CHAPTER TWO

LIFE AND WORKS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR
The Birth and development of drama in Greece, Rome, England and India emphasizes upon the fact that it was always been an integral part of culture, highlighting and evaluating moral commitments, religious convictions, philosophical approaches and social and political changes in various countries.¹

Tendulkar’s drama highlights the complexity of human relationships and contains a latent critique of modern Indian society. Tendulkar’s plays like Shakespeare’s plays are neither moral, nor immoral in tone but may rather be seen amoral. Vijay Tendulkar was a leading dramatist of twentieth century. He was playwright, screen and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist, one act play writer, novelist, short story writer and social commentator. After 1950, he has been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality for next five decades in Marathi. Marathi is the principle language of the state of Maharashtra. Marathi language has a continuous literary history since the end of classical period in India.

Tendulkar was born in 1928 and brought up in the heart of Bombay City in Kandewadi, a small lane in Girgaon. A lower middle class community crowded its elements. The men were mostly shopkeepers and clerks. Vijay Tendulkar’s father Dhondopant Tendulkar was head clerk at a British Publishing Company called ‘Longmans’. Tendulkar’s brother Raghunath and sister were many years older than him. In his childhood Tendulkar was a sickly child having persistent cough and asthmatic wheezing. This made his
parents over protective. Though Tendulkar had two younger brothers, he remained the favourite of his parents.

Tendulkar’s father was an enthusiastic writer, director and actor of amateur plays in their mother tongue, Marathi. He would take young Tendulkar to the rehearsals of his plays. They were presenting a kind of magic show for the young child of four. He was wonderstruck when persons change into characters. At that time women’s roles were presented by men and young Tendulkar was greatly amazed to see men actors suddenly changing their voice and movements to become women. As a child Tendulkar never saw any theatre except his father staged. Tendulkar’s brother Raghunath used to act like his father. Raghunath had interest in literature too. Different writers often comes their home to meet Tendulkar’s father. Thus Tendulkar grew up in a kind of literary atmosphere.

On Sunday morning his father would take him to a large bookshop owned by his publisher friend. Young Tendulkar wandered among the shelves and picked up a good collection of children’s books in Marathi. His father bought them all for him and would often tell him stories from them. When Tendulkar grew up Raghunath his brother used to take him to English movies by cutting school. Tendulkar developed interest in watching English films and they had made abiding influence in his career as a playwright. Tendulkar had early primary education from Bombay. Later on his father migrated to Kolhapur, where Tendulkar took his education from 5th to 7th standard. Then his father moved to Pune. Tendulkar has taken his matriculation exam certificate from ‘Nutan Marathi Vidyalaya’ at Ramabag in Pune.
During his school days, Tendulkar cut school and spent time watching English plays and rest of the time at the city library where he read a lot. Later when he became a journalist, he was surprised at the amount of reading he had put in while at school. Tendulkar had two role models who had influenced him while he had in Pune. Both were well known names in Marathi literature. They were Dinkar Balkrishna Mokashi and Vishnu Vinayak Bokil. The former was a radio mechanic but fine writer; the latter was Tendulkar’s Marathi teacher at school whose stories often turned into successful films. Early in his carrier Tendulkar dedicated one book to Bokil master. Bokil master sent him a letter saying that Tendulkar wrote better than he himself did. Tendulkar preserved that letter considering it the greatest honour that he has ever received.

Tendulkar’s brother Raghunath brought the fiery spirit of nationalism into their house. He was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. He got a charka, wore only Khadi and attended congress meetings. He was black listed in college for his activities. Tendulkar’s mother, Susheela told him stories about Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. She was witness of Tilak’s rousing speeches during Ganapati festivals in Bombay. This all atmosphere instilled the spirit of nationalism in the mind of Tendulkar and his formal education came to close in 1942, during, ‘the Quit India movement’ when he answered Gandhiji’s call to boycott school. Tendulkar had written his first story when he was six years old. When he was eleven, he wrote, directed and acted his first play. He acted in two Marathi films as a child artist. He had three volumes of stories on his credit before he ventured into his first play.
Tendulkar’s first job was in a printing press. Then he moved to journalism. He served as sub-editor on the daily ‘Navbharat’. He was also executive editor of magazines ‘Vasudha’ and ‘Deepavali’. Some years he was appointed as sub editor on daily Maratha. Tendulkar spent some years as public relations officer for the Chowgule group of Industries before being appointed assistant editor of the daily ‘Loksatta’ in 1968. His varied professional experience put him in touch with peoples of all classes; his most convincing male characters come from the middle class to which he and his circle belonged. Hence his plays are on this class and often addressed to these peoples. Although he was doing different jobs, during all these years he had been writing, starting with short stories. He himself found that his short stories include more dialogues than narrative; he switched to writing one act plays and finally full length plays. His first play, Grihasti had come out in 1955 and last plays completed in 1992. His plays have given Indian theatre a rich and challenging heritage. Tendulkar has written original scripts for film makers like Shyam Benegal and Govind Nihalani. His plays and film scripts are penetrating studies of violence, power and repression in different forms in that contemporary Indian society. It suites to Tendulkar’s creation as Plato says,

The invention of dramatic art and of the theatre seems a very obvious and natural one. Man has a great disposition to mimicry; when he enters vividly into the situation, sentiments, and passions of others, he voluntarily puts on a resemblance to them in his gestures.\(^2\)
Tendulkar’s *Manus Navache Bet* was staged in 1956. Here, we see Tendulkar broke away from the three-act convention. Tendulkar along with Girish Karnad changed the dramatic mould by demolishing three act structure of the well-made play and giving it a new mould appropriate to the performance tradition. His plays sometimes used the expressionistic technique of dramatic make believe of dreams within the framework of naturalistic play. *Chimaniche Ghar Hote Henache* (1960) was a play, which battled the audience with its farcical element, interspersed with lyrical movements. In *Kavalyachi Shala* (1963) Tendulkar used the farcical element to highlight the tragedy of middle class ambition. In *Madlya Bhinti* and *Ek Hoti Mulgi* are more than the ‘family dramas’.

As the time passes, Tendulkar has become more and more concerned with the intrigues of power and the effects of oppression, especially in plays like *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe* (1968) and *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) Tendulkar broke away from certain traditions of Marathi theatre that had been dominated by family melodramas centered on the middle class. *Sakharam Binder* a study of human violence and terror amounted to a powerful dramatic statement. There are some lighter plays too, like the light-hearted fantasy of *Ashi Pakhrey Yeti*, created by Tendulkar.

After ‘*Ghashiram*’, Tendulkar turned to the naturalistic theatre with two very contemporary themes. *Kamala* (1982) and *Kanyadaan* (1983) are this two plays in this style. *Kamala* is a study of marital status, of the motives behind the popular investigative journalism, as well as study in many layers of exploitation. *Kanyadaan* is a complex play about the cultural and emotional upheavals of a family. It deals
with the violence in the subconscious of Dalit poet who is married to
the daughter of native socialist.

Tendulkar has been active in the new theatre in Maharashtra, through his involvement with groups like Rangayan and Avishkar, and others, remains an activist in the ongoing struggle for democratic rights and civil liberties. Once he said, ‘My creative writing, including plays and films have written mostly deals with or tried to deal with contemporary social reality. As a social being, I am against all exploitation and I passionately feel that all exploitation must end.’ He asserts,

All my creative writing begins, not from an idea but from
an experience, mine or somebody else’s which then
becomes mine. It was such an experience, another’s to
begin with, that provided the starting for Kanyadaan.³

Tendulkar has been a witness to many social movements and
has travelled to remote parts of the country. And yet, as an artist, he
was never tempted to use his information for photographic
representation of social reality. His sensation as a human being goes
deeper than that. His dramas present social reality. But his characters
are imbued with dramatic power. He has created raw theatre language
for his ape characters. Tendulkar chose themes, characters and
situations from the contemporary life except some historical plays.
His material for plays comes from the observation of life.

Tendulkar have interest in violence in society, the human
response to violence, and individual freedom, has manifested itself in
many ways. He has made various studies, worked at the Tata Institute
of social sciences as a visiting professor. He turned around the country
to see prisons. His all observations have found way in literary writings, which bear testimony to his keen perceptiveness, and his compassion for the common man’s daily struggle for survival. According to Plato,

Drama is deeply associated with inner consciousness of human race that it has rightly been regarded as the best means for the exploration of human nature in all its varieties and manifestations.4

This opinion fits to Tendulkar and his dramatic art. Tendulkar also involved in the translations of his contemporary dramatists from other Indian languages. He translated Tughlaq by Girish Karnard and Aadhe Adhure by Mohan Rakesh in 1971. He also translated Tennessee Williams A street car named Desire in Marathi. Most of Tendulkar’s plays have been translated and performed in Hindi and number of other regional languages winning him recognition at the national level.

Tendulkar was a lifelong resident of Bombay city. He is author of thirty full-length plays and twenty-three one-act plays, several of them have become classics of modern Indian Theatre. Among these is Silence! The Court is in session (1967), Sakharam Binder (1972), Kamala (1981), Kanyadan (1983). Ghashiram Kotwal, a musical play, combines Marathi folk performance style and contemporary theatrical techniques, Ghashiram, one of the longest-running plays in the world. It has six thousand performances in India and abroad. Tendulkar’s treasury includes eleven plays for children, four collections of short stories, one novel and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism. He is important translator in Marathi, having translated nine
novels, and two biographies into native language as well as five plays, among which are Mohan Rakesh’s *Aadhe Adhure* (Hindi), Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq* (Kannada) and Tennessee Williams’ *A Street car named Desire* (English). He is also original writer of screen plays for eight plays in Marathi including *Samana* (1975), *Simhasan* (1979) and *Umbartha* (1981). The *Cart* is a ground breaking feature film on women’s activism in India.

Tendulkar has also worked as screen-writer in Hindi, India’s majority language and the preferred medium to the world’s largest film industry. During the 1970’s and 1980’s, he wrote the original script and dialogue for eleven Hindi films among them are *Nishant* (1975), *Manthan* (1977), *Akrosh* (1980), *Ardha Satya* (1983) and *Aghat* (1986). These all paved the pattern for the ‘middle class cinema’ movement. Tendulkar has written and directed discussions on current social issues for Indian television in Hindi too.

Tendulkar’s dramatic output and theatrical activities in Marathi and his work in Hindi cinema have received wide recognition in Maharashtra and India for four decades after 1950. The Maharashtra State government brought him awards in 1956, 1969 and 1973. He also received the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1971; he also bagged Film Fare Award for the best original screenplay. The government of India’s Padma Bhushan Award in 1984, the Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar in 1990, the Janasthan Award in 1991, The ‘Kalidas Samman’ Award in 1992, the Saraswati Samman in 1993, the Maharashtra Foundation Award in 1998, the Pandit Mahadeo Shastri Joshi Award in 1999, and the Dinanath Mangeshkar Award in 2000; all these stand testimony to his lifetime achievement
in literary and performing art. Among his other awards include a Nehru Fellowship (1973-74), An Honary Doctorate from the Ravindra Bharati University, Calcutta in 1992, and a lifetime fellowship from the national academy of the performing Arts, New Delhi 1998.

Tendulkar is co-founder and president of the experimental theatre group, Avishkar (Bombay) and served on the Board of Directors of the National scales of Drama (New Delhi), and Bharat Bhavan Rangmandal (Bhopal). He had been member of the Advisory council of Shriram centre of the Arts (New Delhi), a trustee of the National Book Trust (New Delhi), as well as the president of the National Centre for Advocacy Studies (Poona).

Thus this is the brief outline history of Vijay Tendulkar and his creations. Now we shall see Tendulkar’s major concerns expressed in his plays in short. Wadikar comments about Tendulkar’s characters,

Most of the characters in Tendulkar’s play seen as defeated or frustrated since they acquire deformed personalities. They seem to have a tragic dimension. Deformity of one sort or another such as gender, social, political, physical, mental and spiritual is perceptible in Tendulkar’s characterization. He seeks to project men and women, not in their brighter, but in their darker aspects. Mostly, they are shown life-like, i.e., as what they are but, at times, they are shown worse than what they are in actuality.\(^5\)

The first major work that set Tendulkar apart from previous generation of Marathi playwrights was *Manus Navache Bet*. It gave expression to the tormenting solitude and alienation of a modern individual in an urban, industrialized society. Tendulkar’s dramatic
genius eminently suited the newly emerging, experimental Marathi theatre of the time. The plays that followed Manus Navache Bet were, Madhlya Bhinti, Chimnicha Ghar Hota Menache, Mee Jinklo Mee Harlo, Kavlyachi Shala and Sari Ga Sari.

These all plays set the trend of avant-garde for Marathi theatre. In all his early plays Tendulkar is concerned with the middle class individuals set against the backdrop of a hostile society. And another distinctive feature of these plays is that the absence of any easy solution. Tendulkar presents modern man in all its complexities. He portrays life as it is from different angles without moralizing or philosophizing in any way. Most of his dramas are endowed with his characteristic dialogue, which is jerky, half finished, yet signifying more than what it says. Another important quality of his plays is treatment of characters, his sympathy for ‘little big man’. Play of Tendulkar variously deals with the different dimensions of man’s cultural deformity and brings out its evil consequences on human body, mind, and spirit. His feminist approach is also praise worthy.

Biologically as well as culturally, human beings are divided into two classes; men and women. This division is farther accentuated by the roles they are assigned to play in the making of family. Man is the head of the family, governing and controlling all its affairs. Woman is entrusted with household responsibilities, particularly those of cooking food and rearing children. This leads to the formation of exploitative and oppressive society of men as against the exploited and oppressed society of women. Simon De Beauvoir rightly observes;
One is not born but rather becomes a woman... It is civilization as whole that produces this culture... which is described as feminine.⁶

Tendulkar seems agree with above statement. Hence Shailaja Wadikar describes his plays as; Tendulkar’s plays bring a turning point in Indian theatre as they shock the sensibility of the conventional audience by projecting the reality of life, human relationship, and existence. His plays are revolutionary in the sense that they bring about a transformation in the audience’s mindset. They depict the doomed or lost generation of the post-independence India, where people are victims of willful monstrosity.

**Angry Young Man of Marathi Theatre:**

With the production of *Silence! Court is in Session* in 1967, Tendulkar became centre of general controversy. He had already gained the name *Angry Young Man* of Marathi Theatre. But now he is definitely identified as a rebel against the established values of a fundamentally orthodox society. A theatre group from Bombay comes to a village to stage a play in a mini cross-section of middle-class society. The members of group are representatives of sub-strata. Their spiteful attitudes to Leela Benare, the central character of the play, reflect their malicious and spiteful attitude towards their fellow beings. A well targeted conspiracy is hatched out against her, and in the name of a mock trial, they expose and dissect her personal life and blight her psyche. Their attitudes towards her reveal the basic
hypocrisy and double standards of society. The play exposes the vulnerability of women in Indian society.

Critics and scholars have quite often accused Tendulkar of taking off ideas from western plays and films and given them an Indian grab in his plays. But at the same time it is clear that in early days Tendulkar was influenced by western films, mainly the Hollywood films of the forties, and western playwrights like Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and J. B. Priestley in particular. He was also stated that, he has consciously or unconsciously been inspired by just about everything around him: real life experiences, hearsay, news items, films, plays and literature in general... But the basic urge has always been to let out his concern viz-a-viz his reality: the human condition as perceive it. His plays span varied issues which explain their appeal to a cross section of society ‘Kamala’ attacks the media’s credo of ‘anything for good story’, to  Mitrachi Gost there is a bold look at hetero and homosexual love (116) Tendulkar is Osborne of Indian theatre. His Leela Benare in Silence! Remind us Ibsen’s Nora who challenges outdated customs and traditions. Sakharam is duplicate copy of Jimmy Porter, representative of frustrated post 1970 generation.

Encounter in Umbugland, which was written and produced a year after ‘Silence!’ is a play that is totally different in nature. It falls in separate class in comparison with Silence, Kamala, Gidhade (Vultures) and Sakharam Binder. It is essentially a political allegory but not devoid of dimensions. It is helpful to trace reflections of the political situations in India of the late sixties and early seventies in the royalist regime of Umbugland. The play is not merely topical but also
unveils the essential nature of the game of politics as also basic craving for power in human nature. Tendulkar weaves, exposes the intricate political intrigues calculated to attain positions of authority and the corruption involved in holding on to them. It is easy to identify the characters with political figures that held ministerial positions in those years. This play has usual three act structure. In this play apparent observations are made on the recent developments of political situation of Umbugland.

Tendulkar’s *Ghashiram Kotwal* is another political satire that raised hue and cry in political circles. In ‘Ghashiram’ power is designed ‘horizontally’ in terms of individuals against individuals, from humiliation, to revenge in assertion, to eventual victimization; played out against a background of political and moral decadence and degeneracy, with sexuality impinging on strategies of power. Religion manifest in caste dominance and ceremony is a device of power in ‘Ghashiram’. But it is more as an abstraction of awe than as material force. Nana needs Ghashiram, and Ghashiram needs Nana. But in the shifting game of power, it is temporary adjustment that Nana exploits as long as necessary and can drop unceremoniously the moment it has served its purpose. Samik Bandopadhyay makes a comment about Tendulkar’s political plays,

> Tendulkar in his social criticism is more concerned with the Mechanism of power operating within the society than With the economic and political implications and sources of That power.\(^7\)

*Gidhade* (The Vultures) is chronologically the next play by Tendulkar (1970). It is entirely different kind of work that underlines
the astonishing range of Tendulkar’s dramatic genius. About it Girish Karnard said that the staging of *Gidhade* could be compared to the blasting of a bomb in an otherwise complacent marketplace. With the production of this play, Tendulkar’s name became associated with sensationalism, sex and violence. This play is a ruthless dissection of human nature revealing its inherent tendencies to violence, avarice, selfishness, sensuality and sheer wickedness. It does not have the redeeming humour of *Silence! Court is in Session*. It is extremely morbid in the portrayal of its characters and action. The decadence and degeneration of individuals belonging to middle class miller is exposed through interactions among the members of a family.

Ramakant and Umakant’s greed and viciousness, their fathers degenerate nature, their sister Manik’s gross sensuality—all add into naturalistic depiction of those baser aspects of human that one would shut one’s eyes to. The beating of the father by his own children, the two brother’s forcible abortion of their sister’s child and the mutual hatred among the members of the family underline the fundamental evil inherent in human character. But there is something more in *Gidhade* than sheer violence and evil. In the character of Rama, Ramakant’s wife, Tendulkar is able to create a sensitive, naturally kind and good hearted individual. Tendulkar produced *Sakharam Binder* after this play. Some critics commented about this play that for many decades no play has created such a sensation in the theatre world of Maharashtra as Vijay Tendulkar’s Marathi play *Sakharam Binder*. It brought more resistance from the censor boards than *Gidhade* had. In the words of Arundhati Banerjee,
The play is probably Tendulkar’s most intensely naturalistic play. The play grew around the central character Saktharam, a book-binder, who thought a Brahmin, is the antithesis of the general idealized conception of a member of that caste.

Through the delineation of this character, Tendulkar explores the manifestations of lust and violence in human beings. What Tendulkar is able to achieve in his characterization, not only of Saktharam but also of Laxmi and Champa, is an almost total objectivity. All kinds of moralizing and judgment are avoided. Tendulkar seems keen to demonstrate the basic and essential complexity of human nature, which is neither black nor white, but varying shades of grey.

The function of art is not to provide answers or solutions but to raise questions. While exposing hypocrisies and foibles of an individual as well as society, Tendulkar urges upon the audience to ponder over problems. All the characters of Tendulkar are combination of good and evil, weakness and strength. Saktharam, though apparently crude, aggressive and violent, has his own laws of personal morality. He is a man who is primarily honest and frank. This opener of his personality becomes in itself a criticism of the hypocrisy of the middle-class. Saktharam ridicules the double standards of the middle class society. His straightforwardness in dealing with helpless women such as Laxmi, demands a certain admiration.

Tendulkar’s another play in naturalistic manner is Kamala. It is also a topical play. It was inspired by a real life incident based on the
‘Indian Express’ exposed by ‘Ashwin Sarin’, who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented her at a press conference. At the centre of the play Kamala is a self-seeking journalist, Jaising Jadhav. Jadhav treats the woman he has purchased from the flesh-market as an object that can buy him promotion in his job and a reputation in his professional life. He is one those modern day individuals with a single-track mind, who pursue their goal doggedly. Jadhav never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this depiction. Tendulkar makes a dig at the much talked-about modern concept of the so-called investigative, journalism which stresses the sensational unmindful of the damaged psyche of the victim. Tendulkar depicts Jadhav’s concept of newspaper reporting in a critical light by highlighting the rat-race that goes on in this scenario.

Tendulkar’s play portrays different aspects of human characters. All of them underscore the complexity of human relationships. Most of his plays deal with the individual pitted against the society and explore the tensions between the two. In all of them, women play key roles in the plot. All the plays contain a subtle critique of modern middle-class and lower middle-class Indian society. Most of Tendulkar’s dramas follow the naturalistic model of dramaturgy. Although there is similarity; the plays are clearly distinct from each other. Silence! The Court is in Session combines social criticism with the tragedy of the individual. Gidhade (Vultures) deals with a strange blend of brutality and compassion, the economic and moral degeneration of a family. Sakharam Binder shows the great objectivity and complications in human nature, two necessary components of which are sex and violence. Kamala is a denunciation
of the success-oriented male dominated society where women are often victims or stepping stones in men’s self-advancement.

Tendulkar’s plays open end may be seen as one of its striking features. In his article, *Vijay Tendulkar and the Metaphor of violence*, Sudhir Sonalkar rightly refers; In Tendulkar’s plays,

… the ethical question remains both untouched and UNanswered.\(^9\)

In the same way Asha S. Kanwar, observes;

By leaving the ethical questions open, Tendulkar is perhaps inviting his audience to think about the solutions for themselves.\(^10\)

We observe there are variations in Tendulkar’s theme as well as form; from purely naturalistic plays and dark tragedies to farces, from musical set in traditional folk modes to absurd drama and from full length plays to one act plays. In the thematic point of view, his plays are ranged from social individual tensions to the complexities of human characters. From the exploration of man-woman relationship to the reinterpretations of historical episodes, the greatest quality of Tendulkar as a creative writer and dramatist rests in the fact that he can simultaneously involve and distance himself from his creation. This affords his works with infinite subtlety. Two other hallmarks of his creative self are his sense of humour and his intense compassion, which are sometimes difficult of notice because of their invisible quality. Tendulkar is a great name in Marathi theatre and he has refurnished it with vigour and vitality to awaken the dormant conscience of society through the medium of art.
Tendulkar is named ‘Arthur Miller’ of India’s theatre. His social conscience, the role he has scripted for women, his fight for justice, modern representation of gender roles, his criticism of class system in India and his dialogue with western theatre ranked him to the forefront of modern Indian theatre.

Other Writings of Tendulkar:

Short Stories:
Tendulkar was a versatile figure in Marathi literature. He started his career in literature beginning short stories. He confessed once that ‘Who Will Love on Us’ is his first story written in 1948. Later on he published fifty two stories under five anthologies. Tendulkar’s dramatic outlook and middle class characters took birth from his short stories. His middle class characters chosen in plays are reckless and vulgar than his short stories. Tendulkar selects the weak point of common men in his short stories. Tendulkar indulge himself as a demonstrator in short stories. Self demonstration is one of the characteristics of Vijay Tendulkar’s short stories. Characters used in short stories of Tendulkar are in quiet and in sorrow mood. Once Tendulkar admitted during an interview that writing story is straight forward, so he turned towards it.

Tendulkar’s Journalism and Literary Writing:
Tendulkar’s literary writing through journalism touches to the then social, cultural and political, situations. He wrote in the columns of ‘Maharashtra Times’ daily (1967). He says this column writing helped him to border the horizons or writer within him. Tendulkar’s
daily writing in newspapers shows his tender, poetic language style. He is an inveterate observer of humankind. Once he said that he faith in beauty, believe in spiritual love and sacrifice. He expresses,

At a very early stage of my life I had developed a curiosity for people... without consciously trying to have an ear for the speech habits of people and also an eye for their mannerism and personal peculiarities... Everything gets recorded and stored in the computer of the brain. I don’t have to call for it as I write it comes by itself....

Tendulkar has composed some biographical sketches like ‘Sir, Pal Muni, Jaiprakash Narayan, Sohala (Hansa Wadkar), One era (Vijaya Mehata), Chief minister (Vasantrao Naik) Politician (Chimanbhai Patel), One evening (Baba Amte) etc. It shows the qualities of writer as a truth finder and Romantic attitudinal. Thus Tendulkar’s poetic style of representing individuals is praiseworthy. He selects the exact words to create dramatic life of various persons. His choice ultimately becomes our choice and his liking our liking when reading his plays.

During 1967-68 Tendulkar wrote in Manus a weekly under the name Ratrani. Finding truth is the only motto behind Tendulkar’s press writing. Tendulkar has composed literary writing, political writing, social writing, theatrical writing and experiments of common man. According to him man is very complex animal; he doesn’t come under any definition. Man remains far away from his given labels. Literary writing in journals by Tendulkar shows us the keen interest of writer in social characters and their lives.
Film Scripts and Dialogues Writing:

Tendulkar has devoted himself for writing scripts of cinemas in Marathi and Hindi. i.e. *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*, *Kamala*, *Half Truth* and *Restless*, etc. He has written script of *Sardar Patel*, a feature film. Tendulkar says that script writing and play writing are the same arts. His skills of film scripts and dialogue craftsmanship can be seen in *Samana*, *Sinhasan*, *Umbertha*, etc, in Marathi cinemas and *Nishant*, *Manthan*, *Akrosh*, *Gahari*, *Ardhasatya* etc, in Hindi cinemas. Although cinema is a business, its commercialization doesn’t suit Tendulkar. He says that my cinemas are business but not commercial type, while writing cinemas Tendulkar has preserved his life beliefs. He didn’t find oppose in writing cinema scripts as it is seen in writing novels and cinemas. Its credit goes to Tendulkar for his new way of writing cinema scripts and dialogues.

Fiction Writing:

Novel writing remained untouched by Tendulkar in his early phase of writing. He thought writing novels is not an easy job. But writing plays is natural and a thing of practice according to him. Tendulkar’s first novel, *Novel-one* appeared in 1996. It is a story of Prabhakar Surve, a middle class man. Tension, stress arising in a family is shown faithfully by the novelist. Being one part of a family, they behave like strangers, disjointed and ironic. Disgustedness and frustration of modern man is rightly depicted by the novelist in this novel. But it is clear that novelist Tendulkar’s hand does not run as smoothly as dramatist Tendulkar.
**Novel: two** is published in September 2004. It is a story of contemporary politics and its moral downfall. This is a farce on the contemporary political men and their manners. *Rat* simile is used as representative of political men, who lives away from the society but they harass society. No one is ready to combat with them. One innocent girl is killed when a rat raped her. Dirty politics, shrewdness in it and its various black aspects which are unknown to common men are presented faithfully by the novelist. He is the politician who starts communal riots and he is the same who condemns it. Permanent truths in politics are displayed by the writer in this novel. It is one of a realistic attempt by Tendulkar.

**Tendulkar and His Translated Literature:**

Tendulkar has translated some European novels into Marathi. Some of them are *Devachi Manse* (Men of God), *Gele Te Divas* (That days have gone), *Me Asa Zalo* (I have developed in this way), original writer is Robert Ruark. *Aage Badho* (Be ahead) original writer G. L. Latham. *Ranful* (Land flower) creator Shiley L. Arora, *We Will Not Loose* creator Lara Engles Winder, *Story of one pain, Love letter*, creator Henry James, and *New House and New Life*’ basic creator – Grace Jorden, these are the examples of novel translation. He has also translated biographies like, *Goddess of Mercy*, basic creator Helen Boylston, ‘He Taught for us’ – Catharine Woven Pear. Tendulkar is not behind in translating, short stories too, *On the Way of Panther, Karbhavin, Introduction of America and Five Guests*, translated by him.
Vasana-Chakra original creator Tennessie Williams, ‘not to have attachment this is request’, John Mark Patrice these are the translated dramas by Tendulkar. Some of the translations are done only for gaining money and run home. Although this is translated copies but it has their dignity of the translations. Half House of Mohan Rakesh and Tughlaq of Girish Karnad are translated into Marathi for only friendship’s sake.

Tendulkar published two miscellaneous Books Jahirnama (Manifesto) and Samajvedh (Introspection of Society) in 1984 and 1987 respectively. Jahirnama (Manifesto) is annual, collection of short stories, poems and other aesthetic writing. Samajvedh – introspection of society is created for showing complex reality of society truthfully. Tendulkar has collected articles from Bhau Padhey, Priya Tendulkar, Kamalakar Sarang, Ravindra Bhagwat, Nilu Damale, Vidhya Bhagwat, Pravin Patkar, etc. on their actual life experiences. These articles are not only the photographic representations of the society but also the introspection of society and its real problems. It provides us awareness of the time.

Samajvedh includes Bombay (Kherwadi) riot written by Bhau Padhey. Priya Tendulkar’s Panchatarankit, Vidoot Bhagwat’s ‘Education: Some Pages of a Diary’. These provide the exact experiences of realistic life.

‘Divakaranchya Natyachata’ (Dramatic-monologue) is a type of drama but it means not a small or easy part of drama. It is different from Drama and short play. Divakar took inspiration from English poet Robert Browning and his ‘Monologue’. Tendulkar’s first monologue is Mahasarp (Biggest snake). Monologue and Divakar
these two names are connected with each other. Tendulkar thinks Monologue is now on death bed and it should be renovated. Short story and one act plays have observed in dramatic monologue. Tendulkar published 51 monologues in all written by Divakar from 1911 to 1931. He has also provided prologue for its better understanding.

While reading dramatic monologue of Divakar, we remember Tendulkar because there is much similarity between Divakar and Tendulkar as far as their dramatic art of writing is concerned. Use of short sentences and exact word is speciality of both the writers. There is some relationship between Divakar and Tendulkar in their dramatic skills too. Tendulkar’s monologues used in different dramas remind us Divakar. There is compositional similarity between Tendulkar and Divakar. We observe that there is a stamp of Divakar on Tendulkar’s great works of art. Tendulkar’s Zupurza and Baby, one-act plays resemble with dramatic monologue.

**Tendulkar’s Short Plays for Children:**

Tendulkar has composed some short plays for children during 1960 to 1972. *Ethe Bale Militat* (Here you will get infants) –1960, *Meshpatre* (1961), *Patlachya Porich Lagin* (Marriage of Patil’s Daughter), *Chimana Bandhato Ghar* (Sparrow built a house) 1966, *Rajaranila gham hava* (King and Queen need sweat), *Baba Harawale* (Baba is lost), *Bobychi Gost* (Story of Boby). These are some of children’s plays on his credit. Amusement of children is the basic aim of Tendulkar behind these children’s plays. While going through this plays we come to know that Tendulkar has studied child psychology.
Instruction and entertainment are the basic motives behind his children plays and Tendulkar succeeded in it. “Calamities not only befell on others but also on us, who forgets it, he has to repent later on. No one should debase other; no one should laugh at other.” This is the gospel given in ‘Sparrow Built a Home’. We see in ‘Baby’s Story; Baby is indulged into herself because her parents are office goers. “It is true since mothers are going to office, Baby like little girls are become so”. In ‘Baba is lost’ we see a thief who kidnaps girl. Here Tendulkar advise us and children how to behave in Bombay like cities.

Tendulkar uses simple but concrete incidences for his children plays. We observe children are always doing mimicry of elders. But Tendulkar’s children spectators are grown up and more respective than common men. They accept new incidences as fast as they can. Child spectators are more imaginative, hence they understand further than the grown spectators. He took them in the world of fantasy–Demon, King-Queen, Birds, Nature, Witch and Jugglers, etc. Tendulkar’s children play emphasis more on action than dialogues. Little children involve in comedy as well as in imaginative world. They are sensitive and tender. Tendulkar shows some pathetic incidences too in these plays.

Although some of the dramatist has paid need towards children plays, maximum number of dramatist neglected it. Government, philosophers, writers, presenters and spectators all have come together for the issue of children plays. Tendulkar has written child-plays during 1960-72. Some of them are translated into Hindi. After 1972 Tendulkar turned his attention to serious plays. There are some
parallelism between children-plays and other plays. For example ‘King and Queen need Sweat’ is a child-play; its dialogue style is reflected in ‘Ghashiram Kotwal’. Thus Tendulkar’s devotion for child-plays is remarkable.

**One Act Plays and New Dramatic Techniques:**

We observe that, Tendulkar was writing stories and one act plays at the same period. Later on he left away from these both forms of literature. But these two kinds remember us his interest in dramatic writing. Tendulkar is not familiar until 1963 in any one of the literary form. Hence Shankar Sarada of Marathi Literature says, during this period Tendulkar was searching suitable form for his expression. Tendulkar’s one act plays are outcome of his stories. His first one-act play is ‘Identity’. His unforgettable one act plays are *Bali, Madi* (Female), *Frightened, Python and Gandharva, Thief, Police! Night*, etc.

Tendulkar acquainted with Vijaya Mehta, Damu Kenkare, Arvind Deshpande, Sulabha Deshpande, Madhav Vatave, Nandkumar Ravate, etc. These dignitaries were doing various experiments in Marathi theatre. Vijaya Mehata says, “Tendulkar would write and we would perform.” One act play has got its dignity after 1950, before it one act play was not considered equal with drama. Tendulkar’s ‘Night and other one act plays’ are on various subjects. But Tendulkar’s one act plays represent the inner feelings of two different persons. ‘Night’, ‘Darkness’, ‘Four days’ and Identity’ are some of his best one act plays. ‘Bali’ is a horror one act play. Tendulkar is less imaginative but
more realistic writer in his literary creations. He gave a new form of seriousness to one act plays in Marathi literature.

**Tendulkar as a Dramatist in General:**

The life portrayed in Tendulkar’s plays is sad, miserable and full of contradictions. During the days when Tendulkar started his dramatic career the names of B.V. Varerkar, P.K. Atre and M.G. Rangnekar were dominating the scene. Each one of them had carved a niche for himself. The period between 1920 and 1950 is generally seen as a low watermark in the history of Marathi drama. Tendulkar started writing his plays against that background. At the beginning he was influenced by his predecessors. It means not that he imitated them, but he grew in their shadows. It was Tendulkar’s greatness that he outgrew that influence and did not remain stuck there. He was uneasy about the stereotype dramatic writing of the time and also the stagnation of the Marathi stage. He wanted to rebel and break new ground. He has interest in showing disharmony rather than harmony in relationship between man and society. As a playwright with critical acumen, he is, at once subjective and objective, personal and impersonal, particular and general, individual and social, and, finally, local and cosmopolitan. Tendulkar asserts,

> All my creative writings begin not from an idea but from an experience, mine or somebody else’s which then becomes mine. It was such an experience, another’s to begin with, that provided the starting point for *Kanyadaan.*

12
If we look at Tendulkar’s first play *The House Holder* and subsequently *The Rich* we notice that though these plays have the traditional dramatic structure, the individuality of the writer stands out in the novelty of subject and treatment. Tendulkar’s earlier plays are mainly about the middle-class sensibility and their day to day problems. *The House Holder*, *An Island Called Man* and *The Middle Walls* shows Tendulkar’s keen observation of middle class societies and their complexities.

He does not only tell us the story of middle class families but also makes us feel the complexities of middle class life and their mentality and behavior. These men are simple and rough, Tendulkar tend to show us how these personalities turn violent, how they come to love, hate and envy each other, how they become enslaved by passion, and why they are lonely and alienated. Ramakant in ‘An Island called Man’ and Rama in ‘The Vultures’ are the best examples of Tendulkar’s early plays. Through the personal relationship of his characters Tendulkar develops the theme of man’s existential loneliness.

Theme of loneliness is not new in English literature but it was new in Marathi drama. Tendulkar is not one of those dramatists who use their medium for spreading favourite socio-political ideology. He is not giving us a particular philosophy of life. Tendulkar’s plays are open to diverse interpretations. But the question whether Tendulkar writes for life’s sake or art’s sake remains pointless. His plays do not entangle in socialistic ideology.

It is clear that, there is impact of Sartre and Comus far reaching on Marathi writers in the second half of the 20th century. Tendulkar’s
‘An Island Called Man’ is also showing the same influence. The theme of alienation is embodied in this play was new on Marathi stage, before five decades. ‘Shrimant’ (1955) presents the problems of the Maharashtrian middle class morality and the problems of man-woman relationship. The Marathi stage had not read or seen such bold presentation. Tendulkar has written such plays in his early phase of writing dramas. He has done it not for shock tactics but he felt he could express himself in that manner.

His plays put forth several questions without providing any answers to them. The playwright seeks to present the modern man with his predicament, his challenges, his difficulties and his complexities. In the career of Tendulkar as a dramatist, ‘Silence, the court is in session’ is a milestone. It is new not only by content but also by form. The major character around whom all things revolve is Leela Benare, a school teacher. Her bitterness with the society comes out through the mock-court scene. Benare’s soliloquy at the end raises many-many equations, it rises about society, man-woman relationship etc. That almost leaves us speechless. This play was staged in 1967. There was lot of controversy over this play about ‘indebtedness’ and piracy. Although one cannot set aside the questions raised by Leela Benare and her plight in Indian urban middle class ethos; Leela Benare’s predicament is not foreign origin; it is indigenous. The agony faced by Benare is symbolic and representative of Indian experience. The root of Benare’s tragedy is that her suffering does not reach the people around her. Besides empathizing with her, the society likes to play or toy with her feelings. Benare’s blind belief is that her
private life is her own affair and she is free to do what she likes to do with it. But it is not possible for the middle class peoples in India.

This play is translated into fourteen Indian languages. The play was staged all over India in different versions. After ‘Silence;’ Tendulkar is recognized all over India as a dramatist. Ashi Pakhare Yeti (so come birds), this play is based on an original English one ‘Rain Maker of Romance’. Here the hero addresses audience directly and explain to them how the whole story took place. In 1970-71 such a direct address to the audience was something new to Marathi stage. Later on such technique came into experimental Marathi theatre. The main story between Arun and Saru and the poetic spiritual level at which their relationship moves was also refreshingly new. The same content is found in Pahije Jatiche (wanted men of right caste). This play centres round the conflict between a professor and a youth, representative of lower classes in villages. This play presents a realistic and frightening picture of the frustration of the educated. And the consequent collapse of the social structure. Wadikar says,

Tendulkar is out rightly a humanitarian, but for that, one has to read his plays between the lines. Even in Silence! The places with ‘panes’ is eloquent.  

Tendulkar always been engulfed in controversies with the plays like The Vultures, Sakharam Binder and Ghashiram Kotwal. ‘The Vultures’ was written by Tendulkar in his early period but it was staged only in 1971. The Vultures moves around the interpersonal relationship in middle class families. He has to bring out the Vulture mentality residing in the deeper recesses of the human psyche. The
idiom which would confront the audience with the Vulture in man was truly shocking and unsettling. Content of the play is more appealing than the language but unfortunately content is forgotten by the audience. There is always and ever a general awareness of the Vulture in man, but its dramatic representation is neglected. According to Tendulkar The Vultures expresses all that was unexpected in his middle class world; the shock that audience receive is not new to Tendulkar’s dramatic skills. Hence Wadikar comments,

Tendulkar’s plays expose vices of the society like hypocrisy, vulgarity, barbarism, corruption, narrow mindedness etc. He attacks on society through his writing on feudal values and his demand for the new code of conduct and morality are clearly perceptible.¹⁴

Sakharam Binder has also an explosive subject matter. All the incidences in this play moves around Sakharam; his lasciviousness, his women, and his vulgar language. Tendulkar does not take sides in this play. He is far away from his characters. He brings out the dramatic tension among Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa. This play has evoked extreme reactions. For some it has been ‘Hot Stuff’. Some found it to be extremely superficial and sensational. Some others gave the play a spiritual interpretation. One thing is clear that Tendulkar has something significant to say about marriage institutions and man-woman relationship through this play. Laxmi and Champa are not only women, but two different attitudes. Because of controversy and litigation a good dramatic work was rejected.
Tendulkar is interested in showing disharmony in relationship between man and society. There are tensions depicted in his plays; the tension between individual identity and social existence.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Ghashiram Kotwal} appeared on stage on 16\textsuperscript{th} December 1972. Like ‘Sakharam’ this play was also caught up in controversy. The play was written by placing Nana Phadnavis and Ghashiram Kotwal at the centre. It is not only commentary on Brahminical social system in Pune during the age of Peshwai but also personal incidents in the life of Nana Phadnavis and Ghashiram Kotwal. Ghashiram was a Brahmin from Kannoj who had migrated to Pune and become a Kotwal of Pune. Soon Ghashiram became intoxicated with power. The play is an allegory of the struggle between the individual and society, between power and exploitation. This is a drama in verse (poetic play).

Tendulkar has used many of the devices of folk theatre in it. Maharashtrian folk music such as ‘Naman’, ‘Lavani’, ‘Powada’ and ‘Kirtan’ are used in this play. This play is translated and staged in many languages in different regions. The popularity credit goes as much to Tendulkar the write as to the director of the play Jabbar Patel. Only textual ground is not sufficient to understand the play, along with it stage performance is immense useful. ‘Ghashiram’ gave Tendulkar popularity outside Maharashtra and humiliation and torment in Maharashtra. Tendulkar is one of those writers who along with his family had to suffer a lot. The main objection on this play was its character assassination of Nana Phadnavis. It was a blind worship of history and tradition. To evaluate the work properly we
need to have unprejudiced and open mind. ‘Ghashiram’ has acquired a global reputation.

*A Friends Story* is about a lesbian relationship. Tendulkar has presented pathos and tragedy of such relationship. It was the first attempt out of traditions made by Tendulkar in Marathi stage. This play gives us a unique dramatic experience and makes us introspective. This play has some relationship with ‘Kamala’ an earlier play by Tendulkar on an auctioned woman in flesh market. It is heroine centered drama. *Kamala* explores the women question. Although *Kamala* is a tropical play, it has a significant place in dramatic development of Tendulkar. In *Kanyadaan*, a girl from a Brahmin family with socialist progressive orientation falls in love with a Dalit boy and marries him. Unfortunately he treats her badly. This play throws light, on Brahmin-Dalit relationship. But it doesn’t give us any deep or new insight into the class structure of Indian society. When asked, do you think you are cynical? Tendulkar answered,

No, not in the least. I couldn’t project life cynically; absolutely not. That might be my limitation, perhaps. But in my approach to life, I didn’t need to have that sort of attitude.\(^{16}\)

Tendulkar has not tried his hand for farcical or comic mode. In the play ‘The school for crows’, there is an element of comedy but the tragic mode overpowers it. A play like *Sari Ga Sari* (Drizzle O Drizzle) is more in the form of folk theatre as like ‘Vag’ in *Tamasha*. Because of its weakness, the story does not clarify the exact intention of the dramatist. *The Emperor of the Lower Step* is ‘free play’. Texts
of Tendulkar’s plays are different from conventional texts. We cannot apply literary standards to them. Performance of play is its criteria. Other literary canons cannot be applied to them. Tendulkar’s plays are performance generated plays. *An Obstinate Girl* is once again a play of middle class life and ethos. It depicts the conflict between Mangala and Tatya. Mangala is a straightforward girl whereas Tatya is sly and hypocritical. ‘*Lobh Nasava*’ (Requested not to love) one finds a similar picture into interpersonal relationship. This play was written only for dramatic competition and so was *Encounter in Umbagland*. This play reveals political scenario of mid-60 in India, it can be updated by current political events too. *Bhalya Kaka* was written in 1972. It is about a constable who was once a General of the Army.

The play presents the scene in the life of Bhalya Kaka in present and past. It is an extended soliloquy rather than drama. Another attempt by Tendulkar in the form of *Bhau Murarao* did not popularized among audience. It is depending on the medical racket of sale of kidneys, which is now lost capacity to shock people. It includes many faces of political leaders. It was also a flop show after some initial attempts.

Thus as a dramatist Tendulkar has done multisided attempts in this field of Experimental dramas and professional dramas. But it is clear that he has never planned before dramatic career. In the middle part of his career he turned to narrative fiction, script writing and feature writing. Number of years he was a journalist. But Tendulkar is stamped on the dramas. Dramatic career of Tendulkar is not sustainable. Ability to express maximum meaning in minimum words
has been the characteristic of Tendulkar’s writing. It is also one of the features of absurd theatre.

Tendulkar’s use of language is marked by an intelligent use of punctuation marks. Blank spaces, exclamation marks, question marks are effectively employed by him. His stage directions are also significant. He was indebted aware about the stage. That awareness impacted Tendulkar’s dialogues and dramatic idioms. It is said that Marathi stage lacks the verbosity and sentimentalism; they took interest only in telling stories. He kept away right from the beginning from telling stories in his works of art. He was interested in effective presentation. His form and techniques nicknamed him an ‘experimental writer’, although he had got limited commercial success; play after play he has made effective presentation of latent violence and lust in middle class life. Devastation and essential existential loneliness of man, is the major characteristics of Tendulkar’s plays. His failure never deterred him from the way of writing. He was the first man who brought the experimental drama on Marathi stage. This may be the important trend which brought him on the international scene. Tendulkar’s plays bring a turning point in Marathi drama. But one has to read his plays between the lines. With experiments in theatre, he broke the tradition of well made plays and evolved new theatrical traditions appropriate to represent the contemporary social reality. Arundhati Banarjee attributes. Vijay Tendulkar has been in the vanguard of not just Marathi but Indian theatre for almost forty years.

Thus, Tendulkar has written twenty eight full length plays, seven collections of one-acts, six of child plays, four of short stories, three
of essays, a novel and seventeen film scripts. That all have came out in the course of a carrier of about fifty years. This is miraculous but when asked how he created all that he replied, “Give me a piece of paper, any paper, and a pen and I shall write as naturally as a bird flies or a fish swims”. He added, “For the last forty-five years I have been writing sitting in a newspaper offices, in the roadside restaurants, on crowded running local trains, and when my living pace did not allow me to be by myself and write, I have written sitting in the bathroom. And I have written on the sickbed in the hospital in spite of the doctor’s advice not to tax myself. He did not know and would not accept that writing was not taxing to me at all. On the contrary it was soothing. It was great relief. It was Joy.” When asked in an interview, do you think that you have project man smaller than he actually is? Tendulkar replied.

No, I don’t think so. I projected people as I saw them. I don’t want to disturb their proportion. I try to seek them, search them (as they are, and not as they look to me). I’m curious about having a close scrutiny of them all. But I’ve never imposed my personal feelings and thoughts on them. In my guest of their true selves, I notice that they are not complete. True, I am in guest, and I go where from I can have better a lance of them.\textsuperscript{17}

Characters were most vital trigger to Tendulkar’s play writing, so he says, that he was never able to begin writing his play only with an idea or a theme in mind. He had to have his characters first with him ... living persons leading him into the thick of their lives where they would give him the theme. It means that we can approach Tendulkar’s work through his characters. From their language,
structure and forms we can go through the work. Tendulkar has given birth to memorable male and female characters. It is also clear that naturalism is the natural expression of Tendulkar’s inborn genius.

His plays put forth several questions without providing any answers to them. He tries to present the modern man with his predicament, challenges, difficulties, and his complexities. He uses drama as a means to raise questions rather than to provide solutions, although one cannot term his plays as problem plays like those of Ibsen, Shaw, or Galsworthy. What the plays depict is the socio-cultural and political reality of human life. His plays do not provide any message, nor do they provide any clues or guidelines to the solution of them problems they deal with. These plays are thought provoking and evoke a note of silent protest in the minds of their audience. Tendulkar has written film scripts for the much publicized, *Sardar Patel* and the same directed by Govind Nihalani. His Marxist ideological ardour was tired during his school days. He was the member of ‘Lal Nishan’. Later on he joined local people’s rights organizations. His training in writing was journalistic. He worked for Marathi newspaper ‘Loksatta’. He also edited magazines like ‘Vasudha’ and ‘Divali’. He has written enough short stories to have appeared in sizeable collections. Tendulkar found his talent in direct dialogues of dramatic depictions, bypassing the descriptive narrative streams of common practice.

His success in this genre may be gauged by the honours he received–the ‘Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award’, ‘the Nehru Fellowship Award’ from the Maharashtra government, ‘The Sangeet
Natak Akadami Award,’ ‘Padma-Bhushan,’ ‘Membership of National Organizations,’ and so many Cultural and Literary Awards.

Tendulkar was a man with rare quietness. He was ever hiding his sensitive features behind the beard and spectacles. A tall man, soft spoken and appreciative when he condemns, these are some of the characteristic features of Vijay Tendulkar. The greatest quality, which Tendulkar can claim to himself as a creative writer and dramatist, is his singular ability to simultaneously involve and distance himself from his creations. This fulfils his work with infinite subtlety. New meanings emerge as one reads his plays in the light of one’s understanding. Other two hallmarks of his creativity are keen sense of humour and his intense compassion. He tries to make people conscious of their voices and limitations and, directly or indirectly, wants to mend their way.

The life portrayed in Tendulkar’s plays is sad, miserable and full of contradictions. But it is real. The anger and frustration of the protagonist are not without any reasons. The dramas are thought provoking and make the audience sensitive to the issues. All audience leaves the theatre with their minds shocked and perturbed. Tendulkar’s plays helped to refine Marathi Drama that was so far polluted by propaganda for political awakening, social reforms, social and vulgar entertainment. He turned towards drama writing after delving deep into human relations. He did not have interest in painting quinsy colours of the superficial society. On the contrary he touched the simplicity and common tensions in middle class society. Tendulkar has guided Marathi drama that seemed to have lost its proper track and has kept leading it for over four decades. His place
and importance in this respect shall remain unique in the History of Marathi drama.

There are controversies regarding his greatness but his achievements are beyond question. There isn’t doubt about this, there shouldn’t be any. Somewhere Tendulkar has said that he had drifted to the middle of current of life. He then felt its unfathomable depths. Like the sea-birds, he was soaring aimlessly, casually and calmly ... He had only one desire – How deep would be the bottom? How would it appear? Whatever he saw, he portrayed it faithfully. Hence Shailaja Wadikar says,

Tendulkar established his reputation as a ‘rebel’ who wanted to register his protest against the established conventions and who perceived the possibilities of new spaces for the marginalized sections of society.¹⁸

All the major aspects of life psychological socio- political, deterministic, existential, feminist and humanitarian are delineated in realistic manner. When asked in an Interview, “Have you written plays to change the mindset of people? Tendulkar replied, “No never so, in one sense, you’ll find there in my own expression of the moment. They are all reflection of my mind.” Tendulkar through his plays gave a voice to the oppression of the individual in conventional social codes. He was more concerned with the machinations of power and the effects of oppression manifested in different forms. Tendulkar’s plays represent a fictional reality in which the reality of life assumes a new significance. His creative writings are based on the assumption that violence is rooted in human self and it seeks its outlet in various forms expressing man’s helpless defense against the
adversity of the life conditions. He is called an iconoclast, who tries to bring about a silent, gradual change in people’s attitude towards life and its problems. One of the important aspect of Tendulkar’s plays is that they doesn’t provide us idealized life on the contrary most of the characters in his plays are the victims of chance or circumstances. In the projection of life Tendulkar appears to be detached observer neither condemning cruel nor praising good characters. Almost all the plays I selected for study depict agonies and suffering, helplessness of man but they are anti-sentimental and anti-emotional. Shailaja Wadikar assumes that,

Tendulkar’s art may be seen as a liberating influence: It liberates us from our cribbed, cabined, and confined existence and helps us become, in one word, human - as human as possible.¹⁹

The generation portrayed by Tendulkar is culturally, mentally and ethically crippled one. People suffer because of their incomprehension and fall victims to willful monstrosity. The playwright uses harsh, abusive language to represent positive and negative aspects of the lost and doomed generation. In Tendulkar’s plays, to say it in Eric Bentley’s words,

We move beyond a character’s personality to his humanity.²⁰

In short, we can say that Tendulkar’s plays reflect socio-cultural reality as they comprise real-life situations, events, and incidents. He is social realist committed to reveal evils present in the contemporary society. He has depicted marginal position of women and their
struggle against exploitation, discrimination, class conflict, homosexuality, sexual abuse etc. To depict reality on stage Tendulkar has moved from Millionaire to Dalits. The playwright himself has either met or heard of most of the major characters at one point of time or other of his life. Tendulkar confesses. I think a lot before I write. My creativity has been shaped more by experience than by imagination.

He once admitted, as an individual- or rather as a social being- I feel deeply involved in the existing state of my society (because I am affected by it though no immediately in some cases or not as much as other are) and in my own way brood over it.... As a writer I now find myself persistently inquisitive, non conformist, ruthlessly cold and brutal as compared to the other committed writers. As a social being I am against all exploitation and I passionately feel that all exploitation must end. As a writer I feel fascinated by the violent exploited- exploiter relationship and obsessively deep into it instead of taking a position against it. This takes me to point where I feel that this relationship is eternal, a fact of life however cruel, and will never end. Nor that I relish this thought while it grips me but I cannot shake it off. Moreover He adds, I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world in which I live. If they want to entertain and make merry, time go ahead, but I can’t do it, I have to speak the truth.21
His artistic skill helped him to disengage himself and allowed his characters and their lives to grow on paper and this gave his plays the ring of socio-psychological truth. When asked in an interview, that his dispassionate approach to his characters gives the impression of non-involvement and that his writing in general suggests a pessimistic view of life, he answered in the following words,

The urge to create is born out of involvement with life. Creation is the result of grief over something, anger at something, joy about something in life. There aren’t signs of neutrality ...but I do believe that (the character and situation I create) have their own independent existence and logic and I allow them to live by them ...That is not to say that their sorrow don’t sadden me, their joys don’t make me happy as they do any other member of the audience, but that doesn’t mean I will intervene.\textsuperscript{22}

This statement clears his social and aesthetic concerns as well as informs some ideas and motives behind his play writing. In an interview with Sumit Saxena, Tendulkar said,

I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world in which I live if they want to entertain and make merry, fine go ahead, but I can’t do it, I have to speak the truth.\textsuperscript{23}
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