SOCIAL DEFORMITY OF CASTE IN

KANYADAAN

*Kanyadaan* (1983) is the play for which Vijay Tendulkar was awarded with the Saraswathi Samman. The play *Kanyadaan* brings light to the Indian society which is riddled and stenched with caste system. ‘*Kanyadaan*’ the little of the play itself signifies the ‘Daan’ of a “Kanya” into Dalit community. This sport is the most controversial play of Vijay Tendulkar. The play *Kanyadaan* extremely deals with sensitive, social and political issue, mainly the struggle between the upper caste and Dalit’s, a phenomenon still out of control in several portions of India. The play was greatly criticized and faced the wrath of the consultation when it was staged in Marathi.

The viewers considered and criticized it as an anti-Dalit play and could not find out the main design of the game. While getting the award Tendulkar said, “As its creator, I respect both verdicts” (9). The deep-rooted depression of caste system which had caused pains for many centuries cannot be curved so easily. It also takes many centuries. *Kanyadaan* depicts the conflict between the ideal and the real through the description of a daughter’s sacrifice in pursuing her father’s ideals.

*Kanyadaan* is the first major play to be staged after *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) and also, the last major play of Tendulkar to be staged. In *Kanyadaan* Tendulkar takes the Poona Brahmin community to the other side of the political spectrum, equally a political progressive with the socialist leanings. Whereas 1983, was a time
when the Soviet Union and its empire collapsed into the waste bin of history and the self-contradictory came into power.

Jyoti, is a Brahmin girl brought up with sophistication, culture and good education. But all these supreme qualities got swallowed by her father, Nath Devalikar’s ideals. Nath Devalikar, Member of State Legislative Council and his wife Seva, who runs ‘Seva Dal’ and both fought for untouchability as tooth and nail. So both of their children Jyoti and Jayaprakash are brought up with the same ideals like:

Hatred not for the man, but for his tenancies; No man is fundamentally evil, he is good. He has certain propensities towards evil. They must be transformed, completely uprooted and destroyed. Then the earth will become a heaven. It is essential to awaken the god slumbering in man. (67)

Jyoti, daughter of an over idealistic democratic couple meets Arun Athvale a graduate at a study circle. Jyoti reads his poems and autobiography. After a two months acquaintance, a casual conversation leads her into marrying him. Jyoti tells her parents,

Arun asked me, isn’t the very idea of marrying me dreadful to you? I said, what is dreadful about that? Arun said, you don’t think that I am an absolutely worthless fellow? I said, no! He said in the case let us get married. And I nodded. Her parents wonder at her decision of marriage. She had not fallen in love. She says, I too am surprised. It was as if, someone had asked, shall we have some tea? (11)
The title indicates that the play centers around the wedding. *Kanyadaan* is a play in two acts, five scenes and it has a limited characters. The unusual marriage brings a complex problem, problems at self-centered and foreseen. Jyoti’s father Nath Devalikar who insists on democracy at home, has promised to marry Aruna Athavale, a Dalit youth. Both Seva and Jayaprakash are shocked after they met Arun and got surprised by his language and behavior is very bad. But Jyoti’s decision to marry Arun leads to a crisis which worsens her after the wedding. Day by day, Arun promenades to be a violent husband. Jyoti is forced to come to a conclusion with her fate as Arun’s wife, and it is unacceptable to change the people and improve the club.

Tendulkar has focused on a problem that there is no unity between the diverse segments of the club. In this play, Tendulkar discussed about the problem of inter caste marital relationship in the patriarchal society and also about the class differences and the caste conflict in the modern India. The last three decades Dalit literature has become popular and it creates awareness among the people about the discrimination of Dalit people. As Arundhati Banerjee observes,

In all his early plays Tendulkar is concerned with the middle class individual set against the backdrop of a hostile society. Another distinctive feature of these plays is the absence of an easy solution. Tendulkar presents modern man in all complexities. He portrays it from different angles, without trying to moralize and philosophize in any way. Most of these works are endowed with his characteristic style of dialogue-joke, half finished, yet signifying more than what it says. (7)
Due to class differences and casteism the notable personalities like Karn, Sambuk, Aklawaya and Dr. Ambedkar had fought against the evils of the society. Though the time changes have occurred in the society, religion, culture and literature in our country but the complete revolution has not taken place yet. Our country has not produced the great revolutionists like Karl Marx or Martin Luther. But no doubt Buddha, Phule, Gandhiji, Ambedkar had made a notable contribution in constructing a new society. Still in India the originator of class and caste differences like “Manu” of “Manusmriti” is alive in the contemporary country. The suppressed and down-trodden group remains “Untouchable” and excluded from the main steam of the society. Their plight continues and so they have taken up the weapon as pen to express their agony, their culture and about their society.

In our Indian literature the saints and writers like Kabir, Tukaram, Dadu, Malukm Sahjobai, Nanak, Narsinh Mehta tries to express the “Voice” of such suppressed and down-trodden society. Dalit Literature is originated in the form of revolt against the injustice to the down-trodden people. The suppressed man is the centre in dalit Literature. Almost the writers of dalit literature tries to establish the new values of life and reject the old traditions. They prefer to live in a new society and try to abolish the caste differences. They implemented new ideologies, demand a dignified identity for Dalit and advocate liberty, fraternity and equality. Finally, they declare Dalit is not untouchable, but a dignified human being. So the writer of Dalit literature is a representative to expose the truth of Dalit society.
The writers of Dalit literature, expose through various forms of literature like novels, drama, poetry and the writer also gives voice to the agony of the down-trodden. In this scenario, Vijay Tendulkar is not a Dalit writer, but he is always concerned with predicament of human beings. Tendulkar expresses in his *Musings on Indian Writing in English*,

As an individual or rather as a social being – I feel deeply involved in the existing state of my society (because I’m affected by it though not immediately in some cases or not as much as some others are) and in my own way brood over it. As a social being. I am against all exploitation and I passionately feel that all exploitation must end (156 & 157)

Tendulkar writes about the origin of “Kanyadaan” as “All my creative writing beings, not from an idea but from an experience, mine or somebody else which then becomes mine. It was such an experience of another to begin with, that provided the starting point for “Kanyadaan”.

Presenting the hero, Arun Athavale as Brutal man Tendulkar does not want to create anti-Dalit feeling but he wants to analyze the social deformity of the dalit’s. They are suppressed so much by ages that even now the “Savaran” tries to accept them. Their socio-logical approach is disturbed in such a way by the humiliation that, they ever want to remain as “Dalit”, “Untouchable” and never trust so called upper caste people, though chances and opportunities are given. The present reality of India is revealed by Tendulkar in the play through the love story of Jyoti and Arun. Tendulkar also highlights the exploitation of the Dalit in the past and its effect on the
post-Independence Indian delight through the revengeful spirit of Arun. Here, Tendulkar examines the clearest difference between the pre-Independence Indian dalit and post-Independence Indian dalit life.

Tendulkar presents this play quietly under different topics. He does not depict a Dalit character who is exploited or ignored by the society but who wants equality or rights in the social club. Nath Devalikar, a civilized human, who is “Gandhivadi” democrats MLC. He is a preacher of Gandhian philosophy to the public and he does not believe in castes and hold big ideas. Most of the critics believe that Nath is none other than Tendulkar himself.

The annoyance of these people, the frustration and the fundamental confusion made me to form the theme of Canadian. In the opening scene of the play Mr. Nath states to his daughter that his disillusionment regarding independent India, he says: “The visions we had of the future of this nation before independence! And what we are forced to see today! Disgusting it hurts” (2).

Nath supports Gandhian ideals and novels at home. Nath is very much involved with his children intimately. Jyoti and Jayaprakash are brought up with Gandhian principles in their lives. Jyoti meets Arun Athavale a graduate in a study circle and gets attracted by his poems and autobiography. Jyoti expresses Arun’s affair and her wish to get married a Dalit youth, but Nath does not feel surprise. He welcomes the liberal thought of his daughter.

Jyoti’s mother Seva completely opposes the idea of getting married into a Dalit boy. Like her husband, she is also a socialist democrat and a realistic practical woman. She does not like to implement all the Gandhian philosophy in her home.
When Jyoti expresses her desire about Arun Athavale, her father does not feel surprised, but her female parent is shocked and stubbornly resists Jyoti’s decision to get tied to a Dalit boy. Seva is anxious about her daughter, but her father encourages and applauds her choice of selection. Arun is a scavenger by birth and Jyoti will live up to the ideals of her father and mother in rooting out untouchability and bringing out God in man.

Seva thinks that Jyoti has taken the decision in hurry. Nath is supporting Jyoti in her reforming idea, but Seva tries to persuade Jyoti. She says:

My anxiety is not over his being a dalit. You know very well that Nath and I have been fighting untouchability tooth and nail, God knows since when. So that’s not the issue. But your life has been patterned in a certain manner. You have been brought up in a specific culture. To erase or to change all this overnight is just not possible. He is different in every way.

You may not be able to handle it. (13)

The major problem between “The Savarna” and “Shudra” is shown. Saint Mira, Saint Kabir, Narsinh Mehta and finally Gandhiji had tried their best grade to bump off the caste barriers, but it remains an old long time problem. In this independent India the Dalit takes higher education, but the psychology has not been changed. It is presented through the characters of Arun Athavale and Jyoti. Nath supports his daughter by saying “charity begins at home” and encourages her to get married to a Dalit boy. Jyoti and her father dreams about an utopian society by providing “space” to one Dalit.
Jyoti immediately brings Arun Athavale to her house to meet her parents. As soon as he enters Arun says:

Sit with me, please. I feel uncomfortable in big houses…. As for me, I feel safe on the streets. The bigger the crowds, the safer I feel. My heart shudders when the walls of cement and concrete surround me. I feel I must get up, run, get lost in the crowd. (16)

His talks reveals the age long down-trodden life of the dalit’s and also the tart reality and the kind of life they had been leading far decades.

Our grandfathers used to roam, barefoot miles and miles, in the heat, in the rain, day and night… till the rags on their built fell apart used to wander ‘shouting’ Jhohaar, Mayi – baap! Sir, Madam, Sweeper! Generation after generation their stomach used to the stale, stinking bread they have begged! Our tongues always tasting the flesh of dead animals, and with relish! Surely we can’t find in your unwrinkled Tinopal world. Can you eat stinking bread without vomiting? Can you beg, quaking at every door, for a little grass for our buffaloes? Our life is hell. At times, a fire blazes in me so that I want to set fire to the whole world, strangle throats, rape and kill. Drink up the blood of breasts, your high class society. It’s a jolly game, caught a Brahmin dame. (17)
Tendulkar portrays “Kanyadaan” as an anti-Dalit play. Actually, they sum up their unhappy condition and the reason for his anger and stubbornness. Merely in the representation of the psyche of Dalit’s mind the negative delineation (definition) of Arun’s character is necessary. Tendulkar does not want to depict the exploitation of untouchable of pre Independent India, but, even in post- Independence India the plight of Dalit’s was abused, Physical torture and dependence. Though ample opportunities are given to Dalit’s such as instruction, occupation, economic independence, acceptance in the society, representation in politics and religion but for thousands of years they have been oppressed inhumanly. So their psychology is not at all ready to go for the “co-existence” with the Savaran.

The mother enters into the house wants to know about Arun Athavle’s future plan. Immediately Arun is roused and replies with vengeance that he and his wife will bribe the police and runs the profitable business of brewing and selling illicit liquor. His kids will wash glasses and plates; fetch pan and cigarettes and bring good income in the mouths. Jyoti tries to save the situation but he shouts at her. Arun abruptly says: “You don’t know a shit, shut up”. (18)

Jyoti compromises her parents, through Arun is a Dalit boy, he is doing B.A., and also working in “Sramik Samachar”. She sees him in the socialist study group. His parents are surviving in a village called Chiroli. His family consists of seven children and Arun is the second child of his parents, since his father does not make enough money, he has to turn and send money every month. She is intimate with him for the final two months. Jyoti is impressed by his verse forms and his poetic idea. Though he is a dalit boy, Goddess Saraswati has gifted and endowed him with poetic
genius. Arun’s poetic mind inspires him to write his autobiography and his genius mind attracts her very much. As Jyoti says: “His poems and his autobiography have inspired me with complete faith on him” (10).

By seeing Arun’s poetic genius itself, Jyoti decides herself that he is capable and absolutely good in all mannerisms and character. So, when Arun asked Jyoti to get married, just without any hesitation, she nodded her head. The idealized upbringing and being the daughter of socialist she believes the idea that getting married to a Dalit is a crusader. But both the mother and brother Jayaprakash opposes the very idea of her.

In Act I, Scene II the entry of Arun exposes the life style of Dalit and the psychology of the Dalit boy. Constantly each and every dialogue of Arun presents the vast gap between the “Savaran and Sudhra” along with that he compares his life and Jyoti’s life manner and style. Jyoti invites him to her house. After entering into the house he feels uncomfortable in that big house of the high middle class. Thus the title of the play suggests a daughter’s sacrifice, which Nath performs in the name of the “norms of civilized society” (527). The society as well as Nath has created hegemony for the weaker section of the society. They have dominated women with its moral codes and Dalit with its social codes. Being a Dalit he lives in the corner of the village. In a fit of anger Arun says:

If you see my father’s hut you’ll understand. Ten of us, big and small, lived in that eight feet in by ten feet. The heat of our bodies warm us in winter no clothes on our back, no food in our stomach, but we felt safe. Here these damn houses of the city
people, they’re like the bellies of sharks and crocodiles each
one alone in them! (16)

Factually Arun gives the detail explanation of the life and style of Dalit’s. He compares them with sharks and crocodiles. The house is very small but big enough to provide warmth and close affection to ten people in comparison with the isolated life of the people who live in the bungalows. He feels suffocated to live in the four walls of cements which provide him warmth. With reference to ‘Bhagawad Gita’ one may find the divisions of caste according to quality and work!

The stress here is Guna-“aptitude” and karma “function” and not Jati-birth. Dr. Radhakrishnan also expresses an opinion that the fourfold order was designed for human evolution. There is no caste system, which has changed its own character in the progress of history. India has a morbid fascination with castes and sub castes which is opposed to the unity taught by the “Gita”. This caste system is an atomistic conception of the society. The social content in the Hindu society took the form of caste system. This caste system is not only a division of laborers, in which the divisions of laborers are graded one above the other “Manusmriti” is the originator of the caste system. The travellers from China, Fahiyan has mentioned that chandal has to live away from village and they have to declare their entry before coming into the village. It was “Gupta Age”. So in India 600 B.C. the untouchability was already prevalent. The Dalit started the plightful journey of life. Arun describes the miserable life of the Dalit. He says “You thought of marring me. Our life is not the socialists’ service camp. It is hell and I mean Hell. A hell named life”. (18)
The speech of the protagonist resembles with the famous poem of Heera Dom, written in Bhojpuri language, which is titled as “Achut Ki Shikayat” and published in 1914 in the magazine “Swaraswati”. This poem is regarded as the first dalit poem written by a dalit poet. The poet presents the miserable condition of Dalit along with religious government and as well as the creation of god in the whole poem.

Dalit’s are pained by abuse, and rude behavior of Savarans, even God does not grant happiness to them. The Savarans considering them as dumb “Scavenger” people disgusted them. The poet says with anguish, we drink water with the help of our palm. They do not allow us to be near and beat us with their shoes and we bow down and return their shoes with gratitude.

The protagonist wants to bring some revolution for this untouchability. Arun wants to set fire of revolt in which all the old customs, discriminations, deformities regarding caste and class will be removed. Being he is young and aggressive, he wants to kill upper class people. Still now this untouchability prevails in the society though law and order are strong. The valuable lines of Arundhati Roy come to the mind,

Sometimes, quite often, the same people who are capable of a radical questioning of, say, economic neo-liberalism or the role of the state, are deeply conservative socially-about women, marriage, sexuality, one so-called ‘family values’- sometimes they’re so doctrinaire that you don’t know where the establishment stops and the resistance begins. For example, how many Gandhian/Maoist/Maxist Brahmins, or upper caste Hindus would be happy if their children married Dalits
or Muslims, are declared them to be gay? Quite often, the people whose side you’re on, politically, have absolutely no place for a person like you in their social, cultural or religious imagination. That’s a knotty problem…. Politically radical people can come at you with the most breathtakingly conservative social views and make nonsense of the way in which you have ordered your world and your way of thinking about it… and you have to find a way of accommodating these contradictions within your worldview. (186)

It is very difficult to give voice to a live community of “Dalit” in this deaf and dumb society. Voice is given through poems from saint Raidas to Heera dome and the same severe pain is presented by Tendulkar in the play *Kanyadaan* through the character Arun.

The fire of revolt burns within him but limitations are given. He says just like corpse he is living physically. All his sensitivity is dead by seeing the injustice in the society but he is existing. “Hatred” or “Disgust” is inborn quality in dalit as they face the injustice in the society, so Arun is no exception. Arun realizes that he is giving great pain to Jyoti by his outburst and then he takes her to apologize for the rise out of his feeling of injustice, frustration, an inner desire for retaliation and his complete weakness. At once, it pleases Jyoti and she smiles. Exhilaratingly, Arun chants the childish rhymes. “Hasli re hasli, ek bamanee fasli”. (18)

The word “Bamaneen” for a Brahmin woman is considered as vulgar and insulting among Brahmins whereas, it is usual for non-Brahmins to use the word “Shudra” or “Mharda” which is seen as castes by the Dalit until recently freely used
by non-Dalit’s. The first meeting of Jyoti’s mother and brother with Arun do not give a good attitude. Right from the beginning, Jyoti’s mother is against to this marriage. Jyoti’s mother Seva is shocked when Arun gives rough answer for the caste prejudice. Arun has a strong hidden hatred for the people of the upper class. As Swathy Margaret writes in her book “Cultural Gandhism”,

The untouchables are represented as drunkards and as prone to self-destruction because of their habits, customs and festivals. They are portrayed as a dehumanized bunch of people and termed dirty, uncivilized and barbaric because they do not follow Hindu culture. The notion that they are themselves responsible for their degraded existence that it is their habit of drinking alcohol, eating meat, animal sacrifice and dancing that takes them beyond redemption is one that recurs repeatedly. (91)

Seva gives awareness about the hardships and expenditure of city life as Arun has completed only B.A., and not earning much, so it would be difficult for him to provide luxuries life to Jyoti who is totally brought up in comfortable atmosphere. Arun is shocked that Seva is mocking at his low status by reminding the expenditures of city life. In a hatred mood he gives the Solution by saying:

No problem we shall be brewing illicit liquor. It is a first class profession for two person. The man bribes the police and the wife serves customers. People call her aunty. The more striking the aunty’s looks, the brisker the trade”. (21)
Jyoti’s mother is shocked by Arun’s answer. Jyoti tries to make the atmosphere cool but Arun is already disturbed and scolds her “You don’t know a shit shut up”. As being a socialist, Mr. Nath is overjoyed by finding Arun at home. Jyoti’s father is glad that his family has become Indian in the real sense as they have developed the caste barrier. After Arun’s departure Seva and Jayaprakash reject him as Jyoti’s suitor. Arun is uncultured uncivilized and his misbehaviour towards Jyoti shocks them. Seva says - “But I will never accept him as my Jyoti’s husband. Never”. (27)

Mr. Nath, being Gandhian supports Jyoti’s decision, but Seva stubbornly objects their opinion and says:

You ran your democracy. To me Jyoti’s decision seems to be absolutely senseless, and as her mother, I cannot accept it...

This is a home, not your, party where you can impose your discipline. (30)

Jyoti is totally confused and she cannot give frank opinion so she says:

At time I feel I can trust him, but the very next instant I am left miles behind him. I ask myself – this thing that I want to do, is it the right thing...? He is complex. (29)

Mr. Nath tries to compromise the whole family by saying that he has been brought up in the midst of poverty and hatred. His psychological make-up is altogether different so try to understand him. He says in favour, “He may not be a gentleman, but neither is he a scoundrel... He is like unrefined gold, he needs to be melted and moulded”. (31)
Through the convince of her father Jyoti takes a radical tone and gets married to a Dalit youth, Arun. By letting out this marriage Tendulkar does not want to show the reformation of independent India but the caper is a work of the psyche of delight. Utterly reformation is not possible as they are not ready to leave their deeply rooted lifestyle. The attempt made by the upper class to uplift them is seen by them as a treachery and merely hypocrisy. So they never believed the upliftment genuine. Really it is very difficult to imagine their day today lives without drinks, abuse and beating and quarrels. Tendulkar does not want to show, but he presents the totally unexpected situation that a Dalit youth has become a member of Brahmin family and lived happily. But Tendulkar always tries to present the defeat of Gandhian ideals in the midst of Dalit world.

Jyoti’s mother asks him the intellect for the dispute; he offends them by pronouncing that he has beaten Jyoti. He never feels shy for his behavior by expressing that beating and abusing are knitted in the webs of their lives. Jyoti is not used for such things, but things appear her unnatural and becomes a parcel of their lives. He says:

When have I claimed that I am civilized and cultured like your people, from childhood I have seen my father come home drunk every day, and beat my mother half dead, see her cry her heart out. Even now I hear the echoes of her broken sobs. No one was there to wipe the tears. (44)

The married life of Jyoti and Arun shows the dark side of life. Though a good chance is given to a dalit boy to rise up the life style to come up in the society but
Arun is incapable to utilize the opportunity. Even educated Arun cannot escape from his dalit mentality and life style. Whenever he feels love, his wife Jyoti becomes a mere thing for him and if he is angry, he shows his anger by beating. After suffering a lot, Jyoti returns home and declares that she has left Arun forever. She says:

He…he will not enter this house. Because …I have left him…
I am not going back to him again… never. It’s …all…over… I must tell you, Bhai. I must. I am Fed up with him, Fed up! Fed up! (39)

By hearing all these words of Jyoti, Seva feels relieved as Jyoti is released from the animal like Arun. But suddenly Arun, arrives to take Jyoti back home. He never changes. “No, I am not fit to have dinner with people like you”. (42)

Mr.Nath considers his behavior as his upbringing key factor. In his family he has seen only abuses, beating and quarrels. According to Arun, marital life means love plus beating. Arun’s mother never complained to anybody, she has tolerated such a cruel life. So Jyoti’s behavior to leave him sounds unfair to him. He says:

What am I but the son of scavengers. We don’t know the non-violent ways of Brahmins like you. We drink and beat our wives… We make love to them… but the beating is what gets publicized. (44)

Arun feels that he does not want to change himself because he does not want to lose his identity of Dalit. He believes that actually the upper class people only
make a show of love for their wives but they never give “Space” to them. Just it is a matter of being ‘Male’ which is superior and ‘Wife’ is merely a ‘Second sex’. A male wants to dominate whether he relates to lower class or upper class. He says

I am what I am… and shall remain exactly that. And your Jyoti knew what I was even before she married me. In spite of that she married me, she did it out of her own free will. If she thought so your Jyoti is a stupid fool. (44)

For Arun beating wife does not mean that he hates her. He love Jyoti too much. So he says, “I am barbarian a barbarian by birth when have I claimed any white collar culture”. (44)

Jyoti unable to tolerate his words decides to go with him despite the unwillingness of her mother and brother. In Act II, scene II after a few months it is presented that Jyoti is under pregnancy of six months and her mother admits her at nursing home due to internal bleeding. Seva comes to know that Arun kicks at Jyoti’s abdomen and beats severely at night. Hearing this horrible row Mr. Nath is totally broken and finds it incredible as how a man can beat a pregnant wife. Mr.Nath recently read the autobiographical novel of Arun, which is sentimental as well as poetical. After reading it, Mr.Nath is overjoyed and praised it like anything but now the disclosure of Jyoti’s condition moves him completely and he laments-

Such heinous behavior by someone who wrote this beautiful autobiography? How can he? Here in these pages he describes the humiliations he has undergone with extraordinary
sensitivity… and the same man kicks his pregnant wife on her belly? How? How dare he do it to her? (47)

Jyoti’s mother Seva, has always against to this marriage. So, she ironically comments that their Dalit son-in-law, who writes lovely sentimental poems and wonderful autobiography, is an idler, who runs his life on the money of Jyoti but beats his wife. Seva sarcastically points out the reality which Tendulkar also wants to convey in order to justify Arun’s behavior towards his wife, Jyoti. Seva says:

Doesn’t his wife belong to the high caste? In this way he is returning all the kicks aimed at generations of his ancestors by men of high caste. It appears that this is the monumental mission he has set out to fulfill. (48)

Tendulkar never expressed Arun with negative shades, but only he explores the soul of a Dalit youth. Always Arun loves Jyoti very much, but the Dalit part of his mind lives within himself and unleashes torment on his high-caste wife. In the inner mind his past returns to haunt him every day, night and he bends into an unpredictable savage beast, which has strong hatred and sadistic desire to punish his wife for the suffering of his ancestors who have survived through the ages. Though Jyoti is a wife, but he has a crude satisfaction that he has “Caught a Brahmin dame”. (18) He punished, not only his wife but he derives sadistic pleasure in abusing her parents too. Arun blames Seva as a procuress, who is the leader of Sevadal. He again accuses Seva’s chastity that Jyoti’s real father is not Mr. Nath but “Guruji”, the guide, and philosopher of Seva. By accusing, Arun tries to degrade the parents of Jyoti and he takes revenge upon the upper caste.
Arun becomes a celebrated dalit writer after the publication of an autobiographical novel. The association is known as “The progressive Dalit Literature Circle”, who has made of discussion on his autobiography. Along with Arun other members like Hammer Rao Kamle essayist of Dalit literature, Vamanseth Nevrgaonkar, critic of Dalit literature, arrives to invite Mr.Nath to preside over the function of the discussion on his autobiography. Mr.Nath is a socialist, an MLA and also the father-in-law is the chief guest for this programme. Mr.Nath does not want to miss the situation so he took part in the discussion to appreciate the book.

Arun, the writer only a hypocrite like a savage beast is antagonist of the upper caste. If Mr.Nath if he was not present in the function, people would conclude that both father-in-law and son-in-law are not good in terms. His rejection may be due to the fact that he does not want to mix with lower class people. So, finally he convinced himself by reminding the gap between the upper caste and lower caste.

Arun says:

Your connections are with the elite. Our friends here belong to a low caste, brought up on the flesh of dead animals. Our ancestors trudged around with a load of shit on their heads. It is my great good fortune which made a fair and lovely bird from a well to do, high class background fall to my lot. My revered mother-in-law has always been angry with me. She would have liked a fair, rich, highly educated son-in-law with his but glued to a high office chair. But fate wrote my name instead. A poet and a writer! And Dalit at that!. (56)
Mr. Nath unwillingly, for the sake of his daughter goes to the function, so that
Arun cannot torment Jyoti no more. In the midst of the public, he praises the book,
but Jyoti sentenced her father as she knows that the speech of Mr. Nath was fake.
Inwardly he hates his son-in-law even Jyoti is disenchanted in her search of
reformation. Due to the idealism taught by her father, she suffers a lot. According to
Arun, she is a daughter of “Savarna” who can never be his wife. When the play ends
she takes up another mission to be the wife of a Dalit and she leaves her parents by
saying that now she is Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. She wants to live with the
Dalit boy like insect only then the distance between the “Savarna” and “Shudra” can
be crossed.

Arun’s mind recalls the grumpy plight of his ancestors whose tiring walk in
the realm of shit only and they passed away. Their voice never remained unheard
only due to the high caste people who exploited them. This reality strongly sustained
in Arun’s mind and he carries wherever he goes. The fact is that he belongs to “Low
caste” and so “Rejection” is his destiny. According Arun’s point of view Mr. Nath is a
hypocrite in the society and he stands for liberal socialist ideas that has done many
social works for the downtrodden, but actually he hates them and his dalit son-in-law.
Arun ridicules Nath by saying:

These people believed you were a well-wisher of the Dalit
community. That you championed the cause of “a well in every
village for the Dalit” you launched a satyagrah for that state.
You deliver socialist addresses at the state assembly. With the
trumpet call of idealism you got your daughter married to a
Dalit. (56)

Nath really starts hating him. Now the innate character of Nath, two-facedness comes out when he is “Offended” by the Dalit contemptuous mockery of him. Arun’s departure he says:

His visit has polluted this drawing room, this house and this
day… It stinks Seva you know you see I feel like taking a bath
like cleaning myself! clean everything! This furniture, this
floor all this … he has made them filthy, dirty, polluted! (57)

The play *Kanyadaan* depicts the issues of Dalit’s psyche in the post-independent India. Dalit’s are not at all ready to mingle with the mainstream of the society. They do not want to lose their identity. The intolerable happenings of the past by “Savarna” do not allow them to mingle with the present world. The high class appears merely hypocrisy to them. Tendulkar suggests that if this is the fact how can be the gap between the “Savarna” and “Shudra” is bridged? Even any idealistic person likes to mingle them; the situation demands new means to overcome the gap between the upper class and lower class.

To represent this reality Tendulkar depicts the character of Arun with negative shades. Finally the play arises with anti-Dalit feelings. Meghna Pethe told Tendulkar that Dalit writers were angry about his misrepresentation of Dalit’s.

I comment in a very different way that “if the society is ready to mingle with all of them without any revengeful attitude, there will be
definitely a Panacea”. So, the play “Kanyadaan” boldly fired the social deformity of class, caste system in the Indian Society. (17)

The play analyses, serious issues of caste division, idealism and co-existence in society. As being a socialist, Gandhian, democrat MLA., who has practiced Gandhian principles, has fed his two children on his idealism. Actually the play is not about the glorification of Gandhian idealism, but Tendulkar depicts the disenchantment regarding Gandhian principles.

He wishes to create a Utopian world on the base of Gandhian idealism, but his idealism crumples at the end of the play. At last, he realizes and accepts that the social change in Indian society is impossible. To his satisfaction he sacrifices his daughter’s life.

Tendulkar does not want to analyze the issues of dalit’s psyche but expresses the uselessness of Gandhian principles in Indian society. Karl Marx in his theory of “Dialectical Materialism” discusses about the abolishment of lower class and upper class. Gandhiji, a great man through his non-violence and truth, tried to remove “untouchability” from Indian society. But even in post-independent era still the people are not ready to accept the Gandhian principles in establishing a new social structure. The people representing upper class and as well as the lower class have their own problems and views which does not allow them to mingle with the new social structure created by the idealists.

The play “Kanyadaan” presents the post-independence position of India. Nath practices the principles in his personal life, but does not merely teach to his children. He never dominates the lives of his children, but he practices democracy at home.
Without knowing and unaware about its destruction effect, he taught his children
about the idealism. When Jyoti talks about her affair, he says:

Tell me something say it them. Who stops you? We have a
democracy in this house and we are proud of it. Democracy
outside and dictatorship in the home, we don’t know these two
timing tricks. I am all ears. Go ahead!. (4)

Jyoti’s father heartily welcomes her idea of getting married to a Dalit. He
feels very proud that his daughter follows the Gandhian principles and has taken
severe steps to reform the society. Nath congratulates his daughter for the idea and
also he favours her. Father’s lofty ideas have inculcated a new spirit in her. He
supports his daughter’s idea but he rejects his wife’s opinion. Being an optimist, he
hopes that Jyoti’s decision will surely enlighten the dark side of the life of a dalit. He
says, “If they decide to do so, lifestyles can certainly be changed. And the ideal of
stability can be different for every man…. ..(12)

At the first meeting with Arun, he makes the atmosphere very light and
comfortable by offering tea though he is against for drinking. He says:

Arun, let us celebrate over a cup of tea. Well, nowadays our
socialists don’t mind even liquor. But in this matter I continue
to be somewhat old fashioned. A little worm called Gandhi ate
into my brain in youth didn’t he, therefore certain things
slipped out of my life forever. Liquor is one, fancy clothes is
another. (22)
Nath says that his family has become Indian in the real sense, but his sad destiny, he gets a son-in-law who is a drunk and talk of brewing illicit liquor. Nath is a Brahmin, does not feel hatred for them. He says to Seva, until today, ‘Break the caste system’ was a simple slogan for us I’ve attended many inter-caste marriages and given speeches. But today we broke the caste barrier in the real sense. Arun appears to him as the proper suitor for his daughter.

Jyoti’s marriage with Dalit invites a strong opposes and fiery argument in the family due to the ground of culture and life style. Arun was grown up but Nath defends Arun by saying, “Manners and culture, are they your ancestral property? He is a good boy… He is well behaved…can anyone be that without culture?”

Nath’s ideology is a puzzle to Seva. She fails to understand her husband’s ideology. He firmly believes in Gandhiji’s ideology that charity begins at home, then only the barrier between the lower and upper class will be erased. He convinces his wife with these words:

Look Seva, society cannot be transformed through words alone we have to act as catalysts in this transformation. The old social reformers did not stop with making speeches and writing articles on widow remarriage. Many of them do it…? That was also an experiment, a difficult experiment, but they dared to risk it. (28)

As the proverb “Charity begins at home”, he becomes the practitioner of his preaching. Nath is very sure that his bold step of his daughter marrying a Dalit would not merely cross the barrier, but it would become an apt example of the upper caste
society. He hopes that Jyoti’s journey of reformation will definitely enlighten others and in future the nation will get independence from the clutches of casteism.

The married life of Jyoti and Arun remains futile. After their marriage, Nath idealism breaks into pieces. Jyoti soon realizes the actual identity of Arun, as a Dalit, his past returns to haunt him every night and he unleashes torment on his high caste wife. At one moment he is a beast, sometimes like a devil, as a poet and next the lover who beats wife after drinking, so these are part of his character. Jyoti leaves Arun and she comes to her father for shelter. Still Nath believes that it will take time for her to get adjusted herself in the world of Dalit. According to Jyoti’s father, Arun is still good. He says,

Seva let not this wonderful experiment fail! This dream which is struggling to turn real, let it don't crumble into dust before our eyes! We will have to do something. We must save this marriage. Not necessarily for our Jyoti’s sake… This is not just a question of our daughter’s life, Seva this has… A far wider significance… This experiment is a very precious experiment.

(41)

Nath has very strong faith in the process of reformation. He wants his daughter should be an example for this society in the abolishment of casteism. He is overjoyed, when Arun comes back take to Jyoti home. His experiment meets success, when Jyoti decides to go home. He says, “Jyoti, I feel so proud of you, the training I gave you has not been in vain”. (45)
Nath whole heartedly praises Arun’s autobiography, after reading it. He feels happy that his daughter has selected a man who admires the heart of everyone through his writing. But he is shocked to hear that Jyoti who is pregnant is admitted in the hospital due to the kicking of Arun. His ideology and experiment is shattered into pieces. The sacrifice of his daughter’s life becomes worthless. He understands that the modern world cannot be ruled by Gandhiji’s ideology. Arun abides the same and proves that the barricade between the lower caste and upper caste cannot be crossed. He gets completely disappointed regarding his ideology.

Arun invites Mr. Nath for the extended conversation on his autobiography unionized by the progressive Dalit literature circle. But he is not willing to attend the function and praise such a hypocrite. Arun appears to him as a disgusting, who writes with sensitivity on the degradation of Dalit, and kicks the pregnant wife. By reminding the program as a social criticism, Arun excites him to accept the invitation. Mr. Nath firmly says “No” to Arun. He is totally disturbed. His effort proves frivolous. Whatever the Gandhian principle and ideology is there to remove untouchability, but Dalit themselves are not ready to mix with the upper caste. The inconsolable past happenings has gone deep into the soul of the Dalit. They thought the members of the upper caste are just only a tool for them to take revenge. He agrees his son’s words. “In other words, yesterday’s victim is today’s victimizer. It he has been, shot at yesterday, he shoots today…”! (51)

Nath decides not to give anymore speeches about Arun. But Seva, his wife reminds him that his decision may be true, but his rejection will bring more sufferings to Jyoti. Surely Arun will take more revenge on pregnant Jyoti. She says,
If you don’t go to the meeting, God knows what he…in his madness…will do to Jyoti… Therefore, you will have to go, you will have to praise the book, because that is the only option left to us. (58)

Nath taught the lofty ideals of Gandhiji, humanity and socialism is defeated. He finds himself helpless in front of the delicate position of his daughter, but he praises his son-in-law’s autobiography in the function. He hopes that,

My blatant lying today will make Jyoti’s life a little more tolerable. I did it for the sake of my brave and innocent daughter. What is this compared to her having ruined her whole life for my sake? (62)

In the public function, Mr. Nath gives a gleaming speech and shower acclamation on the book. But in his socialism service, he is completely defeated. He realizes that his belief in human innocence is faulty. He conserve his progressive image in the midst of the public to assure that it excuse his daughter from the torment of his son-in-law. He completely dissects by the distasteful awareness of his utter helplessness in this matter, which compels him to carry this feigning task so repulsive to him. He says,

I had this maniacal urge to uproot casteism and caste distinctions from our society. As a result, I pushed my own daughter into a sea of misery… (61)

Being a Gandhian he never speaks untruth but he praises which is not truth in the public function. Only for the sake of his daughter he compares the writers like Byron and Kusumargraj to praise the autobiographical book of Arun. He thinks
“what is her fault? Why does she suffer?” (60). The only fault she has perpetrated is that she had accompanied her father's words for gospel truth. She was totally led by her father's humanism and liberalism. He feels that if he praises Arun’s autobiography, her daughter will be happy. But in the last scene of the play the transpose of words between the father and daughter is amazing. All around her life she has noticed her father’s frank and lawful words, but today he praises the book against his will due to Arun. She feels that he also became a hypocrite. She says,

Your speech today was not only lousy, it was a hireling’s speech. You attended the meeting against your wishes you praised that book against your wishes. (66)

Nath’s Gandhian principle and experiment to amend the society has turned fruitless. His own daughter is accusing him for preaching the principle of humanity. Gandhiji’s principle may shine resplendent in the pages of history but in reality its practice is just untruth. The Modern India has completely forgotten Gandhiji, then how about Gandhian principles. But ‘Bapuji’ lives in the names of pictures, statues, roads, image on all rupees, etc. People never follow his principle of “Non-violence” or “Truth”. Jyoti harshly disapproved the teaching of her father and she says,

Come and watch Arun at night when he staggers home roaring drunk, if you have the guts. There is a savage beasts in his eyes, his lips, his face… In every single limb. And bestiality is something which cannot be separated from him. In the beginning like an idiot, I used to search for that Arun who is above and beyond this beastliness. I used to call out to him,
take him in my arms. Hard experience taught me I would always fail. Arun is both the beast and also the poet. Both are bound together one within the other, they are one. (68)

Jyoti hates the philanthropic act of her father who still thinks her to be the member of the Brahmin’s family. She says, “I belong to someone who makes you clean and pure soul impure by his touch” (68). Tendulkar’s criticism of Gandhi’s ideology is far different. As Swathy Margaret states,

The Gandhian resolution believes that at its core, the Dalit community is divided into passive, submissive women and violent, unreasonable, aggressive men. (21)

She makes her father to understand that all his preaching has gone vain. Nath always reminds her that by birth no man is evil; just he has by birth some tendency towards evil. Through her experience, she has learnt that idealism is utterly false. She says,

Putting man’s beastliness to sleep and awakening the godhead within is an absurd notion. You made me waste twenty years of my life before I could discover this”. (67)

Though Nath tries to persuade her but she remains them. One must not turn back in the battlefield. She recalls the poem of her father which said,

I march with utter faith in the goal!

I grow with rising hopes

Cowards stay ashore, every wave opens a path for me. (69)
Regarding the present status of women Catherine Thankamma says that though the time has changed but the level of half of the population is still worth considering. She comments:

In a joint family the senior-most is the head, the Patriarch, while in the nuclear families of today it is the father. Of course with the advent of feminism and a more ‘liberated’ mindset an open advocacy of the system is no longer considered fashionable particularly among the intellectual elite….very often one finds evidence that shows that what was once an active and overt avowal has only gone underground to surface in more insidious and frightening forms. (80)

Jyoti cannot drop out Arun from her life. She says that she will follow. “March on, oh soldier! And continue to lose our lives as guinea pigs in the experiment”. Her father always taught her only the good lessons about the society, belief and trust in human being. So, this resulted his daughter to select a dalit to pry out untouchability but her experiences has taught a different reality. Only for the sake of her father, she decides to live as a dalit. Then the distance will be crossed and her father’s tryout will get successful. She asserts,

I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. I don’t say Harijan. I despite the term. I am an untouchable, a scavenger. I am one of them. Don’t touch me. Fly from my shadow, otherwise my fire will scorch your comfortable values. (70)

Tendulkar indicates,
Theatre is a visual medium as much as it is a medium of words. This visual aspect needs to be used properly not only to create a relief in the barrage of continuously emoted words, but also to provide powerful visual insights into the complex content of the play. A play staged in a theatre is not a radio-play to be heard with closed eyes and enjoyed. The visual elements in a stage play, if not used properly can work against the magic of words and harm the play. (2)

Similarly, through multi-faceted content, Vijay Tendulkar finalizes the point that one man is different from other man in reality. Nath’s daughter finds her own identity in the dusty slum, where her husband returns home drunk and beats her one side and cares her next side. Though she hates sometimes but still she loves Arun as a man, not as a poet.

Tendulkar highlights the psychological and sociological implications of caste and gender inequalities in this play. The problem of inter-caste marriage and power-politics of caste pyramid is not strange to Tendulkar alone. Girish Karnad also intertwined these aspects in his plays. In fact, involvement of these dramatists with the issues of caste grading immediately establishes the problems that Indian society was facing. Seva’s view on the issue of cultural differences in an inter-caste marriage remind the reader same as like Lalita’s view on the issue in Girish Karnad’s Tale-Danda. Madhuvara, her husband, wants to marry off their daughter to Sheelavanta, the son of tanner, in the name of his newly adopted religious and spiritual beliefs. But Lalita, as a mother, understands her daughter and avers: “Till the other day our
daughter ran around barefoot. She was told it was unclean to touch any leather except deerskin. How can she start skinning dead buffaloes tomorrow? Or tan leather?"(48). Seva’s anxiety about her daughter also don’t align with her social and political commitments. Cultural conflict is the first point that anyone hostile to an inter-caste marriage would spotlight. Finally, the cracks in her theoretical archetypes and personal life become very understandable.

Nath has lost his principles and idealism in many ways and also he has sacrificed his own daughter just to alter the social-political ideologies. The dramatic technique used by Tendulkar for the whole action of the drama is presented only in the drawing room. The play _Kanyadaan_ is constructed with two acts and five scenes. It is very interesting and naturalistic play, which pioneers the issues of caste divide systems and at the same time the variety of scenes is superbly omitted.

The whole play is set through the drawing room of Devalikar’s typical high-caste urban antique furniture with a picture frame of Mahatma Gandhiji, Acharya Narendra Dev, Yusuf Maherali and Sane Guruji are hanging on the wall. Family jokes are plentiful to suggest liberal views of the Brahmin family like, “The call of nation is far more important than the call of wife” (5).

So, the play is fabricated with a gentle humor of Mr. Nath Devalikar’s happy family. This fascinating play, which is emblazoned with fine humor, but charged with an overtone of violence, deformities, uncertainties and its impact on family life. It is the wonderful art of Tendulkar that violence is not present in the scene but brilliantly reported. Likewise, Arun a drunkard who beats his wife regularly even at the time of pregnancy and treats badly are also not presented but reported.
Finally, the play ends with Mr. Nath’s snuffle. He is chastened regarding his faith in Gandhian principle, humanity and idealism. Though he sacrificed his daughter for his experiment finally he is defeated. In order to indicate this failure, the dramatist avails the sound of huge buildings flinging down. The crashes of the buildings suggest his pessimistic impact on domestic life. Nath completely breaks down. Nath’s soft cry appears as a heartbreaking squall which could make a person cry. Vijay Tendulkar creates catharsis, the feeling of pity and fear through this scene.

Finally the audience sympathizes with Nath’s defeat in his search for an ideal society. Thus, the use and misuse of authority to maintain the status of power, and the violence against women has been repeating theme in Tendulkar’s plays. He never expects such an inconsolable end, where his daughter challenges and blames him. As a father, he always taught goodness to his children, but the world is not ready to acknowledge this Gandhian idealism. Though he practiced this experiment for a long time but the condition arouses the feeling of “fear”. The audience suggests that if they follow the same idealism like Nath, they also have to suffer as the world is not ready to change its view.

This gripping play is decorated with fine dashes of humour, is charged with an undercurrent of violence, uncertainties and anger but it is the art of Tendulkar that violence is not presented on the scene but reported.

Environment may change but the social deformities of society remains in different strata. So, Tendulkar brings typical hamartia at the end. A woman tears
does not have much impact because the audience expects it, but a man’s’ tears can just eradicates the mental peace. The play “Kanyadaan” is complemented as an amazing play.