal play in Tendulkar’s oeuvre, a play that engages with many layers of complexities, that will not take easy positions and that expose the system sensitively yet mercilessly.

*Kamala* exists as several texts: as a play originally written in Marathi, as various translations, as a performance text and as a cinema text. These texts coalesce in their identification of characters as signs. *Kamala* draws on real women and men and develops them beyond their immediate representation. One would never know what the ‘real’ Kamala thought about herself but Tendulkar has deliberated about her, her life story has agitated him and both, the film and the play, are a reassessment not only of Kamala but of other relationships,
perspectives, and other modes of being. There are many differences between the
two and they stand apart as two distinct forms. The written form of drama is a
pure form which generates mental images. While the play uses words, the camera
is the film’s eye which poses sound and images as recorded phenomenon. This
picture of reality that the cinema offers is heavily mediated by the techniques of
film: camera, sound, editing, etc.

Kamala, was originally written as a play but eventually metamorphosed
into a film whose script was written by Tendulkar himself based on a real life
episode that he read about in a newspaper. In her journey from fact to fiction,
from written text to a performance text and finally a cinema text, Kamala
undergoes many mutations. Out to prove that women can be bought and sold like
cattle in this country. Jaising, a journalist, decides to expose the workings of
power and its consolidation within the system. In this process, however, he also
exposes himself and his facile ideological stance. Though in a primary sense both
the play and the film are about Kamala, the ‘bought’ woman, in both Kamala has
perhaps been lost. More than that of real woman, Kamala’s role is of a signifier of
exploitation. She is the catalyst who brings Sarita, the educated, intelligent wife
of Jaisingh, to her existential crisis and precipitates the fall of Jaisingh. As a
woman she, Kamala, is of little significance to the playwright and her movement
is from an object of interest to a precipitatory factor and a central prop in the
narrative.

The introduction of Kamala is very different in the film from that in the
play. In the play Kamala is first seen standing behind Jaisingh, having just arrived
at his house. Finding herself in such a grand mansion is an overwhelming
experience for her. The film, on the other hand, in its opening sequence
foregrounds the discourse of the male gaze given to us by Laura Mulvey in her
much celebrated essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’. Mulvey argues
that most often cinema delivers the image of the female body to the spectator for
pleasure. A gender matrix is constituted along the lines of masculinity and
femininity where being masculine connotes an active sexuality or ‘looking’ and
being feminine connotes being a bearer or recipient of that look. Cinema
contributes to representation mainly through the production of ideology. This
subject position is highlighted at the beginning of the film when first another
woman is exhibited to Jaisingh. The camera establishes this woman as fleshy and
voluptuous as it gazes on her body, pathetically robbing her of any grace or even
natural human dignity and reducing her to a sexual object both for Jaisingh and
the spectator. This woman is not chosen by Jaisingh and he moves on to the next
woman who is Kamala. Kamala is not seen but heard through a sheet of darkness.
Though Jaisingh has otherwise stated that he must carefully look at the woman
before he decides. Kamala’s cough is enough for him to make up his mind. She
comes out of the dark cell looking frail and confused with only a thin cotton sari
draped around her. She is framed in the centre and half the screen is lit while the
other half is dark. The camera focuses on her eyes which look pinched by the
light. On the face of it, the introduction of Kamala is a clear example of female
objectification in cinema. She is the body to be looked at, the place of sexuality an
object of desire -everything in short that the apparatus of cinema conveys. At
another level, she also becomes the signifier of the terribly painful existence of
multitudes in the oldest profession in the world.

If one looks a little deeper at the way the tribal woman is depicted, certain
stereotypical notions cannot be ignored. To this extent Kamala has perhaps been
exploited in the texts. This is more so in the film because Kamala belongs too
much to the genre of the popular Hindi film. The feminine other has no identity,
apart from a physical identity. In the film, the women to be sold are imprisoned
out of all familial, cultural, spatial contexts in their dark cells. Kamala, being
bought by Jaisingh, initiates her journey into the so-called ‘realm of culture’, but
paradoxically, it is also her journey from womanhood to slavehood. In the film, in
the initial course of this journey, Kamala - ill and tired- runs behind the cart that
Jaisingh has boarded because it is not ‘right’ that she share the physical space
inhabited by her ‘master’. It is a physically excruciating experience for her and
perhaps it premeditates the emotional excruciation that is to be this journey’s
outcome. Jaisingh buys her a pair of slippers: she takes them, but does not wear
them. She almost reveres them with awe. She almost reveres the bond between
herself and Jaisingh she is not in a position to accept any concern shown by him.
Thus, her inability to wear the slippers symbolizes her predicament. She has to-as
she must-travels all her distance barefeet.
Once Kamala has been transported to the realm of 'culture', there is an indulgence in her visibility. She becomes so much the object of the gaze of others that no clue is provided of her own impulses to retreat into her inner reality. There is only a very brief and sketchy expression of Kamala's inner instability and disquiet.

In the film Kamala's tattered red sari may be incidental but is not altogether innocent. Red is a bridal colour and here it acts as an important signifier of the initiated relationship between Jaisingh and Kamala. To Kamala, red signifies the status of a wife. Jaisingh is more interested in the visibly sorry state of the sari. The way Kamala wears her sari also has other connotations - it declares her tribal origins. If, on the one hand the resources of region, style and culture can be defining and can bestow an identity, on the other hand they can also limit and circumscribe. Her ethnicity leaves her feeling underdressed, naked and out of place in comparison to the people in the city. It also raises questions about the way in which we look at the issue of tribal identity and the simultaneous construction of an educated humanist subject. Kamala critiques how these discourses of identity suppress difference, heterogeneity and multiplicity in an effort to maintain hegemonic relations of power. Power works in constructing identities and subjectivities and simultaneously it redefines culture within multiple relations of difference. What are these themes of otherness? Is Kamala a narrative of the master and if so in what manner does it control social and moral expedience? It is important to re-write and re-inscribe the relations between power and issues of difference, struggle, identity politics and narrative.

Jaisingh's and Sarita's dominant status also designates Kamala's otherness in terms that degrade and cheapen human life. What does it mean for these marginalized tribals to come to voice and to speak on their own terms? To struggle for a politics of voice within these practices means to reject the politics of the centre. Kamala is the other whose experiences and traditions have to bear the historical weight of otherness.

In Kamala, Tendulkar also questions the construction of family and its hegemonic perceptions. It is important to examine these representations in literary, theatre and cinematic texts. As a writer, Tendulkar is placed in the experimental,
avant-garde category where relationships are examined in the context of a changing social, political, economic and cultural milieu. The text examines these asymmetrical, unequal relations between women and men and Kamala discusses these issue in the context of a nuclear family in which the woman may be perfectly capable and intelligent but must not assert her independence. Kamala tries to debunk the myth that only the family can provide comfort and security. It voices a critique of the male order largely through Sarita. Sarita, by virtue of being Jaisingh Jadhav’s intelligent and sensitive wife, has a predictably crucial role in the film. In the play we see Sarita in person keeping a note of incoming telephone calls for her husband but in the film it is a voice which introduces herself as Sarita, even as the camera pans across nice, framed pictures on the walls of her drawing room. The frames signify Sarita’s blissful ‘framing’ within her familial context. She is a doting wife, who basks in the glory of her husband’s success. Efficient, meticulous and comfortably Lethean, she brushes aside her uncle Kakasahib’s queries about her loneliness as casually as she brushes aside the news on bonded laborers in a minister’s house, carried in that day’s newspapers. Kamala’s arrival on the scene takes her out of her reverie and into a state of heightened awareness. Sarita is stirred by Kamala’s visibility. She wants to know who Kamala is, why she has been brought to her house and how long she is to be kept. Her concern for Kamala is an expected response even though she seems to be questioning her husband’s motive much too quickly. Sarita is used to being shut out of Jaisingh’s work space periodically and she seems to accept it with indifference. In this specific circumstance, her discomfort is expressed in clear words to Jaisingh. Sarita’s reaction and consequent response to Kamala is difficult to compartmentalise into one set of emotions or any defined intellectual stance. Since Kamala sees herself as Jasingh’s ‘wife’ Sarita could have experienced Kamala as a threat but that fear is soon put to rest by the apparent hierarchies of class and caste. This awareness assumes the form of concern, bringing with itself a reflection of the conscious self and of all that the self perceives.

The crucial moment of identification between Sarita and Kamala occurs not much later. In the film, Sarita is shown sitting in a rocking chair in the drawing room alone in the dark. Predictably enough, she is in tremendous psychological turmoil. It is into such acute isolation that Kamala intrudes. Kamala comes out of
her room, steps up the staircase and begins to touch the decorative objects and statuettes that dot the house. These material objects are signifiers of an urbanized world of culture where inanimate objects are displayed, unlike artifacts in her village which are all part of everyday life. The internal dialogues of both these women echo in an encounter. Sarita calls out to Kamala. Kamala, in turn, asks Sarita why she hasn’t slept. Sarita replies that she is unable to. Kamala looks up and remarks on the splendour of the house: she says back home even the king’s palace is not so beautiful. She questions Sarita about her children and becomes pensive when Sarita says she has none. Kamala remarks that it must be accepted as God’s will. Sarita agrees that it is very lonely without children. Kamala feels sorry for Jaisingh and remarks that he must be unhappy. For a while she keeps a discreet silence and noticing this silence Sarita urges her to speak. The central question in the text come from Kamala.

Kamala : Can I ask you something? You won’t be angry?
Sarita : No. Go on.
Kamala : How much did he buy you for?
{Sarita is confused at first.}
Sarita : What?
Kamala : I said how much did he buy you for?
Sarita : {Recovering} me? Look here Kamala.
(Changes her mind and sits down beside her.)
For seven hundred.2

The camera shifts to kamala in a close up, who is appalled at the amount quoted. She expresses her shock because for her it is too high a price for a slave who cannot bear children and hence cannot generate prosperity. Sarita asks her about her children. Kamala replies that she does not have any but can produce as many as required. Then, again in close up, face half lit, Kamala asks Sarita how much land and property ‘their master’ owns. On hearing Sarita’s reply in the negative, she reflects over the situation. A little later, on Sarita’s insistence, she articulates one of the central themes in the film text. On the sound track, there is music as Kamala equates Sarita’s position with hers:
...The master bought you, he bought me, too. He spent a lot of money on the two of us. Didn't he? It isn't easy to earn money. A man has to labour like an ox to do it. So, memsahib, both of us must stay here together like sisters. We'll keep the master happy.3

In this scene Kamala and Sarita are like mirror images of each other; both are part of the same split self, one is the other's alter ego. Sarita is still in a state of non-knowledge that cannot see Kamala as being anything beyond an innocent victim, unaware of her exploitation: the way a privileged woman would feel for an underprivileged counterpart.

In Jungian psychology Sarita imagines herself in terms of her 'animus', the archetypal masculine feature in a woman's psyche. The transition Sarita undergoes leads to a fuller realization of her psychological being. The power within her, with all its unknown turbulence and unexplored depth erupts as articulation as she expresses her anger and resentment at Jaisingh, at having had been used in different ways. Before Kakasahib, she does voice her conviction about the essentials of a meaningful liberation for women. However, certain questions remain unanswered despite the meaning and relevance of the issues she raises: which women's liberation is being talked about? What kind of liberation and from what? Sarita cannot dissociate herself from her class. Hence her perspective also formulates a somewhat one sided view of women. In her discourse she fails to acknowledge the inherent contradictions and differences amongst women from different socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In spite of these limitations, however, Sarita, through Kamala, gains a fuller comprehension of herself. As a woman despite deep internalization of patriarchal standards; Sarita is able to retain a female self.

At the conscious level, Sarita's immediate concern for Kamala, is very personalized. She regards Kamala with compassion and sympathy. She sees her as a helpless, victimized women and feels responsible to speak up for her, stand up for her. She does so because she feels Kamala is mute and cannot hold ground with such odds against her. Clearly, this concern is devoid of much insight into larger political issues. There is no attempt to question the seeming inevitability of a woman's victimization with significant woman identified politics. Moreover,
Kamala’s experience of slavery, which is the most fundamental, pivotal experience of her existence, is something Sarita cannot comprehend. Her defence of Kamala does not take into account Kamala’s own hopes, desires and expectations her fused sense of comfort and unrest in her ‘home’. The sense of security Kamala experiences in being part of Jaisingh’s ‘family’ is too remote for Sarita to assimilate. This is Kamala’s existential situation. Hence, at one level, it can be argued that Sarita, with her constant assertion about Kamala’s victimization, without taking Kamala’s own feelings into account, objectifies the cause. Indeed, what has happened to Kamala needs to be addressed but Sarita does not realize that it is not the tale of one Kamala but a thousand Kamala of Jalgaon, of Palamu and of Bangladesh with stare us in the face.

Before further analyzing the complexity of Sarita’s perception of this other self it is relevant to see how her own self image is constructed in the text. It is an archetypal image, individual yet collective. Sarita does not justify overt and evident oppression but once aware of her own identification with Kamala she is led to confront her own angst. The trauma of neglect by her husband, her helplessness and inability to do anything concrete for Kamala expresses itself as an intense outburst. Sarita expresses her anger and resentment at being used in different ways by Jaisingh to Kakasahib. She is not suddenly exalted, emancipated or liberated but there is a will to change. It is anticipated yet one almost feels grateful for this anger. Atleast it breaks a pattern. The hope for collectivity amongst women is not lost. Resistance to complete subordination and a strong element of self-doubt are movements in Sarita’s sense of self. She staggers under the burden of her recent awakening, which has mercilessly destroyed her perception of her self. Hers is thus a conscious fall from wifehood to slavehood. This shift is marked by another demand by Jaisingh for a public appearance. She connects this decree with a similar decree spelt out to Kamala, when she had been asked to present herself as she was in the Press Club, and brings her closer to her perception of herself as a slave. Kamala is thus assimilated within Sarita but with an understanding that despite incense struggle within, despite the decision to break away from her fettered role, relationships are binding. Her crisis to be neither Sarita nor Kamala while remaining parts of both can be perceived as one of extreme complexity which many Saritas can face given similar circumstances.
Kamala is crucial to the victor-victim issue. The other character who is also crucial to the thesis is Jaisingh. Initially, Jaisingh is firmly rooted on the dictating / desiring end of the power matrix. In the beginning Jaisingh comes across as someone worthy of his name: a man in control of situations, an achiever and a go-getter. His introduction on screen has been done with an air of mystery and enigma. He does not reveal either his identity or his motive. All one knows is that he wants to buy a woman. The whole transaction of buying Kamala is done quickly, with a dogged indifference and restrained grace: almost like that of a royal predator on prowl. Interestingly, in his communication with Bihari he states that Bihari needn’t judge him by his face; for appearances are deceptive. It is a fairly casual remark, thrown off hand by Jaisingh. The implications at that moment do not seem very serious. For the most part, Jaisingh is distant, detached and maintains a strange cynical aloofness in the entire Karimpura episode. Here and there he expresses some concern for Kamala, for instance in his gesture of buying slippers when she has run barefoot behind his cart for miles.

Soon after we are presented with an impressive version of Jaisingh’s character through Sarita, back in his house. In her conversation with Kakasahib, she speaks of Jaisingh with fondness, pride and adulation. Countering Kakasahib’s sarcasm of investigative journalism, of which Jaisingh is a proud promoter, Sarita portrays him as a conscientious, idealistic journalist, crusading tirelessly to expose the corruption and exploitation existing in society. Also, one gets to know how particular Jaisingh is about everything in his life being in order. He is obsessed about paper clippings and telephone calls, precision of messages and the like; singularly keeping his career most important to himself. When Kakasahib points out flaws in Jaisingh’s attitude and his callousness toward Sarita is not even bothering to let her know his whereabouts, she ignores the complaint, not wanting to make an issue out of it. Strangely enough, it is Kakasahib, himself a journalist, who seems unimpressed by Jaisingh’s approach to work. Thus, Smith’s image of her husband as a successful, busy and idealistic journalist is severely qualified by Kakasahib’s critical attitude and soon the chinks are visible. In the press Club, the jeering, gloating admiration of the journalists for Jaisingh instantly rubs him of all the aura that has been, built up so far. They carve him out as a sharp opportunist
who used sensational scoops to be in the limelight. Only his unfailing advocate, Jain, insists on his professional commitment.

It is only after this exposition that Jaisingh can be closely scrutinized as an individual. One finds that all his interactions fall in the master-slave dynamics. He is either subservient to authority or dictates terms to those who are subservient to him. His cosmetic politeness is sometimes a matter of necessity and at other times a matter of choice. He can be insensitive and rude to Sarita; he can even be rude and inattentive to Kakasahib, but not to anybody who is above him in the power hierarchy. His needs are strong but he does not come across as a person who will recognize that they are urgent needs, that others have to take care of his demands for food, sex, etc. and there is neither reflection nor gratitude at these demands being satisfied. Sarita is important as long as she carries out his decrees. He is polite to Kakasahib since the familial, social and cultural equation demands a certain degree of politeness. Jain is his obsequious friend who is only as appropriately entertained as he must be. Any hindrance to his work is ruthlessly cut out and absolutely no intrusion is allowed. Regarding Kamala, his current 'work', he only talks to his editor, towards whom, incidentally, his tone is always of syrupy subservience. Thus, all his niceness and gentleness is a typical upper middle class sham or facade which collapses the minute he is crossed.

His excitement over 'presenting' Kamala in the Press Club as a victim is actually his terrible excitement at presenting himself as a super-hero. The truth remains that he is as self deluded about his ideological stances as he is about his relationships. As soon as he is through with Kamala he decides to take her to a nariashram ignoring both Sarita's protest and Kamala's subdued and saddened comment communicates a truth: all men are the same, they can only be masters. Jaisingh is the dictator and Sarita or Kamala have no choice but to abide by his orders.

Jaisingh's fall is grim in many ways. After holding and being held at the centre all the while, he is completely taken aback when things fall apart in one stroke. The loss of his job, perhaps, is not of too much consequence concretely as he is shown to be in the higher rungs of the journalistic circle. However, as an individual he feels betrayed and immensely demoralized. His sense of shame is so
acute that even if only superficially and even if only for a moment, he is able to identify with the agency of Kamala. 'I am Kamala', the film's most powerful refrain, for once echoes even in his mind. The message is clear enough: every individual is a pawn in the hands of a system built and based on power. It can exalt a person to stupendous heights or reduce him to a hapless victim. Squashed and humiliated. Jaisingh stagggers back to his home and wife. His subsequent victimization has profounder implications and beneath the evident, indiscriminate exploitation is an inherent feature of a power-obsessed system. The prey, as well as the predator who preys, are both victims within a larger frame of reference.

The mind of Kamlabai is completely silent over the matter of Kamala, unable to express anything. In fact she cannot even relate to Kamala's exploitation for she is too enmeshed in her own defined situation. She remains in a state of non-knowledge. Tendulkar depicts poignantly and straightforwardly the helplessness of the vast majority that have no voice.

Sensitivity is not the prerogative of the intellectual elite, but a public expression of concern is. The tests make sure not to provide the necessary emotional environment to Kamlabai so the more articulate Sarita. Thoughts of Kamala do not keep her awake, they do not disrupt her daily routine. Which is to suggest that a certain obvious desensitization is imperative in the economically subordinate, in order to keep their position as servants secure. Her exclusion is not only from the conflict over Kamala but also from Sarita's struggle. Santa does not come to realize that Kamlabai too is another Kamala, a slave, and further exposes the working of power and its consolidation.

In the press club, Kamala the tribal slave, is seen embodying rampant sexuality, with the suggestion that she has had multiple partners and held the appetite of the body supreme. However, in the play itself sexuality is depicted only in a very latent manner. Even though the responses of readers / spectators are expected to be sharply against this apparent victimization of women it may be relevant to delve deeper into the linkages between femininity, patriarchy, sexuality and motherhood from a psychoanalytic perspective. Sexual exploitation and sexual demands are also indicators of deeper psychological needs.
There is no happy sexual moment between Jaisingh and Sarita. The only time jaisingh demands sex and is refused by Sarita is after Kamala has been presented in the press club. It is important to look at this moment of denial between husband and wife which precipitates the identification between Sarita and Kamala. Is Jaisingh unable to contain his terrible excitement that he demands Sarita? Or is the need more a need for a sense of worth deep within, with at least one woman? Sexual exploitation and sexual demands are also indicators of deeper psychological needs. The psychoanalytic approach takes up the idea that any adult sexual activity can stir up infantile feelings in an adult. Jaisingh's needs are to fuse and merge, feel loved, reassured and to be centre stage and are expressed as demands of sexual conquest. The infant experiences himself as totally merged with the mother as a separate person with her own interests. This 'merging' in the infantile state is total but experiencing these states in sexual relationships can only be partial and temporary. While the consciousness of adulthood does to go away, it is the emotions associated with the infantile state which are stirred up strongly rather than the state itself. The self is often experienced as exposed, needy and vulnerable. These feelings can be threatening for the self and a sexual connection can bring with it a fear of loss of self. It is also important to remember that Sarita has just begun to find her sense of self. When she refuses Jaisingh's sexual advance, she does not wish to create this experience of oneness with Jaisingh because she does not experience a sense of fusion with him nor is she emotionally equipped to become a mother to him. These layers and labyrinths in the text cannot be ignored and it is not enough to analyze this psychologically complex text only in terms of a strict victor - victim thesis. In fact, when Jaisingh relates with Kamala alone we get a glimpse of his tender side. Between Jaisingh and Kamala there is no harshness, both 'know' their relationship with each other. Though never overtly stated, a partnership exits between the two. Yet, Kamala's silence and passive acceptance also keep him conscious of his callousness and he finds it difficult to come to terms with it. He is uncomfortable answering Kamala's queries when she is being abandoned. One must also remember that if Sarita is not for a moment jealous of Kamala it is because Kamala is not a sexual threat to her. The text keeps up this delicate and subtle balance with regard to sexuality.
Apart from these centrally propounded issues and themes pertaining to feminine sensibility vis-à-vis the sexual - social - cultural power dynamics, *Kamala* also touches upon a host of other issues. They emerge as peripheral offshoots from the pivotal issues. A significant aspect that the film focuses on is the degeneration in the media. The Press Club crowd in general and Jain in particular typify the media in contemporary times. Jain represents the completely debauched face of the print media. With no work apart from reveling in Jaisingh's career, Jain is actually no different from his other colleagues whom he dismisses as good for nothing gossip mongers. The most depressing aspect of this conglomeration of lumpen-idlers, who call themselves journalists, is their disastrous non-seriousness towards all work, conviction and commitment. To them Jaisingh's work and the shabby and gross treatment meted out to Kamala are all equally relevant. They might be momentarily excited over, say Kamala, yet they remain unaffectedly callous towards the exploitation of women in particular and human misery in general. This portrayal of the press is a curiously interesting statement; a telling comment on the print media in cinema. The group is rather harshly portrayed though the element of truth in the representation is undeniable.

The politics of language is power hierarchies has also been taken up in *Kamala* by showing the interactions between the voiceless, the silenced, the silent and the vocal. Not only does it bring out the differences between the articulated points of view of the vocal (Jaisingh versus Kakasahib) but also the different languages of verbal expression. Kamala is the marginalized voice. For most part she is mute. The maid, Kamlabai, on the other hand, is the silenced. Sarita, neither silent nor silenced, chooses her silence as she later chooses her articulation. Kakasahib comments or refrains from commenting according to his understanding and conviction. It is only Jaisingh, by and large, who believes he can say what he pleases to whoever and however.

Kamala speaks in her tribal dialect, Kamlabai speaks in her regional dialect. Sarita's and Kakasahib's language is polished urban Hindi. Jaisingh is the only person using English in his professional and domestic domain. Here it would be relevant to consider Edward Said's discourse on language. In *Orientalism*, Said says:
Language itself is a highly organized and a coded system which employs many devices to express, indicate, exchange messages and information, represent and so forth. And these representations rely upon institutions, traditions, conversions, agreed upon codes of understandings.  

As one sees in this case, the English language is the market of power in the neo-colonial Indian Society. It is the language of the powerful; the language of the masters. English obviously is not Jaisingh's first language, yet it is the language which define his sensibility and his professional competence. It is, therefore, the language in which he has learnt to assimilate himself. Closely connected to Jaisingh's use of English as his own language, is the issue of English being his professional language as well. Within the text this issue is taken up by Kaka Sahib who points out to Jaisingh that for all his claims of expositing oppression and exploitation in the public gaze, he is essentially catering to a minuscule readership: that which can understand his language. His truth do not awaken the common man because the message is not received - the medium being incomprehensible. 

Thus, with a remarkable economy of characters and incidents, Kamala manages to create a heterogeneous, polyphonal microcosm of urban existence. As an autonomous, complete whole, it does establish the superiority of the system. Suggested, flickering alternatives get splintered by this rock of the 'given' yet there is a consistent impetus to look beyond the meticulous build and break. Perhaps this is where Kamala desires to leave a mark, as a sensitively complex, existential document of everyday lives. 

Among the language theatre of India, Marathi theatre is easily the best organized and promoted. The secret of its continuing success and popularity is a storing tradition created by brilliant dramatists enterprising producers, dedicated artists and indulgent audience. Marathi drama has a rich tradition, but what is more significant for its growth is that new dimensions are being added to it. The most active and undoubtedly the most controversial playwright of the modern Marathi theatre is Vijay Tendulkar. As a play Wright he had dominated Marathi stage for the last fifty years. Some of this significant plays are: Sakharam Binder, Silence! The Court is in Session, The Vultures, Ghashiram Kotwal and Kamala
which are considered as landmarks in Marathi theatre.

Vijay Tendulkar’s play Kamala has raised pens and typewriter keys, both for his denouncement of trendy journalism and his own trendy stance of sympathizing with the plight of a woman, a theme he has been pursuing with some consistency through plays like Silence! The Court is in Session, The Vultures and Sakharam Binder. A journalist named Jaisingh Jadhav went to purchase a woman to prove the point that illegal flesh trade was still prevalent in some parts of Bihar. It was a classic case of an advertising dictum where the news editor wants pictures to speak louder than could print.

Jaisingh Jadhav in the competitive world of journalism had to go for the direct kill instead of traditional combination of a photographer and a newsman. A journalist could not be bothered about the plight of the commodity he had paid for. But Jaisingh went back on his deal because he did not actually do what he was supposed to do. He duped Kamala who had come prepared to become his bonded keep with all the associated feeling of sex, motherhood and living. Kamala of course never imagine that a young man was buying her for a boring journalistic coup. Every woman who is on sale knows why she is being bought and what her buyer is trading money for. To Kamala, the smart journalist would have looked like a handsome knight from dreamland while he faithlessly sent her to Nari Niketan.

Tendulkar says that he picked up the story only when he read about it in a magazine in which Kamala is supposed to have asked Jaisingh’s wife Sarita on that night: “How much did he pay for you?” Kamala thought that Sarita was also his bonded keep. The puzzled Sarita sat near Kamala and told her that he had paid seven hundred rupees for her. The play is not only about the journalist’s wife Sarita or about journalism in general and sensational journalism in particular. Kamala moves between fact and fiction and quite shamefaced falls between the true fact and ungainly fiction rubbing everyone the wrong way.

Tendulkar’s other characters in the play are Kaka Sahib, an old time journalist, Jain, a fellow traveler, and almost docile wife and a maid-servant who is also called Kamalabai. But throughout the play Jaisingh is in tension. He has
time only for his stories and drinks that follow the press conference. Kakasahib is his father-in-law who has landed up to see his daughter as also to acquire newsprint quota. Jaisingb tells him he can get it through as the secretary concerned is a friend of his. But Kakasahib also becomes Tendulkar’s protagonist for his diatribes against ivory-tower English language journalism.4

Tendulkar expresses himself through punch lines and opinionated dialogue bringing in stage intervention whenever there is chance of building character or idea. Jaisingb complains about the profuse perspiration that the tiresome journey has brought about. So he demands a hot tub bath. Jaisingh is furious when Sarita refuses him his right. “What have I done? Why has your face changed? Why did you throw me away? You have never done that before....You must tell me. I must know. Don’t I have the right to have my wife when I feel like it Don’t I”? When Kamala thought that Sarita too is a bonded keep of Jaisingh, Kamala told Sarita: “You will enjoy fifteen nights with master and remaining fifteen nights in a month I will enjoy. Are you ready.?”

Hectic phone calls, stratagems, maneuvering to get the best mileage from the illustrated story, police threats and marital discord, much drinking and bonhomie are the other ingredients of the rest of playing time. So what is the play about? Is it against journalism or the buyable commodities that women in our society are, or about the male chauvinists that journalists are who for a handful of silver play into the hands of capitalist bosses thinking they are doing their downtrodden and duped masses a service.6

Kamala’s slavery is narrated directly in the play. But Santa realizes very late in the play that she too is a slave.

Who is my husband, he is my master. I am not his companion but a slave. I have no right of any kind in this house. Because I am a slave. A slave has no right, isn’t it? Yes Uncle. A slave can work hard, must dance to the tune of the master. If he says to lift the telephone must lift it. If he asks to accompany for a party must accompany. If he says to sleep in bed must...

Sarita is a symbol of slavery in family system. She has hope that one day
she will be free. She says: "The day will come and I will be no more slave, Uncle. I will not be a thing to be used and to be thrown into dustbin. I will act as per my will and pleasure, nobody will have power to rule over me. That day is sure to come."

Jaisingh is a journalist in a free democratic country but he is also a slave of the bourgeois mentality of the society. The play is not about Kamala or Jaisingh or Sarita but about the wickedness in the society. One may even venture to suggest that the theme of Tendulkar's Kamala, A two act play, is flesh-trade and, how well known young journalists like Jadhav seek to capitalize on it in order to further succeed in their careers without caring, in the least, for the victims of this nefarious trade in a democratic country like India. The play offers Vijay Tendulkar enough scope to scoff at the kind of trendy journalism practiced by Jadhav, and also to strike a contrast between the journalism in the vernacular and that in English. Tendulkar uses the play also to dwell on the characteristic suffering of the Indian middle class women perpetrated by selfish, malicious, secretive and hypocritical male chauvinists. The man-woman relationship, another of Tendulkar's favourite themes, is also deftly touched upon in the complex relationship between Jadhav and his wife, Sarita. Kamala is gyno-centric play in the sense that it is built on the metamorphosis of Santa emerging from being a docile wife to an assertive, mature woman in the end.

Jaisingh Jadhav is a well-known young journalist associated with an English daily published by an unscrupulous press baron, Sheth Singhania. Sarita is his wife. She is well-educated and hails from a village called Phaltan. They live in a small bungalow in a fashionable locality around New Delhi in the neighborhood of Neeti Bagh. Kamalabai is Sarita's servant-woman and she, too, hails from Phaltan. Though highly educated, Sarita lets herself be reduced to the status of a slavish, docile wife. Kakasahib is Sarita's uncle and, he is currently in Delhi on order to procure his quota of newsprint with Jadhav's help. Born in an aristocratic family, Kakasahib (Shivajirao Mohite) runs a paper in the vernacular. He lives a simple life on Gandhian principles.

Hectic phone calls form a recurrent 'motif' throughout the play. Act I of Kamala with Kakasahib speaking on the phone. In the dialogue that follows between Kakasahib and Sarita, we learn that Sarita has to make a note of all the
incoming calls and any failure on her part to do so will inevitably attract Jadhav’s displeasure leading eventually to domestic discord. When Kakasahib asks her why she wants the name of the caller to whom he has just been talking, Sarita replies, “I have to write down each phone call”. (p. 3). If she fails to do so, in Sarita’s words, ‘If I say they didn’t tell me their names he (Jadhav) gets angry with me for not asking.’ (p.3). The phone rings at such regular intervals that Kakasahib suggests to Sarita: “Why don’t you make Kamalabai sit by the phone?” (p.4). That Jadhav does not tell her anything about his frequent outings becomes obvious when Smith says: “He’s gone out of town somewhere.” (p.4).

After sometime; Sarita receives the message that Jadhav is returning to Delhi from the newspaper office. Receiving this message, Sarita goes about busily making all arrangements for a warm reception for him. As a wife, she is extremely sensitive to her husband’s needs and tastes, quite eager to pamper to his own whims and fancies. On this occasion, for instance, Sarita asks Kamalabai to make a curry of cauliflower, spread some mangoes on a plate and keep Jadhav’s beer ready. Sarita, thus, attends to her husband’s needs with an alacrity that makes us wonder how she, an educated girl, rich enough not to depend on anyone, could be so slave-like to her husband. Kakasahib rightly observes: “You may be highly educated; Sarita, but you are still a girl from the old Mohite ‘Wada’”(p. 5).

Kakasahib feels honoured when Sarita tells him that his houseboy, who is now the Defence Minister, enquires after him, whenever he meets Sarita and Jadhav at a party in New Delhi. Kakasahib’s response in this context, though tinged with bitter sarcasm is significant, for, his words clearly indicate the world of difference that exists between his kind of journalism and that of Jadhav’s. He says:

I’m honoured. Who asks after me now? I’m a back number-a remnant of times past. A dead journalist who’s just about staying alive! Now it is the day of your husband’s type of journalism. The High-Speed type! .. Eye-witness report. Being on the spot—that’s what’s important! Never mind what you write. (p.5)
Kakasahib does not approve of Jadhav’s style of functioning mainly because of the danger involved in the manner of his reporting which infuriates the powers that be. His apprehension regarding Jadhav’s safety becomes evident in his question to Sarita: “Can’t he write them ‘From our Correspondent’?” (p. 7). Santa replies: “He is absolutely determined to write everything under his own name. Once they forgot to print his name and he nearly resigned.” (p. 7). Kakasahib is worried, as he apprehends danger to Jadhav’s life and, so, he suggests to Sarita that she should advise her husband to carry a gun. He says: “This isn’t manliness. It’s madness. If you’re going to wake up the jungle, then carry a gun”. (p. 7). “Sarita knows that it is futile as her husband will not pay heed to any advice regarding his own personal security.”

Now Jaisingh Jadhav arrives, bringing with him Kamala, a village woman, whom he has bought for two hundred and fifty rupees from a village in Bihar. He has already made every arrangement to present her as an exhibit to prove that flesh-trade is rampant even in the remote villages of India. However, Kamala does not know that Jadhav is going to present her at the ‘Press Conference’. On the other hand, she thinks that Jadhav has bought her in order to keep her in his house for ever as his mistress.

Kakasahib now tells Jadhav about a telephone call threatening to kill him. Jadhav, to Kakasahib’s surprise, is not perturbed at all. Kakasahib asks Jadhav: “Don’t you feel anything?” (p. 8). Jadhav: “Huh? What about?” (p. 8). Kakasahib replies: “You’re being threatened with murder.” (p. 8). Jadhav just smiles and goes to the phone. Jadhav’s indifference upsets Kakasahib and he says: What are you laughing at? They won’t always stop at threats! One day, they’ll” (p. 9). Instead of responding to Kakasahib’s question, Jadhav reports to his editor over the phone of the successful completion of his mission, namely, buying Kamala as a proof of flesh-trade, and the ‘Press Conference’. In the conversation that follows between Kakasahib and Jadhav, hints are given which show Jadhav’s self-centeredness, and headset disposition. Kakasahib asks Jadhav: “... But tell me this, what are you planning to do about this girl (Santa)” (p. 10).
Jaisingh: This girl? Why?
Kakasahib: You go off anywhere - you come back any odd time you don't even say where you're going.... All kinds of threatening phone calls come here - you don't carry any kind of weapon with you. Don't carry and kind of weapon with you.

Jaisingh: (Bored expression: shrugging his shoulders trying to make a joke out of it). Oh, that she (Sarita) seems to have told you quite a lot (p. 10)

Jadhav is not very pleased about this. Seeing the expression of displeasure on her husband's face, Sarita says: "It was he who asked me" (p. 10). Kakasahib goes on to warn Jadhav of the danger involved in the kind of investigative journalism he is currently engaged in. He says "And on top of that-you're not prepared to take care to protect yourself." (p. 11). Jadhav replies: "Kakasahib if one's going to die one can die sitting at home." (p. 11).

Moreover he is under the illusion that he will be protected by both his editor and his boss, in the event any danger."

Though, Jadhav's reputation as a journalist is admirable, and even enviable, as a husband, Kakasahib's and his friends like Jain, have nothing good to say about him. For instance, Jain, addressing Sarita says:

Hi, Bhabhiji, I mean, an English 'hi' to him, and a Marathi 'hai' to you. This warrior against exploitation in the country is exploiting you. He's made a drudge out of a horse-riding independent girl from a princely house, 'Hai', 'hai' (Theatrically to Jaisingh) Shame on you! Hero of anti-exploitation campaigns makes, slave of his wife ... (to Sarita) Bye, lovely bonded laborer (p. 7).

Sarita is indeed a "lovely bonded labourer", taking note of all phone calls, attending to all Jadhav's physical needs and running about in the house carrying out all his presumptuous instructions, Sarita is shocked to hear from Jadhav that
he has bought Kamala for two hundred and fifty rupees in the Luhanduga bazaar in Bihar. Noticing Santa’s reaction, he adds: “They sell human beings at this bazaar ... They have an open auction for women of all sorts of ages.” (p. 14).

He goes on to add: “The men who want to bid handle the women to inspect them ... How they feel in the breast, in their waist, in their thighs and (p. 14). Outraged, Sarita asks him to stop. Jadhav, warns her strictly not to tell anyone that he is going to exhibit Kamala at the ‘Press Conference’ to counter the government’s allegation that newspapermen tell lies. He hopes: “There’ll be high drama at today’s press conference. It’ll create an uproar!” (p.15). When Sarita asks him if she can ask Kamala to bathe and then give a fresh sari to wear, Jadhav shouts at her: “No!” He adds: “Just let this evening’s Press Conference get over. It’s very important.” (p. 18).

As the time for the Press Conference draws near, Jadhav’s calls Kamala to him and engages her in a deceptively sweet conversation:

Jaisingh : How do you like it here, Kamala?
Kamala : Very much, Sahib.
Jaisingh : Kamala, this evening we’re going out together.
Kamala : Oh: I’ll see Bombay! They say it’s a very big city. (p. 19).

“Kamala is so ignorant and illiterate that she does not even know that she is in Delhi and not in Bombay. Jadhav tells her that he is going to take her to a place where ‘big feasts’ take place and that the people there “will want to meet her” (p. 20). Kamala, however, tells Jadhav that she cannot go with him in her rags. Jadhav, hardening his expression and voice, tells her: “You will ‘have’ to come, Kamala (p. 40). Finally, Kamala agrees to go with him in her rags.”

Before Jadhav goes out with Kamala to the Press Conference, Kakasahib makes an attempt to persuade Jadhav to see the danger that he is landing himself in. Jadhav tells him that someone should take up the cause of the common man and so he is doing it. Kakasahib ironically asks Jadhav what he hopes to gain from the reports that he writes in English which will certainly not be read by the common man whose cause Jadhav is fighting for. Here, Tendulkar, highlights the
contrast between journalism in the vernacular and that in English to drive home the fact that it is the dailies in the vernacular alone that reach the masses. To wit:

Jaisingh : We need a force that will raise his
(the common man’s) consciousness,
prepare him to struggle for social and political change
Kakasahib : And you are all doing all this! All of you?
Jaisingh : Yes. Yes. we are
Kakasahib : In English. (p. 24).

To the surprise of Jadhav, Kakasahib argues that none can effect any meaningful social or political change in India through English dailies, as they reach only a very small section of Indian population. Then Kakasahib advises Jadhav saying:

...This new journalism of yours- if money- making is not the object of it- then it’s a ‘Vandhya- Sambhog ... What I mean is nothing will ever come of it. ‘Arre’ Write the people’s language first, speak it. Then try and teach them. (p. 24).

Hearing Kakasahib speaking in such categorical terms, Jadhav becomes tense. Seeing the change that comes over him, Kakasahib apologizes profusely: ‘Arre baba’. I apologize, Is that all right? Seeing I’m a journalist born and bred, I’ll apologize, as often as you like, special apologizes without any reserve” (p. 25). Jadhav becomes relaxed, much to Sarita’s relief. Act I ends in Jadhav’s taking Kamala to the Press Conference.

Act II of Kamala opens with Jadhav celebrating his success at the Press Conference with his friend Jain. Both Jadhav and Jain are dead drunk. Kakasahib watches them in silent amusement. However, very soon, he gets so disgusted with the friends, narration of what happened at the Press Conference that he exclaims: “this is your Press Conference” (p. 29). The two friends, nonetheless, continue their drunken revelry. They say that they had great fun at the Press Conference.
Sarita asks them: "So while they were asking her those terrible questions, and making fun of her you just sat and watched, did you?" (p. 30). Jadhav, rather drunk, says: "I didn't hold this Press Conference for my own benefit. It was to drag this criminal sale of human beings into the light of day" (p.31). At once Kakasahib tells him: "And you sold a woman to them to do so." (p.31). Jadhav gets infuriated at Kakasahib's observation and asks him to apologize, which he does at once. Yet, the success Jadhav has been proud of is punctured by both Sarita and Kakasahib. Jain now takes leave of them and Kakasahib goes into his room. This leaves Jadhav and Sarita alone. Jadhav wants to go to the bed room at once with Sarita. Sarita repels his advances towards her which makes him ask her the question:

Don't I have the right to have my wife when I feel like it? Don't I? I'm hungry for that too- I've been hungry for six days. Is it a crime to ask for it? Answer me. (p.32). Sarita, trying to control her aversion, goes to the kitchen, and Jadhav goes upstairs drunk, enraged and dejected.

Like Kamala, Sarita too functions as a mere pawn in Jadhav's game of chess. However, she becomes aware of her real condition only when she converses with Kamala who asks her what price Jadhav has paid for her. To quote from one of the most pungent, ironic episodes in the play:

Kamala : Can I ask you something? You won't be angry?
Sarita   : No, Go on.
Kamala   : How much did he buy you for? (p. 34)

Kamala's question opens Sarita's eyes suddenly and, for the first time, she finds no difference between herself and Kamala whom her husband has bought to exhibit at the Press Conference. She coolly tells Kamala that Jadhav bought her for seven hundred rupees.

Only women understand the problems of women, a fact that emerges from the frank and unreserved conversation between Sarita and Kamala. Kamala, though naive, ignorant and illiterate, sympathizes her barrenness: "... If you pay
seven hundred and there are no children . " (p.34). Sarita asks her: How many children do you have, Kamala?" Kamala replies: "I’ll have as many as you want" (p.34) Kamala, thus, expresses her readiness to bear Jadhav’s children to make the house a pleasant place to live in. In a rather long dialogue Kamala tells Sarita:

Memsahib, if you won’t misunderstand, I’ll tell you. The master bought you; he bought me, too ... So, memsahib, both of us must stay here like sisters. We’ll keep the master happy ... The master will have children. I’ll do the hard work, and I’ll bring forth the children. I’ll bring them up. You keep the accounts and run the house.... Fifteen days of the month. You keep with the master. the other fifteen, I’ll sleep with him. Agreed? (p. 35).

Totally cornered by Kamala’s suggestion, Sarita at once says “Agreed” (p.135)

It is now that Sarita’s eyes open and she realizes, at least, that her husband’s scheme of things, there is not much difference between herself and Kamala. That Jadhav has been using her as a mere object to satisfy his own carnal desires, and as an object to parade his own status in the capacity of his wife at parties, is suddenly recognized by Sarita.

On his return from the Nari Niketan, Jadhav asks his wife to go with him to a party. Sarita, defiant now, tells him that she does not want to accompany him there:

Jaisingh : You don’t want to come? Why?
Sarita : That is my will
Jaisingh : (Rather surprised) Your will?
Sarita : Aren’t I allowed to have a will of my own?

Jadhav, surprised and dejected, leaves alone for the party: Kakasahib, who has been away to the City, now comes in, and sees Sarita sitting, rather depressed, on the sofa. To quote from the play:

Kakasahib : Is your head aching?
Sarita : If I had one, it would.
Kakasahib: You don't have a head? Then who does?
Sarita: The gentleman who just left.
Kakasahib: Gentleman? What gentleman? I didn't meet any one.
Sarita: I did (p.45)

Here Sarita refers to Jadhav, her husband, by the term 'gentleman' underlining the fact that he has become a stranger in her life. Sarita like Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* has thus, undergone a sea change, and now is entirely an independent and assertive woman who has finally discovered her real identity.

Now Sarita tells Kakasahib that she is going to convene a Press Conference at which she intends to declare before the whole world, the real state of affairs at home:

I am going to present a man who in the year 1982 still keeps a slave, right here in Delhi. Jaisingh Jadhav. I am going to say this man's a great advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave, he got free. Listen to the story of how he bought the slave Kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free-not just force--the slave's father shelled out the money—a big sum. (p.46)

When a startled and incredulous Kakasahib asks her: what on north happened between you two?" (p.46), Sarita replies: "Man-image" (p.46). When Kakasahib asks her why she suddenly begins to think thus in strange terms, Sarita says:

I was asleep ... Kamala woke me up. With a shock. Kamala showed me everything ... I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. I have no rights at all in this house ... slaves don't have rights, do Kakasahib? ... Dance to their master's whim. Laugh, when he says, laugh. Cry, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up ... when he says, lay on the bed- she (She is twisted in pain) (p.46).
It is true Kakasahib makes some feeble attempts to mollify her, but all his efforts are of no avail. For SB screams at him in impatience in the end:

Why? Why can't men limp behind? Why aren't women ever the masters? Why can't a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as a man? Why must only a man have the right to be a man? Does he have one extra sense? A woman can do everything a man can. (p.47)

Jain, Jadhav's friend, now comes in to inform Sarita and Kakasahib the shocking news that Sheath Singhaniya, the unscrupulous press baron, who is hand in glove with the equally unscrupulous politicians, has dismissed Jadhav - a result of Jadhav's expose of flesh trade at the Press Conference: Jain says: "There have been pressures on the proprietor. I learnt that some very big people are revolved in this flesh racket." (p.48). "Sarita, at once, asks Jadhav over the phone to come back from the party".10

Jadhav returns and asks Sarita why she has called him away from the party. Sarita's reply is soaked in irony: "Your owner is pleased with you and he's decided to relieve you from your job." (p.49). Jadhav is shocked to hear the news and he curses his boss and then goes on drinking. And then he suddenly flares up and then goes on banging his fist on the table, bursting out: "The bastard? Do you hear me? He is a bastard. That Sheath Singhaniya! I'll teach him a lesson." (p.50). Little by little his voice weakens, his control over his limbs gradually decreases, and finally, he collapses on to the sofa. Kakasahib tells Sarita: "This is the mistake men make. That manhood makes. Do you understand me? (p.51) Sarita tells him that she understands him. Nevertheless, she is not ready to change her opinion about marriage and husband-wife relationship. She says:

I'll go on feeling it. But at present I'm going to Jock all that up in a corner of my mind and forget about it. But a day will come, Kakasahib, when I will stop being a slave. I'll no longer be an object to be used and thrown away. I'll do what I wish, and no one will rule over me. That day has to come. And I'll pay whatever price I have to pay for it. (p.52).
Kakasahib is both fascinated and impressed by the quiet determination in her words. The play ends with Sarita, looking at the child-like face of the sleeping Jadhav, remarking: "How innocent even the masters look when they are asleep" (p.52). Her gaze is calm, steadily looking ahead at the future. One sees both Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Sarita in *Kamala* playing roles which anger mystify and bemuse their male counterparts. They emerge as capable modern women who challenge the male chauvinists in society. In fact, the two plays *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Kamala* are Tendulkar’s attempts at delineating women, who, inspite of their supposed inferior status in Indian society, rebel against all odds and commands our admiration.

The principal action in both the plays revolves around women protagonists. Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Sarita in *Kamala* stand for the central consciousness in the respective works of art, beyond any shade of doubt, and, hence, the plays can be rightly called women centered. Through them Tendulkar projects a point of view that is peculiarly feminine - tending to be even feminist- as the entire denouement in both the plays in question bears it out. In these women centered works, feminist ideology, which pits women in direct encounter with chauvinistic male oppressors, finds its full and free expression. In characterization too, Tendulkar has deliberately given his women characters a greater variety and depth- and thus a definite edge, over to their male counterparts.

Benare’s emotional outburst at the end of *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Sarita’s confident and assertive utterances towards the close of *Kamala* show that both the plays are, beyond question, gyno-centric.11

In *Kamala*, Tendulkar makes use of satire in order to scoff not only at the hypocrisy of the urban upper middle class but also at the rampant corruption of the politicians, the cut-throat competition among the journalists, and the tenuous relationship that exists between a husband and his wife. Satire, thus, operates at two levels in the play, namely, in the relation of a typical Indian middle class milieu, and also in the social institutions of ‘politics’, ‘marriage’ and ‘journalism’. Kakasahib is Tendulkar's spokesman in his jibes directed at politicians and journalists. Both Sarita and Kakasahib become, in the playwright’s hands, instruments for satirizing the institution of ‘marriage’. The satire in *Kamala* is
even more pronounced than that in *Silence! The Court is in Session*.

In the very opening scene of *Kamala* there are numerous satirical hints in which Kakasahib refers to the “High-Speed” (p.5) journalism practiced by Jaisingh Jadhav, the husband of Sarita, his niece. He pooh-poohs his craze for “Eye-witness report”(p.5) saying: “Being on the spot—that’s what’s important! Never mind what you write” (p.5). When Sarita, in an attempt to defend her husband, tells Kakasahib “If it’s (murder, bloodshed, rape, atrocity, arson) happening shouldn’t he observe it?” (p.6), he replies:

Why does he have to? My dear, it’s not the facts of an occurrence that are important. But the topic is. Discuss that Comment on it. Suggest a way to stop it-suggest that. After all, any murder, rape or arson is like any other. What difference can there be? What sort of journalism is it that smacks its lips as it writes blood thirsty descriptions instead of commentary? It’s business, isn’t news- it is blood shed! (p. 6).

Kakasahib, himself the proprietor of a small vernacular daily, is quick to discern Jadhav’s real motive behind his reckless and foolhardy reporting. Hence, when Jadhav says, “there’s a commitment behind it, there’s a social purpose the common man ... needs to shocked into looking at the truth :’We need a force that will raise consciousness, prepare him to struggle for social and political change” (p. 23-24), Kakasahib remarks:

But you’re doing all this for the small percentage of the common people who have the good fortune of knowing English. And these fortunate people are going to effect a change in the government of this country. The rest of the population- the majority- poor things are going to carry on in their haze. Because they don’t know English... (p.24).

Again, at the ‘Press Conference’ Jadhav exhibits his find, Kamala, an ignorant and illiterate village woman, as proof of the existence of flesh trade in some villages in Bihar. In fact, he is overwhelmed with the feeling of having
accomplished an adventurous task which has so far, not been accomplished by any of his fellow-journalists. He celebrates his triumph with Jain, another journalist, who happens to be also his intimate friend. In a fit of tipsy delight, both Jadhav and Jain recall the Merriment they had at the ‘Press Conference’ at the expense of the hapless Kamala. Kakasahib, who has been listening to their narration suddenly exclaims. “Fun. At that poor woman’s expense!” (p.30).

Sarita, too, is shocked at the way Kamala has been treated at the Press Conference. She asks: “So while they were asking her those editable questions, and making fun of her - you just sat and watched, did you?” (p. 30). An inebriated and annoyed Jadhav tries to convince both Kakasahib and Sarita of the ‘social purpose’ behind the ‘Press Conference’, saying: “I didn’t hold this press Conference for my own benefit. It was to drag this criminal sale of human beings into the light of day.” (p.31). At this, Kakasahib, in a satirical tone tinged with extreme sarcasm, says: “And you sold a woman to them to do.” (p.31) referring to Kamala who has been ‘sold’ in the market of commercialistic journalism. Thus, he drives home the fact that Jadhav has been more inhuman than the perpetrators of ‘flesh-trade’.

In fact, Jadhav, the successful journalist, turns out to be cruel not only towards Kamala but also towards his own wife Sarita. Kamala, to him, is only an object that helps him win instant fame as a journalist. Sarita, to him, is, again, an object to be paraded as a wife at parties, to enhance his status as a successful journalist. In essence, he is the typical Indian husband, who has no time to spare for his wife assuring her of his affection for her. In short, it is the husband-wife relationship that has come under increasing threat in metropolitan cities like Bombay which has been the butt of satire in Kamala.

Both Kakasahib and Jain refer to Jadhav as an irresponsible husband whose craze for publicity overwhelms him so maltreat he totally ignores her very existence. In one instance, Kakasahib, referring to Jadhav’s thoughtlessness, tells Sarita: “This is something that concerns the whole life of one of our girls-your life. We didn’t give you to him, to take you back as a widow” (p.7). In response, Sarita tells him: “But you did give me away, didn’t you”. Then that’s that” (p.7). To Jain, Sarita is simply Jadhav’s “lovely bonded labourer” (p.17). There are
repeated hints in the play to show that the husband wife relationship between Jadhav and Sarita has, in fact, deteriorated to a disgraceful master-slave relationship.

On one occasion, Jadhav wants Sarita to send Kamala to him at once:

Jaisingh : (Looking at his watch). Sarita, Hey, Sarita! (Enter Sarita). What's she doing?
Sarita : She's asleep. She isn't feeling well.
Jaisingh : Wake her up.
Sarita : She's only just gone off to sleep.
Jaisingh : Never mind. Wake her up and send her here. I want to talk to her. (p. 18-19).

All Jadhav's bravado vanishes into thin air when, in the end, he is confronted by a defiant Sarita. In the following conversation, Tendulkar satirizes the utter impotence of the 'macho' males who find themselves suddenly emasculated when confronted by enlightened women.

Jaisingh : Come Upstairs
Sarita : (Emphatically, without even realizing it) No.
Jaisingh : I'll have my dinner afterwards. We'll both eat together.
Sarita : (Without losing her self-control.) Uh-hunh let me go. I've got work to do.
Jaisingh : (Trying to embrace her). Work later. Come upstairs now.
Sarita : (Throwing him aside with a single shove). Move aside. What are you doing?
Jaisingh : Hurt], what's the matter? what did I do? Why are you making a face like that? Why did you push me away? You've never done that before. (p. 32)
The following is another episode that throws valuable light on Sarita's recalcitrance:

Sarita: (With greater determination). Kamala is not going to come with you.
Sarita: Kamala is not going with you. She's going to stay here. (p. 41).

The Press Conference that Sarita intends to hold, though in all probability she may not, is aimed at exposing the double standards practiced by chauvinistic males like JadHAV. No spectator of the play will miss the satire in Sarita's words in the following episode. On learning of Sarita's plans for the Press Conference' Kakasahib is, at once, startled and amused:

Kakasahib: Anyone would think Jaisingh is a slave driver.
Sarita: Not just anyone I do.
Kakasahib: What on earth happened between you two?
Sarita: Marriage. (p.46).

The play of ready wit on the part of Sarita in the above episode is also an occasion for thought provoking humour for the audience. The play also darts some glancing barbs on power-hungry politicians and unscrupulous press barons who work hand-in-glove with them, to amass wealth and build skyscrapers in metropolitan centres like Delhi. For instance, Kakasahib observes once:

Our houseboy became the Defence Minister; He's got one foot in Delhi and the other in Korad. And finally, he's neither one thing nor the other” (p.5).

Towards the close, JadHAV's dismissal results from his proprietor, Sheath Singhania questionable association with some political bigwigs of Delhi. Thus, in a sense, one may justifiably call Kamala a political satire too.

Thus, Kamala is a powerful satire of modern society. It should be underlined here that Tendulkar does not launch any frontal attack on the subjects he ridicules in this play. He resorts to the employment of the device of "indirect
satire” in which the characters make themselves” “and their opinions ridiculous at what they think, say, and do...” (Abrams 155). The characters emerge as individuals belonging to the middle class who prove to be ineffectual and discontented. Their words and actions prove, beyond any doubt they are neurotic, Sadistic, conspiratorial and even treacherous not out of genuine love for drama that they have turned to their activity, but out of a sheer sense of their own personal failures in real life. Dejected, discontented and still daring, they can only behave cruelly towards one another. To expect them to be refined, truthful and generous is perhaps to ask for the impossible. Similarly, Jadhav in Kamala exposes himself to ridicule all around because of his insensible pursuit after worldly fame. In the process, despite his initial success, he loses his job and lands in a situation that can be saved only by his wife’s sympathy, care and understanding, though he has been treating her all along with utmost impudence.
REFERENCES: