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SEARCH FOR AN IDENTITY/ IDENTITY CRISIS

This chapter attempts to provide the feminist concern of Vijay Tendulkar’s drama. It aims to discuss the four dramas of Tendulkar from a feminist point of view. They are silence! The Court is in Session, Kamala, Kanyadaan and Sakharam Binder. It focuses closely on Tendulkar’s men and women, explores how they suffer from identity crisis and try to search for an identity. It also focuses on the concern over objectification of women. To objectify is to depersonalize, to make substandard, and to make women not quite human. This area deserves our complete attention and energy. We can see in these plays that Tendulkar, though not a self-acknowledged feminist treats his women characters with understanding and compassion. Here is an attempt to highlight a great Marathi playwright Vijay Tendulkar who deals with feminist concern in a remarkably distinct way. He presents them against men who are cruel, selfish and brutally ambitious. The males figuring in his art emerge as immature creatures, for he portrays them as embodiment of hypocrisy, selfishness and treachery.

Feminism is an ideology which seeks not only to understand the world but also to change it to the advantage of women. It stands for a belief that women should have the same right, power and opportunity that men have. While using the phrase “The Second Sex”, Simone de Beauvoir opines that woman’s idea of herself as inferior to man and dependent on him springs from her realization that ‘the world is masculine on the whole, those who fashioned it, ruled it and still dominate it are men.’\(^1\) (1949: 298) Though the biological distinction between male and female is an accepted fact, the notion that woman is inferior is no longer acceptable to women in general and feminists in particular.

Feminist criticism records several opinions on woman by early feminists and social critics. Simone de Beauvoir inquires, “What is a woman?” and charges, “for him she is sex—absolute sex, no less”\(^2\) (1949:13). Dorothy Sayers pertinently queries, “Are Women Human?”\(^3\) (2005: 165-178). The search for identity for a woman is the first step towards her becoming human. Betty Friedan examines the problem of women’s identity and says, “The problem is always being the children’s mommy or
the ministers’ wife and never being myself.” *(Friedan, 2001: 73)* women in literature and in real life have struggled to be accepted as wholly human as men. Hence, the search for identity for a woman is the first step towards her becoming human. “

Unlike western women, Indian women’s identity is deeply embedded not in the marital twosome but in the entire family, caste, class and community. Her role in the family is either given a heavy white-wash or new roles are added to the existing ones. Contrary to western women, Indian women are committed to the idea of gradual change. While focusing on identity of Indian women in a traditional society, it is observed that, where and when tradition governs, an Indian woman does not stand alone; her identity is wholly defined by her relationships to others. In most societies, a woman (more than a man) defines herself in relation and connection to other people; this is singularly true of Indian women. The dominant psycho-social realities of her life can be condensed into three stages: as a daughter, as a wife and as a mother to her sons and daughters. Myths, too, are sparing of their bounty towards daughters, for in a patriarchal culture myths are inevitably man-made and man-oriented. *Templaton* suggests if women are to be truly free of the “chivalric ideal and the notion of a female mind”, they must strive for an identity. *(1997:138:45)* Betty Friedan has remarked how for a girl, identity is exclusively sexual:

“The identity issue for the boy is primarily an occupational-vocational question, while self definition for the girl depends more directly on marriage. A number of differences follow from this distinction. The girls’ identity centers more exclusively on her sex-role—whose wife will I be.... The sexual identity, so critical for feminine development... is a mysterious and romantic issue, freighted with fiction, mystique, illusion” *(2001: 164)*

Men’s power over the circumstances and exigencies of women physical selves, have reduced them to a state of dependence and obedience. Until conditions change, women remained deprived of the possibility of being independent and autonomous persons. An awareness of the inequality in marital relationships is a requisite for the development of feminist consciousness. To quote Veena Noble Dass’s observation on Indian feminism in this context:

“The Indian woman caught in the flux of tradition and modernity bearing the burden of the past and aspirations of the future is the crux of feminism in
Indian literature. A search for identity and a quest for the definition of the self-love become the prime feature of women in literature under the sway of feminism.”  

The image of women, her position, power and status in the society as well as in the family is central to the study of literature all over the world. Though her presence in literature is all-pervasive, the depiction of woman in literature has been in accordance with the social taboos and norms determined by men. The status of women, as one finds, has not been the same at all times and in all societies. In Indian drama, too, women characters, as presented by Indian playwrights, play either the traditional role of passive, docile, dependent, helpless victims thriving on the mercy of men, or the role of rebels poised against a patriarchal ethos struggling to dethrone the myth of femininity. Thus, the women characters can be broadly classified into two categories: those who meekly accept patriarchal subordination and those who either challenge or resist the system in the quest for individuality or search for an identity. Similar feeling is expressed by N. Geetha, as follows:

‘Feminist writers and critics have keenly felt the complete negation of the female experience in literature. Even the projection of the image of women has been compressed into a few acceptable roles. Women are usually cast into a few popular stereotype of a narrow range of characterization. There are two basic types of image: positive roles, which depict women as independent, intelligent and even heroic; and a surplus of misogynic roles commonly identified as the bitch, the witch, the vamp and the “Virgin goddess”  

Tendulkar’s plays often feature characters who are questioning their identity, and who feel isolated in some way. The playwright operates in an Indian context with an Indian texture. He is known for his concern for burning social problems of Indian society and mindset. He offers us a wide spectrum of life. His plays are at once disturbing, moving and provocative. In his plays, generally women are at the centre. Most of the action revolves around women. Leela Benare in Silence! and Sarita in Kamala play the leading roles in these plays which present a world apparently dominated by male chauvinists. These plays revolve around women protagonists. Both Benare and Sarita show their prowess in handling the critical situation in their life. As Benare remains firm in her decision to give birth to the child in an unreceptive circumstance, While Sarita provides an emotional support to Jaisingh. They are new women pleading for freedom from the social norms. They would like to establish their
identity by being different and taking deviation from the compulsion of the male dominated society. Both Benare and Sarita are educated and efficient and refuse to be subjugated by men. So, N.S Dharan points out: “these plays can justifiably be defined as gyno-centric.” 9 (1999: 94) The dramatist’s portrayal of man–woman relationship is charged with a sensitive yet dispassionate study of human nature. Perhaps, he is the most prolific and controversial among the post-independence Indian playwrights.

Tendulkar’s Silence! The Court is in Session challenges patriarchal value system. It combines social criticism with the tragedy of an individual victimized by society. In this play Miss Leela Benare is easily isolated and made the victim of a cruel game cunningly played by her co-actors. His dramatic genius was cut out for the newly emerging experimental Marathi theatre of the time. Shantata! Court chalu ahe (1967) was written in Marathi and it was translated into English under the title Silence! The court is in session by Priya Adarkar in 1974. The texture of the play is built on a pattern of contrast. The play within a play, itself gives the effect of illusion. In fact all the characters except Benare live in a world of illusion to escape the bitter realities of their life. The rehearsal is an illusion of a grave social problem of unmarried motherhood and men’s attitude to her. The characters are drawn from different streams of the society.

Elleke Boehmer notes, “Figures of mothers of the nation are everywhere emblazoned but the presence of women in the nation is officially marginalized and generally ignored”10(2007:)

Some radical feminists see patriarchy as the primary cause of the oppression of women: they conceive of a separate woman’s culture through which women define women. Alice Rossi, while disputing the idea of motherhood as being a social construct, attributes the feeling of motherhood to “innate physiological factors” 11(Rossi 99). Thus the feelings of Miss Benare, perhaps cannot be understood by any other male characters who dissect her publicly. On the one hand we see her as a playful person with a sense of humor; is it a mask she is wearing? Or is it the image she wants to project? What is Miss Benare’s self-perception? The play projects that the very system of justice is gender biased.
Leela Benare, the protagonist of the play is the only exception of the malicious attitude. She is harmless and sensitive to others. She bears men's prejudices and victimization with resilience and forbearance. Men in the play- Kashikar, Sukhatme and others- gang up against her and torture her through a mock trial. In this trial she is made the accused and arrested under the charge of infanticide. When they fail to prove the charge they start dissecting her private affairs. She is projected as a licentious woman hunting for men. She is shown pregnant without being married. For this, she is put to trial and not the man, Prof. Damle, who is caused for it. We see how at the end, the charge becomes the punishment. The court orders her to kill the fetus which she strongly rejects. For this she is sacked from the job of a school teacher. This mock-trial of Benare is actually a trial of the whole female race in this country.

Viewed from the traditional point of view the story of Benare is similar to that of Kunti in the *Mahabharata*. P. Obula Reddy and P. Pramila Devi compare the situation of Benare to that of Kunti. According to them, “Just like Kunti, Benare becomes pregnant without the sanction of wedlock but Kunti being a princess could manage to hide her secret and send away her new-born baby whereas Benare being a middle-class woman is exposed to the attacks of the society. The heart-rending pathos of Benare’s inability to bring up her child is reminiscent of Kunti’s grief while leaving her son in the waters of the Ganges. Benare seems to be an archetypal form of Kunti.”

The flow of dramatic activity in a Tendulkar play comes from the changing moods with which his characters accept their given roles or reject them and try to establish another. In the process they make comments on the surface reality of the social milieu and the psychological reality as they perceive it. The structure and form also signify a psychological reality perceived by the dramatist. The play within is a mock court. There is interplay of stage reality, the reality discussed by the characters when they are outside the court, and the reality presented before the mock court. Miss Benare, who is charged with the crime of killing her own unborn child, is a school-teacher who is expected to follow certain norms by the society around her. Most of the characters assume the role of conscience-keepers of society when they charge against Miss Benare. The dramatist tells us that slowly their faces take on the look of a wild animal waiting for its prey. This concealed violence in white-collar gentlemen and women is an often repeated theme in Tendulkar’s later plays.
All the male characters are failures in their respective field and suffer from insecurity. Among other characters Sukhatme is a flop lawyer; Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar are childless; Ponkshe is an inter-failed scientist; Karnik, an unsuccessful actor; and Rokde has failed to attempt an independent existence. They have no identity of their own and no viable jobs. Somehow, they keep themselves integrated with the urban society by showing off as a theatre group dedicated as the lofty ideals of the society. Particularly, Mr. Kashikar describes his work as a work of social reformation. Samant represents the rural folk and offsets the complexities of the urbane characters. They all suffer from sadism and a kind of inferiority complex.

Leela Benare is a member of a drama troupe of amateur artists. During her teens, she is seduced and sexually exploited by her own uncle. He does not marry her and her mother supports him. Benare overcomes the trauma and completes her education. She becomes a teacher and earns good reputation as a teacher. Her academic interest takes her to Prof. Damle who she respects for his scholarship and intelligence. Though married, he exploits her sexually and betrays her. She requests Balu Rokde and Ponkshe to marry her and save her from ignominy. But they are neither courageous nor compassionate to help her. Benare ridicules their diffidence. She is frank and open. She exposes the hypocrisy of people and laughs at their flaws. The other actors of the troupe are victims of her ridicule. So they plan to take it out on her. In the name of a mock-trial, they expose her private life, humiliate her and hurt her feelings severely. They do not find fault with Prof. Damle, the real culprit, who has spoilt her life.

Prof. Damle is absent at the trial denoting his total withdrawal of responsibility either social or moral, for the whole situation into which he has landed Miss Benare. She remains as the prime accused as the unwed mother of his illegitimate child. Interestingly, the accusation brought against her at the beginning of the trial – that of infanticide - turns into the verdict at the conclusion. This very reversal in the attitude of authorities expresses the basic hypocrisy and double standards on which our society is founded.

However there is a difference between Benare’s illusions and others. Benare’s illusion is born out of her miscalculation; and hence, it is circumscribed. She thinks that her maternal uncle will accept her as a bride. But she is ignorant. She grows into
a rebel. She possesses a natural lust for life and spontaneous joy, and violates social norms. She asserts her rights to lead her personal life in her own way. As a grown up woman she fell in love with an unusual intellect and it was more a worship than love. But she came to realize that it was also a mistake. "He didn’t want my kind, or my devotion- he didn’t care about them... he wasn’t god. He was a man. For whom everything was of the body, for the body". (Silence!-75) And she miscalculates Prof. Damle and falls prey to his lust. She is in search of her own identity and does impose illusions deliberately upon herself to escape from reality. She is not afraid of the reality. But the other characters force upon themselves an illusionary world being scared of the grim reality. In fact, illusion is an escape for them.

Benare is too young to understand what is sin or a crime in the eyes of society. She is unable to differentiate between male’s infatuation and pure love. She is led to believe that her mother’s brother is her man, her love. Being the uncle, he has the privilege to break the restrictions imposed on girl in the traditional house and he misused that natural proximity. This relationship shows how incest operates in the traditional society and how it is a perverted way of fulfilling natural human urge for sex. Benare’s demand for marriage with him shows her intuitive response and her blind love. But a matured, grown up, unmarried woman has shown interest in Prof. Damle who is an elderly person with wife and children. She is not womanized here. Rather she miscalculates Damle to be her life partner. It is clear that she has great regard and affection for Damle. It is her choice. But for Damle, Benare is an object, a commodity to be used and thrown away. This is a typical male’s attitude to young women. But she is equally responsible in this illicit relationship, which is also highlighted from a male writer. Her tragedy reveals that too much of innocence is unpardonable even in the so-called cultured society. Quite ironically, innocence is punished and cruelty is set free. L.S. Deshpande, who has worked on the translation study of the play, puts it as:

"The punishment meted out to Miss Benare speaks volumes of the ways of our so called cultured society. The story of Miss Benare’s innocence is a long drawn out tale of woman’s suffering at the hands of man. As usual, the man is left scot-free and the woman is made a scapegoat by all those around her. Needless to add, however, that all this is just a play and, hence not to be taken seriously. The height of the irony lies in the final utterance of the play: “The show must go on!” exposing the moral and
intellectual snobbery of the white collar, educated middle class Indians.”¹³ (1991:330)

The mock-trial also helps the playwright expose to his audience the cruelty that is latent in the collective psyche of the city-bred male chauvinists of urban India. Benare is horrified at the naked display of their innate cruelty towards her. The eagerness and enthusiasm with which the Kashikars, Rokde, Sukhatme, Ponkshe and Karnik heap evidence after evidence against her terrify her and eventually, she sits frozen like a motionless statue.

Benare offers herself to him, perhaps in desperate search for a life partner, as she has none to arrange her marriage. Hence, in Benare, we find the modern women on cross road struggling with the question ‘to be or not to be’. In the quest for liberation she is under the dilemma how far one should reject the tradition and social conventions. She wants freedom but prefers to be married. She explains her relationship with Prof, Damle in these words:

“Again I fell in love. As a grown woman. I threw all my heart into it; I thought, this will be different. This love is intelligent. It is love for an unusual intellect. It isn’t love at all—it’s worship! But it was the same mistake. I offered my body on the altar of my worship. And my intellectual god took the offering….and went his way. He didn’t want my mind. Or my devotion. - He didn’t care about them! He wasn’t a god. He was a man. For who everything was of the body; for the body’…..(Silence! p.118)

Benare is disillusioned in her quest for a stable and conducive relationship. She despises it but she wants to retain it only for her child to be born. Tendulkar presents Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar as a conventional urban middle class couple with the usual male hegemony. Mrs. Kashikar is not as educated as her husband. He devotes little time to his wife but he loves her as much as a husband in an arranged marriage loves his wife. It is moral duty-oriented love than natural impulsive love. Benare, a progressive woman is against the society. Mrs. and Mr. Kashikar along with their associates represent the traditional society. Obviously patriarchal society rules are male prejudiced. Society has prescribed certain norms for the women to live in the society. A different set of norms is meant for men. Men enjoy all kinds of freedom while women are forced to live in restrictions. As and when a woman asserts herself for equality and freedom the society comes down heavily upon her. Benare is the kind of woman who asserts her individuality and breaks the social rules that come in her way to freedom.
In a way Tendulkar goes with the feminists in voicing women’s concern, their sensibility and their subjugation as well as their protest. He brings to light the male prejudice and men’s false sense of superiority complex. Benare’s life is a continuous struggle against patriarchal hegemony and male biased conventions and rules of the society. Though she is humiliated and dismissed from the job, she does not succumb to the social torture and stands defiant till the end. She doesn’t allow her personal tragedy affect her professional duty. They conspire against her and start an enquiry to probe her moral conduct in her private life. Finally she is dismissed from the service. She is an intelligent and matured lady with her own conviction. She accepts the obligations of the professional life as a teacher and an actor, and asserts her authority on her private life:

‘My private life is my own business. I’ll decide what to do with myself; everyone should be able to! That can’t be anyone else’s business; understand?’

Everyone has a bent, a manner, an aim in life. What’s anyone else to do with these?’ (Silence! P.117)

She strongly upholds it that one’s private life is not a subject of public scrutiny. She refuses to answer silly question pertaining to her affair with several men and particularly with Prof. Damle. She stubbornly turns silent. Her silence is also her defiance. Thus she maintains an edge over men in her moral courage, integrity and self-reliance. Despite defiance and boldness Benare is the embodiment of innocence and compassion. Despite being exploited at every step she has done harm to none. Here is an observation by Shailaja B. Wadikar: “The noteworthy quality of Tendulkar’s plays is optimism. It characterizes his men and women who, despite the fact that they fall victims to the hostile circumstances, are stubbornly optimistic. Benare is cheated twice by her male–counterparts but she is happy with the thought that her body carries within it the witness of her love.”14 (2008: 5). Benare is projected as a rebel against the established values of the basically orthodox society. So, in a sense, she may be seen as Tendulkar’s projection of a ‘New Woman’ in the Indian context.

Benare can be considered as a political subject in that she claims her independence as a person:
'I haven’t hurt anyone. Anyone one at all! If I’ve hurt anybody, it’s been myself. But is that any kind of reason for throwing me out? Who are these people to say what I can or can’t do? My life is my own. I haven’t sold it off to anyone for a job! My will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill those. No one! I’ll do what I like with myself and my life! I’ll decide....(Silence! 58)

This is the spirit of individualism in Benare that makes her to take a drastic step of getting pregnant with the man she loves, Prof. Damle, though he rejects later on and refuses to give his name to her child. She desperately tries to persuade several people to marry her so that the child can have a legal name. The game played by the participants in the form of mock court-trial represents the violent and merciless way in which the dominant establishment deals with the challenges which threatened to rock the very foundation on which it stands. The play lodges a fierce attack on the ideology of glorification of motherhood. It lays bare the sexual politics in patriarchal norms of family and gender relations.

While exploring man- woman relationship in the plays of Tendulkar, Shibu Simon says in the article: “His plays, so different in form and content, are pointed towards this important human predicament which is itself a tribute to the questioning, probing spirit of Tendulkar. The change from the traditional to the modern is carefully carved out in his plays through his powerful female characters. His plays bring out the gradual change which has come over the relationship between man and woman. Nittilai and Vishakha in Karnad’s The Fire and the Rain can be considered as typical Indian women. Benare, Sarita, and Padmini can be considered as typical representatives of young women of Modern India” ¹⁵(1999:180)

Sukhatme plays an important role in the prosecution of Benare. He is a lawyer cum actor in profession. In the mock-trail he plays the double role - of the counsel for the prosecution and also for the defense. He appears masochistic and sadistic who takes delight in torturing woman. His anger against Benare is born of his own frustration in professional life. He is a failure, where as Benare is a successful teacher. His male ego can’t bare all this. Benare’s description of her colleagues is punctuated with shrewdness and sarcasm. She refers to Sukhatme as “an expert on the law” (Silence! 59). Ironically, “he is such an authority on the subject, even a desperate client won’t go anywhere near him! He just sits alone in the barrister’s room at court, swatting flies with legal precedents!” (Silence! 59).
Mrs. Kashikar, though issueless, is happy with her life. She has social security and respect. However she has neither any identity of her own nor does she crave for it. She is flat, conformist and complacent character. Feminists believe that men looked at women from their point of view. They have even forced women to look at themselves from male point of view. For example, here, Mrs. Kashikar's reaction towards Benare upholds the traditional values for women in the society. She is highly critical of women's liberation movement and thinks of it as a social evil. She chastises Benare in the following words: Mrs. Kashikar: “What better proof? Just look at the way she behaves. I don't like to say anything since she is one of us. Should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a man: an unmarried woman? No matter how well she knows him? Look how loudly she laughs! How she sings, dances, cracks jokes! And wandering alone with how many men, day in and day out! “(Silence! P.100). It insists that to be a woman- a wife, a mother, an individual- in India means many things. It means that she is the store-house of tradition and culture and in contrast a volcano of seething energy of strength and power that can motivate a whole generation to change its values, its aspirations, its very concept of civilized life.

One can notice the problem of feminine figures in the myths of a patriarchal society is compounded by the fact that these are not solely male projections but also represent some aspects of feminine psychology in these cultures. The reason for this image and feminine psychology is that very early in childhood, girls learn accurately to perceive and conform to the patriarchal images of femininity entertained by the men around them in the household. Mrs. Kashikar is governed by ideals of womanhood in a traditional society. She on her own keeps interrupting in the mock trial and does something on her own for which she is sometimes snubbed by Mr. Kashikar, 'Can't shut up at home, can't shut up here’(Silence! P.77). Here she represents the typical Indian housewife dependent on her husband for everything. She has no significant role to play. Shanta Gokhale rightly points out: “Tendulkar has made Mrs. Kashikar ridiculous and in an insidious way, dangerous; but he has also made it possible for us to sympathize with her. He has not idealized Benare, but forces us to sympathize with her. In this way he allows women their foibles and weaknesses without forfeiting any part of the human goodwill he wants us to have towards them.”(2007: 35)
The play makes a sharp break with the tradition of Marathi plays in respect of subject-matter and mode of presentation. According to Chandrashekar Barve:

“This is not a play about the cornering of Benare. In fact, the dramatic element in it is derived from the situation in which the “being” of Benare is engulfed by the social existence of her individuality, she tries to express her ego openly and freely; and finally, it is throttled, ‘life is something like nothingness’—these crazy words of Benare are good comment on the nothingness of our being.” (1990: 23)

The Playwright depicts that innocence lies more in the primitive than in the modern. Samant is an honest, helpful and compassionate character in the play. He feels sorry for Benare’s plight and feels happy when motherhood is praised. Samant is a poor villager innocent of the ways of these cunning urban people. He is pure in heart and stands for justice. He is called upon to play the role of a fourth witness; he says that he can answer if the trial is really a ‘mock’ one, as he fails to realize the real motive behind Sukhatme’s interrogatory procedure. Samant does not wish to do anything which might further unsettle Benare who has already become an unwitting target in the cruel game being played on her by Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Karnik and Rokde. Sukhatme describes how the tradition makes woman; the nature of charge against accused is dreadful. ‘It is a heinous blot on the sacred brow of motherhood—which purer than heaven itself. It is bankrupt of morality. Her conduct has blackened all social and moral values. The charge against the accused is infanticide. I mean unmarried motherhood. Motherhood without marriage has always been considered a great sin by our religion and traditions.’-He declares her ‘public enemy number one and that “na stri swatantryamarhati” (woman is not fit for independence).and then makes a parody of it “Na Miss Benare swatantryamarhati”.

The mock-trial holds a mirror to our social response to such things. It is preeminently male biased. What is wrong, immoral for a woman is not so for a man. When Benare talks to Samant of her career as a teacher, she says that her pupils are “so much better than adults” (Silence! 56) when she makes this observation she has Prof. Damle in her mind. She says:

“At least they don’t have the blind pride of thinking they know everything. There’s no nonsense stuffed in their heads. They don’t scratch you till you bleed, then run away like cowards”. (Silence! 57)
It is again the sexually suppressed middle-class woman at cross-roads that stands here and pours out her heart that has been closed tight for many years. She asserts that “Even your own flesh and blood don’t want to understand you. Only one thing in life is all important—the body.” (Silence! 117).

Arundhati Banerjee appreciates this outpouring of Benare’s heart:

“Leela Benare’s defense of herself against the onslaughts of the upholders of social norms in a long soliloquy has become famous in the history of contemporary Marathi theatre. It is important to note here that Tendulkar leaves us in doubt as to whether or not Benare at all delivers the soliloquy, thus suggesting that in all probability what she has to say for herself is swallowed up by the silence imposed upon her by the authorities. In fact, during the court proceedings, on several occasions and protestations are drowned by the judge’s cry of “silence!” Benare’s monologue is reminiscent of Nora’s declaration of independence but lacks the note of protest that characterizes the speech of Ibsen’s heroine. It is more a self-justification than an attack on society’s hypocrisies. It is poignant, sensitive and highlights the vulnerability of women in our society.” (1992: p ix.)

The school authority has decided to dismiss Benare from her service. This shocks her and in sheer despair, she tries to swallow the tik20 that she keeps in her bag. Sukhamte as a defense council says, “Human beings are prone to error” (Silence! 115). But as a lawyer for prosecution finds that Benare’s conduct unpardonable. Then she is asked if she has anything to say. And the motionless Benare stands up erect and says—“yes I have lot to say” (Silence! 116). She expresses her love of life in these words:

“How new, how wonderful every moment is! Even ‘you’ seem new to yourself. The sky, birds, clouds...even the strong smell of medicines in a hospital, even that seems full to bursting with life. Life seems to sing for you! There’s great joy in suicide that’s failed. It’s greater even than the pain of living. (Silence! 116).

There are various moods in this speech. Miss Benare loves the world, she loves her body, her teaching profession, she has enough emotional strength to take pleasure in giving and accepting love. But men in her life have just fleeting interests. They cannot understand relationships; they cannot accept life with all its colors.
Further, she continues her appeal in the following manner-

“Life is a very dreadful thing. Life must be hanged. Na jeevan jeevanamarhati. ‘Life is not worthy of life.’ Hold an enquiry against life.

In dejection she realizes the futility of life and sex. It is more pronounced in the theatre of absurd. It epitomizes restlessness of spirit and the effect of modern western culture. Here we see how a character like Benare, in spite of her honesty, conviction, and devotion, is subjected to male’s victimization in her job. Ultimately she is left with the stagger. She is humiliated by public dissection of her private life. She has got rough treatment at the hands of her mother, her lover, her employer and her friends. As and when a woman asserts herself for equality and freedom, the society comes down heavily upon her. Benare’s courage vividly comes up when she boldly faces the trial and refuses to answer silly questions pertaining to her affair with several men and particularly with Prof. Damle. She stubbornly turns silent. Her silence is also her weapon. It is a silent mutiny. But she is intelligent enough to hit back in eloquent words as she does in her monologue at the end:

“These are the mortal remains of some cultured men of the twentieth century. See their faces—how ferocious they look! (Silence! P117).

These words of Benare show that she has defied their attempts to oppress her down. Thus she maintains an edge over men in both moral courage, integrity and self-reliance. Despite being alone she does not yield to any pressure and emerges as a revolutionary leader. The violence that these men in the play show towards Benare is a result of their own failure and helplessness in life. They try to derive a devilish pleasure in their sadistic behaviors towards Benare. As Sudhir Sonalkar opines: “The play is not just about violence. It is, of course, about the suppressed sexual violence of our middle class. But it is more than that, it is about the innate savagery in all of us and above all it is a kind of exercise in coming closer to poetic truth, however ugly.”

(Nov-20-1983:21) The mock-judge, Kashikar, pronounces the final judgment: “Marriage is the very foundation of our society’s stability. Motherhood must be sacred and pure.” (Silence!- P.118) So that she would lose her job, her only solace, and the child would be destroyed in the womb itself. Thus, this play is a caustic satire on the social as well as legal justice. In an article, “Levity and Seriousness in Silence!” Jyoti Havurkar rightly remarks:
‘Silence! The Court is in Session has been taken as a play that shows how a woman is tormented in a male-dominated society. The deeper implications are to expose the way how inferior, mediocre persons— small men as Shakespeare calls them— trap superior individuals and fulfill their innate burning itch of publicly denouncing them. But they cannot do it openly. Hence they take recourse to such subterfuges as a mock-trial. Cruelty, laced with fun and farce becomes all the more cruel. The “Wanton boys” like Sukhatme and Ponkshe have their “sport” but in the process, they “kill” beautiful butterflies like Benare. Perhaps this is the only kind of “justice” the Tesses or Benare can expect to be done to them by the “sporting” self-appointed moral police of the world of the Sukhatmes, Ponkshes and the Kashikars”\textsuperscript{20} (2007: 104).

Thus, one can notice the playwright’s myriad attack on judiciary, intellectuals, teaching community and at the society which is known for its hypocrisy, lack of sincerity, promiscuity, dishonesty and host of other ills. Tendulkar’s world is one where sex and aggression have an upper hand.

Tendulkar has been quite often accused by critics and scholars of appropriating ideas from Western plays and films and indianizing them. Tendulkar himself has admitted that in his early days he was influenced by Western films and Western playwrights like Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and J.B.Priestly. He has also stated that he has consciously and unconsciously been inspired by just about everything around him. Enormously, he was involved with social issues. The function of Tendulkar’s plays is neither to just entertain nor to just reveal ironies and contradictions but to help man know himself in relation to his environment.

The sense of identity has many meanings. It is neither completely conscious nor unconscious, although at times it may appear to be exclusively the one or the other. It cannot be completely identified with such terms as self-conception and self-esteem, and a disturbance in the sense of identity is not the same as role conflict or conflict in values, although occasionally it may manifest as either. Erikson’s major contribution to the notion of identity has been to show that the formation of individual identity, that sense of self-sameness and continuity in time and space, has as much to do with his group’s basic way of organizing experience— his group identity— as with the vicissitudes of his personal development. In discussing identity, personal growth
and communal change cannot be separated; nor can we separate the identity crisis in individual development from the contemporary crisis in the historical development of his group since the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other. The playwright projects Benare’s characters in such circumstances where she suffers from identity crisis in this social set up.

The play ‘Kamala’ (1980) shows that both men and women suffer on account of gender warp. It illustrates how women are exploited at home while men are exploited at work. It shows how ruthlessly women are treated in the society. Exploitation, dominance, lifelessness, cruelty and violence characterize the Indian society at large. The play exposes how women are used and abused or rather exploited by their male-counterpart. The protagonist of the play, Jaisingh exploits Kamala’s situation for achieving name and fame, then leaves her to her fate as soon as his purpose is served. In this play Tendulkar attacks the field of journalism and the institution of marriage. In the writer’s deft handling of the complex and varied issues, one can clearly notice his keen observation of life. The function of art is not to provide answers or solutions but to raise questions. His plays give the audience a new awareness of truth which is difficult to encounter.

Experience and factual detail is the ground on which his drama is created. Kamala throws light on the evils in the so-called modern, cultured contemporary society. It explores physical as well as mental exploitation of women within the family and outside it. The events and incidents depicted in the play have their origin in real life. The play ‘Kamala’ is based on a real life incident. Ashwin Sarin the then correspondent editor of the Indian Express fetched a girl from a rural flesh-market and presented her at the press conference. This throws light on the ghastly flesh market, the wretched position of women in society, the cut-throat competition that goes on in the success-oriented contemporary generation and the egoistic hypocrisy of the young journalists.

Jaisingh Jadhav is a responsive, adventurous journalist. He takes risk, exposes scandals and caters the paper with sensational news. His work greatly boosts the circulation of the paper and the owner increases his salary. He accepts such a dangerous task not with a view of reforming Kamala’s life but as a part of his professional commitment. Kamala a red-light area woman is purchased by a self-
seeking journalist, Jaisingh Jadhav and is treated as a commodity. Kamala, for him, is a means by which he can get a promotion in his job and win reputation in his professional career. She is used as a ladder in his career. Jaisingh buys Kamala an Adivasi woman for 250 rupees to prove that such auctions are a reality. He presents her in a press conference in the same torn sari that she has been wearing. When Sarita suggests him to dress her in a new sari for press conference, Jaisingh rejects and wishes to present her in the same torn sari for real-effect. After proving his point, Jaisingh sends her to women's home. When Sarita asks him whether he has thought of Kamala's feelings, he tries to convince her that Kamala will find the home a luxury. As a journalist his motive is to create sensational news at the cost of poor Kamala. She is presented as an item of exhibit in the name of reformation, where the press men enjoy vulgar inquiries about her. Kamala is discarded and forced to seek refuge in an orphanage. Later, Jaisingh is dismissed from his job by the proprietor under the pressure of powerful people who are involved in the flesh market. He loses his temper, curses his employer and decides to expose all his crimes at a press conference the following day. Here Sarita tries to console him and saves him from a total mental collapse even after knowing his selfish hypocrisy. The humanitarian ideology is clearly perceptible here in her behavior though women have not been treated as human beings as men.

Sarita represents educated and sophisticated wives. They do not realize that their education makes them sophisticated slaves. As will be seen in mental deformity, education impoverishes our awareness. Jaisingh represents educated liberal middle-class men. They cherish the illusions of their freedom and liberalism. In crisis, their hidden male chauvinism comes out. They do not know that they are exploited and oppressed by their employer as their wives are exploited and oppressed by them. Thus in the play, 'Kamala becomes a powerful symbol of being exploited and oppressed'.

Talking to Sunil Shanbag, Tendulkar expresses: "Kamala after a time becomes a symbol. The wife of the journalist becomes ‘Kamala,’ and ultimately even he (the journalist) becomes ‘Kamala’."

"Psychoanalysis is accepted as a theory of how women are psychically ‘induced’ into femininity by a patriarchal culture, and is then accused of perpetuating that process, either through a practice assumed to be prescriptive about women’s role (that is what women should do), or because the very effectiveness of the account as a
description (that is what is demanded of women, what they are expected to do) leaves no possibility of change."^22(Rose 1983:8)

Thus we see that Vijay Tendulkar has been the most prolific playwright probing the cruel reality of injustice to woman. Like Nora in Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House,” Sarita is treated as an object than an individual. Here it is shown how women are deprived of equal rights, dignity, love and affection. Women are used in a mode of use and throw. It is noticed that Jaisingh duped Kamala who had come prepared to his ‘bonded keep with all the associated feeling of sex, motherhood and living’. He exploits not only Kamala but also his wife, Sarita. Despite his effort to remove injustice in society, he unconsciously practices it in his own house. It is appropriate to quote Arundhati Banerjee’s comments:

“Like Kamala, Sarita is also is an object in Jadhav’s life, an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort”^23(1992: p.ix)

Jaisingh represents male egoism and domination causing exploitation and ill-treatment of women. The play offers enough scope to ridicule at the kind of journalism practiced by Jaisingh Jadhav. This play manifest his acute dissatisfaction with the prevailing social order. The central female characters in these plays Benare and Sarita represent the urban, educated, modern, sophisticated ladies of society. It is observed here that education has not enabled them to overcome the traditional barriers of sex—discrimination and still women victimized by the male dominated society. All his plays reveal that the tone of the writing is realistic, at times satirical and sad

Tendulkar presents modern man in all his complexities. He portrays life as it is from different angels, without trying to moralize or philosophize in any way. All the works contain a latent critique of modern Indian society, mostly middle-class and lower middle-class, though from different angles. “Kamala is an indictment of the success-oriented male dominated society where women are often victims or stepping stones in men’s achievements.”^24(Ibid:p.viii-xviii)

Vijay Tendulkar depicts social issues quite sensitively and accurately. Perhaps the play Kamala is also a gyno-centric in the sense that it is built on the transformation of Sarita, emerging from the role of an obedient wife to an assertive,
mature woman in the end. Jaisingh Jadhav is a well-known young journalist associated with English daily published by an unscrupulous press baron, Sheth Singhania. Sarita is his wife. She is well educated, from a village called Phaltan, dwells in Delhi. Kakasaheb is Sarita’s uncle and he is currently in Delhi, in order to procure his quota of newspaper with Jadhav’s help. Kakasaheb comes from an aristocratic family, runs a paper in the vernacular. He follows Gandhian principle and leads a very simple life. Act I deals with the dialogue between Kakasaheb and Sarita, speaking over the phone. We learn from the dialogue that Sarita has to attend her husband’s phone calls like a receptionist. In case she fails to do so, she will inevitably attract Jadhav’s displeasure leading to domestic conflict. To quote Sarita’s words:

“I have to write down each phone call. (KL.3) “If I say they didn’t tell me their names he gets angry with me for not asking.” (KL3).

In another statement one can notice that Jadhav does not tell her anything about his frequent outgoings. “He’s gone out of town somewhere.”(KL .4).

It is clearly shown that Jaisingh treats his wife as a slave, puts her on duty as his P.A to receive phone calls. He doesn’t care for her pain and pleasure; insults and distrusts her. But she submits herself to him by losing her identity. As a wife, Sarita is extremely sensitive to her husband’s needs and tastes and makes an arrangement for him when he returns to Delhi from newspaper office. She keeps delicious food and drinks ready for him. She gives him sexual pleasure. Jaisingh is obedient to and loyal to his master while Sarita is obedient and loyal to him. In such a sexist and familial system, a ‘good’ wife refreshes her husband so that he may work hard for his employer. So, it can be said as Claude M. Steiner aptly points out: “In order for a man to be optimally exploited in his labour he must live with a woman who, on his eight hours of off-work time, re-supplies him with energy.” 25  (1980:380-381) Kakasaheb rightly observes: “You may be highly educated, Sarita, but you are still a girl from the old Mohite” wada”(KL5). Kakasaheb does not approve of Jadhav’s style of functioning mainly because of the danger involved in the manner of his reporting which infuriates the powers that be. His apprehensions regarding Jadhav’s safety becomes evident in his question to Sarita: “can’t he write them from our correspondent?” (KL.7). Sarita replies: “He is absolutely determined to write everything under his own name. Once they forget to print his name and he nearly
resigned” (KL.7). Sarita knows that it is futile to advice her husband to carry a gun, as her husband will not pay heed to any advice regarding his own personal security.

Jaisingh Jadhav arrives bringing with him Kamala a village woman, whom he has bought from a village in Bihar. He has already made every arrangement to present her as an exhibit to prove that flesh-trade is extensive even in the remote villages of India. However, Kamala doesn’t know that Jadhav is going to present her at the “Press conference”. On the other hand she thinks that Jadhav has bought her in order to keep her in his house forever as his mistress. This sensational journalist, claiming to be the champion of Adivasi women’s right and posing to bring about a revolution in the outlook of society through his articles, is utterly selfish, cruel and insensitive to the feelings of women. In spite of Kakasaheb’s warning, Jadhav reports to his editor over the phone of the successful completion of his mission, namely, buying Kamala as a proof of flesh-trade and the ‘Press Conference’. He goes on warning Jadhav of the danger involved in the kind of investigative journalism where he is engaged in, but Jadhav is under the impression that he will be protected by both his editor and boss, in the event of any danger.

Sarita is indeed a” lovely bonded laborer”, taking note of all phone calls and attending all her husband’s needs and instructions. Kakasaheb and his friends like Jain have nothing good to say about Jadhav. Jain says: “Hi, Bhabhiji,........ This warrior against exploitation in the country is exploiting you. He’s made a drudge out of a horse- riding independent girl from a princely house, (to Jaisingh) shame on you! Hero of anti-exploitation campaigns makes, slave of his wife. (to Sarita) Bye, lovely bonded laborer...(KL.17).It shows greed for money and craze for success render Jaisingh loveless and mindless. Jadhav gives shocking news that human beings are sold in the bazaar. “They have an open auction for women of all sorts of ages...”(KL14). He even adds: “The men who wants to bid handle the women to inspect them....How they feel in the breast, in their waist, in their thighs and …”(KL.14) At this juncture, Sarita outraged and asks him to stop like stopping all the vices against women. She tries to extend a help to Kamala, but Jadhav stops all her effort and warns her strictly not to tell any one that he is going to exhibit Kamala at the conference. He hopes: “There’ll be high drama at today’s conference. It’ll create uproar!”(KL15). Where one can notice that the faint hope of a woman is immediately stopped by the oppressive attitude of a man who considers himself as an authority.
Kamala is so ignorant and illiterate that she does not know that she is in Delhi not in Bombay. She expresses her desire to see Bombay as it is a very big city. She tells Jadhav that she cannot go with him in her rags. Before presenting her at conference Kakasaheb persuades Jadhav to see the danger that he is landing himself in. But, as a hero, Jadhav tells him that someone should take up the cause of the common man and so, he is doing it. Kakasaheb argues that none can effect any meaningful social or political change in India through English dailies, as they reach only a small section of Indian population by saying:....“This new journalism of yours-if money making is not the object of it — ...what I mean is nothing will ever come of it. ‘Arre’, write the people’s language first, speak it. Then try and teach them. (KL.24).

In the press conference, which is outwardly held to expose the sexual harassment of the helpless woman Kamala is exposed physically and psychologically. She has to answer bitter queries in her tattered clothes such as: “If there is a free sex among you, what do you do with the illegitimate children? How many men have you slept with?”(KL.29). Kamala feels embarrassed, while journalists flushed with wine and enjoy themselves. Kakasaheb watches them in silent amusement. Sarita asks them “So while they were asking her those terrible questions, and making fun of her, you just sat and watched, did you?”(KL.30). Jadhav defends it in a way that he holds it for the benefit of the common man to drag this criminal sale of human beings into the light of the day. Jadhav wants Sarita to accompany him but she repels and avoids him and goes to the kitchen. She realizes the pathetic condition of women. Here she thinks of injustice which is done to women, where man claims to expand his physical and mental needs at denying equal rights, dignity, and love to women.

Another important aspect of the play is woman- woman relationship. Both Sarita and Kamala are treated as mere pawns in Jadhav’s game of chess in the beginning. However, she becomes aware of her real predicament only when she converses with Kamala who asks her what price Jadhav has paid for her. To quote from the play:

Kamala : Can I ask you something? You won’t be angry?
Sarita : No, go on.
Kamala : How much did he buy you for? (KL.34).
Sarita coolly tells Kamala that Jadhav bought her for seven hundred rupees. Sarita realizes the truth by Kamala’s innocent question and it opens her eyes suddenly, and she finds that there is no difference between herself and Kamala whom her husband has bought to exhibit at the press conference. Thus both of them are objects of pleasure, money, and reputation. Jaisingh calls himself a journalist of commitment, but this commitment is less to human values like freedom than to sales and advertisements as Sarita points out. Jaisingh is a pukka representative of the patriarchal ideology of what it means to be a husband. That is why Jaisingh’s arrogant remark—“It’s I who take decision in this house and no one else” (KL42)—makes her realize that he is the master and she is the slave. His house, his wife is nothing but the things to be owned. The realization is shocking and painful to her. What Simone de Beauvoir says about the modern men applies aptly to Jaisingh here. “The men of today show a certain duplicity of attitude which is painfully lacerating to women; they are willing on the whole to accept woman as a fellow being, an equal; but they require her to remain the inessential.” (1949: 291)

The playwright exposes asymmetrical gender relations in society. Arundhati Banerjee rightly points out, “Like Kamala, Sarita too, is an object of Jaisingh’s life, an object that provides him domestic comfort, social companionship, and sexual pleasure.... She, too, in her own way is exploited as Kamala’s entry into the household reveals to Sarita the selfish hypocrisy of her husband and the insignificance of her own existence.” (1992: viii-xvii)

Like feminist text, the play highlights bonding between women. Sarita, tries to extend all sorts of help to Kamala for her comfortable stay. Only women understand the problem of women where Kamala expresses her readiness to bear Jadhav’s children to make the house a pleasant place to live in. Kamala tells Sarita:

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

It is now that Sarita realizes her husband’s master plan of using both of them as mere objects to satisfy his own ulterior motto. She finds that there is not much
difference between herself and Kamala. The character of Kamala represents an illiterate unconscious slave in the flesh-market and that of Sarita represents an educated, sophisticated slave in the household. Now Sarita makes up her mind to assert herself by rejecting to accompany her husband to a party. Thus, she says:

Jaisingh: you don’t want to come? Why?
Sarita: That is my will.
Jaisingh: (Rather surprise) your will?
Sarita: Aren’t I allowed to have a will of my own?
Jaisingh: (sarcastically) never noticed any signs of it before. If you didn’t want to come, you could at least have told me earlier. Then I wouldn’t have accepted for both of us.

Kakasaheb: (...) Is your head aching?
Sarita: If I had one, it would.
Kakasaheb: you don’t have a head? Then who does?
Sarita: The gentleman who just left.
Kakasaheb: Gentleman? What gentleman? I didn’t meet anyone
Sarita: I did

Here Sarita refers to Jadhav, her husband by the term ‘Gentleman’, underlining the fact that he has become a stranger in her life. Sarita like Nora in Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, has, thus, undergone a sea change and she is now entirely an independent and assertive woman who has finally discovered her real identity. But, unlike Nora, she stays back with an awakened consciousness. Now Sarita tells Kakasaheb that she is going to convene a press conference at which she intends to reveal before the whole world the real state of affairs at home:

“I am going to present a man who in the year 1982 still keeps a slave,

Right here in Delhi, Jaisingh Jadhav. I am going to say this man’s a advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave and exploits her.....Listen to the story of how he bought the slave Kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free—not just free—the slave’s father shelled out money—a big sum”. (KL.46).
Kakasaheb startled at her statement and asked “what on earth happened between you two?” (KL46). Sarita replies: “Marriage” (KL46).

Here one can notice Sarita’s the most pungent, ironic statement about the status of women in the society. As Jandhyala points out: “With woman’s sexuality so closely bound with marriage and her role as wife and mother, there was no possibility of considering her sexual needs and desires.” (25, Nov-1983. III). Thus women are sexually oppressed. It is reflected in the concept of chastity, a patriarchal value. It is one of the most powerful yet invisible cultural fetters that have enslaved women for ages. Tendulkar reveals that in the patriarchal set up marriage is not only a means of regulating sexual and reproductive behavior but also a means of upholding male dominance. Patriarchy is the greatest enemy of woman.

When Kakasaheb asks her why she suddenly begins to think thus in strange terms, Sarita says:

....I was asleep.... Kamala woke me up, with a shock. Kamala showed me everything.... Who is my husband, he is my master. I am not his companion but a slave. I have no rights at all in this house. Because I am a slave. A slave has no rights, isn’t it? Yes uncle. A slave can work hard, must dance to tune of the master. Dance to their master’s whim. Laugh, when says, laugh. Cry, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up....when he says lie on the bed –she (she is twisted in pain) (KL.46).

Sarita who is ghastly offended physically and mentally symbolizes the suffering of humanity. She makes up her mind to revolt against her trivial state and to prove her entity in future. Even Kakasaheb makes some feeble attempts to pacify her. He screams in impatience at the injustice done to women in the society.

Thus, He says in the end: Why? Why can’t men limp behind? Why aren’t women ever the masters? Why can’t a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as a man? Why must only a man have the right to be a man? Does he have one extra sense? A woman can do everything a man can. (KL.46).

Tendulkar shows the male-centered world with an optimistic note that women can emerge as capable modern individuals who challenge the male chauvinists in society. Sarita has the hope that one day she will be free so she says:
The day will come, Kakasaheb, when I will stop being a slave. I’ll no longer being an object to be used and thrown away. I’ll do what I wish, and no one will rule over me. That day is sure to come. And I’ll pay whatever price I have to pay for it. (KL.52).

Here Kakasaheb is impressed by the quiet determination in her words, even audience is also fascinated by her steady look at the future. It is interesting to note here that the uncle Kakasaheb who first sympathizes with Sarita and is critical of Jaisingh ends up telling her that men are like that, and that her place is beside her husband. In a subversive way he is ensuring the continuance of the status quo, and Sarita agrees. One can wonder whether it is an act of self-sacrifice or a mere product of social conditioning. Or is it gender politics? It is most likely a blend of all these.

A remark of Kakasaheb shows that male characters are located more in sociology than in psychology. He exposes the contradictory ideology of gender justice. This is obvious in his behavior that he talks in favor of women but exploits his wife. To Sarita’s question why only women must suffer quietly while men are hailed for their so called achievements, Kakasaheb answers, “you’re wrong. Do you think men don’t have a problem?” When the news of Jaisingh’s dismissal comes Kakasaheb says to Sarita, “This is the problem of men face. The problem of achievement in the outside world.” It then strike us that Tendulkar has not portrayed working women as working women. We do not see Benare in her workplace; she is not ‘tried’ for her achievement in the outside world, that is, her commitment to and success in teaching children. She is tried for the relationships in her private life.

Now Jain, Jadhav’s friend comes to inform Sarita that Sheath Singhania has dismissed Jadhav for the exposure of flesh trade at the press conference. Some politicians are involved in this flesh racket. Sarita, at once asks Jadhav over the phone to come back from the party. Jadhav is shocked to hear the news and curses his boss and goes on drinking and finally, he collapses on to the sofa. Tendulkar brings out not merely the tyranny of gender but the tyranny of power also, by presenting the same society that enjoys the exposure of Kamala goes against Jaisingh, who becomes helpless towards the end of the play. Helpless people like Kamala cannot help becoming scapegoats then. Thus, Jaisingh is a journalist in a free democratic country but he is also a slave of the bourgeois mentality of the society. The play is not about
Kamala or Jaisingh or Sarita but about the wickedness in the society that is mainly gender distortion. In this context Vikram Gokhale comments on Kamala:

"Sarita is a frightening representative of the orthodox Indian wives. If one looks at the ending of Kamala, one wonders whether Tendulkar wants to suggest that Sarita, because she represents Indian wife, is a masochist, and if so does she remain so because she has no other alternative. Further, even as the champion of idealistic journalism Kaka Saheb comments on his nephew Jaisingh wallowing in the mud of yellow journalism, and on his rude behavior with his wife, he also speaks about his own married life and tells Sarita a thing or two from his own experience of life. Now in doing this it is not clear whether Kaka Saheb cynically mocks at Sarita’s suffering by telling her that she has no alternative or whether he is trying to gloss over his own male chauvinism. It is not certain whether he really opposes Jaisingh or not. If he does, to what extent? There are many such tormenting questions about Kamala which the play does not answer,"^29 (2007: 152)

Now Sarita asks the overwhelming and thought provoking question; Why are women not masters like men? Why can’t a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as man? Why must only a man have the right to be man? Sarita insistently asserts on the need of a change in the concept of manhood and the possessions and execution of certain rights in all domains of life. She cries out: This must be changed. Sarita insistently asserts on the need of a change in the concept of manhood and the possessions and execution of certain rights in all domains of life.

Thus, these plays are delineating women, who, in spite of their supposed inferior position in Indian context, rebel against all oppression and demand our admiration. They would like to establish their identity by being different and taking deviation from the compulsion of the male dominated society. Shanta Gokhale opines that, “They are allowed to inhabit the entire spectrum from the unbelievably gullible to the clever, from the malleable to the stubborn, from the conservative to the rebellious, from the self- sacrificing to the grasping. Tendulkar has created memorable male and female characters, but it is his women, on account of their unique position in society, who help to reveal his social conscience, and it is they who emerge as the columns and beams on which he builds his structures.”^30 (2007: 32)
They are not romanticized, idealized, or forced to live by their creator's symbolic purposes. Tendulkar has given his women character a greater variety of depth- and thus a definite edge, over – to their male counterparts. Benare's emotional outburst at the end of Silence! And Sarita's confident and assertive statements towards the end of Kamala show that both the plays are beyond question, gynocentric. Here Sarita asks the overwhelming and thought provoking question; why are women not masters like men? Why can't a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as man? Why must only a man have the right to be man? Sarita insistently asserts on the need of a change in the concept of manhood and the possessions and execution of certain rights in all domains of life. She cries out: This must be changed.

Thus, Sarita is projected as the anxious manager of home and culture she is on a ceaseless quest for a credible meaning to life, eternally seeking an intelligent purpose to living along with her male counter-part. Women come to realize the inauthenticity of the lives they lead and struggle to discover for themselves their own impulses, reactions, desires and needs. Their quest for self-knowledge and self-realization which can lead to the relationships based on mutual understanding and respect. Individual change and social change, both are desired goals, together with an eventual change in organized perceptions and attitudes.

Finally, it is interesting to note that Tendulkar reveals in his plays the multicolored facets of women in modern India and as such reflects the fully awakened feminine sensibility. Mary Wollstonecraft observes, “Whether she be loved or neglected, her first wish should be to make herself respectable, and not to rely for all her happiness on a being subject to like infirmities with herself” (1792: 40). As such, in these two plays, women are led to an awakening of their consciousness, which at the core of feminism. They are awakened to their true nature and needs.

The characters in Tendulkar's dramas are determined by forces, norms and traditions which are inevitable and over which human beings have no control. All these characters in his plays are victims either of their inherent evil nature or of hostile circumstances. Thematically, his plays have ranged from the alienation of the modern individual to contemporary politics, from social-individual tensions to complexities of human character, from exploration of man – woman relationships to reinterpretations of historical episodes. A woman plays a central role in Tendulkar’s
plays such as Kamala, Kanyadaan, A Friend’s Story, Silence! The Court is in Session, etc. He exposes vices and weakness of society through the portrayal of women characters. Most of the characters who occupy the focus of the plays are educated and sophisticated and hence, refuse to accept the traditional moral values and to be intimidated by men. In their revolt against the established values, one can notice the playwright’s social attitude, though Tendulkar is not a self-acknowledged feminist.

Elaine Showalter observes, ‘How much easier, how less lonely it is not to awaken…yet we cannot will ourselves to go back to sleep’\(^{32}\) (1985:128) Tendulkar plays focus intensely and elaborately on a network of male tyranny and the politics of male power as organized by the patriarchal system. Thus, the awakening consciousness of women characters lead to the subversion of the chief agent of patriarchy.

There are no simple solutions anymore. The woman at the end of the play does not usually make an imaginative escape into a larger life created independently of sex and boundless in joy and sympathy. Even those women, who are more fortunate, with advantages of birth, wealth, education and opportunity, do not find a fully eventuated mature union with the opposite sex. The poor battle for survival does not train their sights higher on equal job prospects, pay and sexual roles. When survival needs are met, they find they are confronted with other problems like loneliness and alienation.

Most women in literature and in real life have to struggle with conflict situations. As for as possible they try to conform, to break away to assert their individuality, to overcome the sense of loss in rebellion, and to resolve the identity-crisis. The figure of the Indian woman—with her inner strength and integrity, paving her own resolute way through an exploitative, sexually discriminatory world-serves as an inspiring light of hope and endeavor.

**Tyranny of gender in Tendulkar’s dramas**

Gender criticism unequivocally puts forward the notion that the conception of gender is not natural. It is unstable and indeterminate; still it fashions our sensitivity and cognition, and remains to be an axis of social inequality. It recognizes that the socially offered structure of men and women relationship is inclined to devalue and subordinate women, even though it does not have any aggressive political agenda. It
also recognizes that the cultural constructions of gender excludes and condemns those women who do not fit neatly into the heterosexual binary. Tendulkar's drama exposes the tyranny or oppressive nature of gender which leads to violence due to social inequality.

"The relationship of man to woman is like no other relationship of oppressor to oppress. It is far more delicate, far more complex. After all, very often the two love one another. It is a rather gentle tyranny."^33 (2001:169)

In the developmental process of culture and civilization, the natural way of life comes to an end. Biologically and culturally too, human beings are divided into men and women. Adopting the ways of culture, both of them suppress their spontaneity and lose their real joy of life. They perform their roles assigned to them in the making of an institution called family. Household chores as cooking food, nourishing children, etc., become woman's sole responsibility. Man becomes the head of the family and governs and controls all its affairs. Ultimately, it leads to the formation of male-dominated society that oppresses womankind all over the world. In the so-called civilized society, women are exploited by their husbands in their houses and men by their masters outside their houses. What Rousseau says of man is perfectly applicable to Indian society: "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains" This so because each and every one tries his/her best to suppress others to establish power and authority. Exploitation, dominance, ruthlessness, and violence characterize the contemporary Indian society at large. Tendulkar's plays depict the exploitation of men and women within and outside their houses for centuries. In spite of the establishment of democracy, women are oppressed and exploited more than men. Unfortunately, Indian society in general, gives its implicit consent to the dictum from Manusmriti: "A woman deserves no freedom." Love of patriarchal values is a characteristic feature of orthodox Indian society."^34

As codified in the Manusmriti, the ritual appears as one important link in men's lifelong guardianship of women, in their roles as daughters, wives and mothers. The text says repeatedly that women cannot have Independence- "in childhood, a woman should be under her father's control, in youth under her husband's, and when her husband is dead, under her sons"^35 (Doniger, 115). Once a woman is given in marriage, she must obey her husband while he is alive and keep her vows to him

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inviolate after he is dead. A woman joined in a right way with a man also assumes his qualities “like a river flowing down into the ocean” \(^{36}\) (Doniger, 199). In the laws of Manu, however, male authority carries legitimacy only when male responsibilities are discharged in the proper way; for marriage, these responsibilities include the careful and selfless selection of a mate for the woman. A father who demands a bride price for his daughter unacceptably turns her into a commodity sold to the highest bidder\(^{37}\) (Doniger, 45-46). Another factor for tyranny of gender is in fact, the mistaken notions of female excellence. This artificial weakness produces a propensity to tyrannize.

Aparna Dharwadker remarks: “In Tendulkar’s *Kanyadaan* (1983), the familial and social symbolisms of this ancient ritual collides against contemporary social processes whose very purpose has been to subject patriarchal authority, prescribed gender roles and caste divisions to radical scrutiny\(^{38}\) (2008: 287). As a Marathi play from 1983 that uses caste as theme and young Dalit writer as anti-hero, *Kanyadaan*, inevitably evokes the twentieth-century history of the struggle over the practice of untouchability, as well as the more immediate phases of the Dalit movement in Maharashtra and in the nation as a whole. The presence of Arun in *Kanyadaan* connects the play to this history of Dalit movement, just as the presence of Nath, the Brahman socialist, recalls upper-caste progressive reformers, such as Jyotirao Phule and Sane Guruji (whose photographs hang in Nath’s living room) Tendulkar’s choice of subject also appears to be deliberate and strategic, because any fictional representation of Dalits necessarily intersects with the community’s highly visible profile in the social and political life of Maharashtra.

The play ‘*Kanyadan*’ (Daughter Gifted Away, 1983) is about a girl born into a political family with progressive views who marries a Dalit man because she sees anguish in his poetry, and promise in delivering him from his devilish tendencies. Her father’s lofty ideals have inculcated in her a spirit which tries to find the good in people, and strive to change them. When she informs her parents, her father is ecstatic, but her mother Seva and brother Jayaprakash are unhappy, after they meet Arun and are shocked by his language and behavior. However, after getting married to him, she soon realizes that the devil and the poet-lover are one and the same person, they can not be separated, neither can he be cleansed of the vices (drinking, wife-beating) that are a part of him. In fact, there is a strange malice in him, a sadistic
desire to punish her for the suffering; his ancestors have gone through the ages. Arun’s excuse for his attitude is the mistreatment meted out to his family and forefathers at the hands of society. Finally, the father, who has taught her the lofty ideals of humanity and socialism, is defeated. He finds himself powerless before the predicament of his daughter, and has to praise his son-in-law’s autobiography, applause spewing his mouth and poison dripping from his approaches.

In *Kanyadaan*, according to Maya Pandit, “Jyoti becomes a site on which the clash between the upper caste and the Dalit castes takes place. She becomes the vessel in which the conflicting caste ideologies pour their aspirations for power. The complete submission of the girl’s gendered self to the violence perpetrated on her by the caste politics leaves no scope for even an ideological alternative. That she deliberately chooses to become the model, ideal, Hindu, Brahmin housewife to him, that she will call her husband’s people and home her own, sacrifice her career for him and mutely suffer all the physical, sexual and psychological violence and humiliation inflicted upon her by him is the problematic of the play. Why has this happened? Is this the failure of the progressive movement which failed to instill in her a consciousness of her identity as a woman? Is this the failure of her civil rights?” (2008:70) Here, the girl lacks the awareness that the issues of caste and gender are interlinked. Here we can notice the marginalization of lower caste men and gender oppression of upper caste woman in Tendulkar’s drama.

Nath, the idealist who dreams of a casteless society, gives his consent to his daughter’s marriage immediately. Seva, who works for the welfare of dalits with a determined, conscious mind, is well aware of their reality and hence, objects to Jyoti’s decision of marrying a dalit boy and gives a caution about the risk involved. As their family is used to Nath’s ways, (male authority) they finally agree. Jyoti and Arun get married. Later on she faces the evil consequences of her wrong decision as feared by her mother. Her married life follows a series of misery, violence and disillusionment.

In *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar takes on the members of the Poona Brahmin community on the other side of the political spectrum, as political progressives with socialist leanings. It deals with the psychological study of the social tensions caused by casteism in India. *Kanyadaan* may be seen as an indirect comment on the evil consequences of father’s obsession with idealism and husband’s obsession with caste
consciousness resulted in the perennial suffering of the woman. Bitter experiences of life turn the stubborn idealist into a disillusioned realist. It is difficult for father to believe the fact that the person who describes humiliation he has experienced with extraordinary sensitivity and seeks sadistic pleasure in taking revenge upon his wife for the guilt of her class or earlier generations. Father feels guilty thinking that his daughter becomes miserable for having sincerely followed his scale of values on the path of humanism. If the play Kanyadaan is viewed from psycho analytical way one can notice the psyche of contempt rooted in the consciousness of a Dalit youth, Arun Atavale. The ‘discontent’ of civilization that goes into the formation of Super Ego and watch over the individual’s every mental process is termed by Karen Horney as “basic anxiety”. The term has been defined as “a feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world”(Horney, 41). It becomes a significant mechanism to analyze the gender-centric, caste-centric and class-centric oppressive mechanism affecting the life and sensibility of marginalized communities.

The play, Kanyadaan is an effort to explore the psyche of contempt rooted in the consciousness of a Dalit youth. Arun Atavale, the protagonist of the play, is a sensitive, educated and oppressed youth. The experiences of tortures for his caste induce insecurity and rebellious attitude towards reality. For this suppression, instead of sublimation, Arun adopts sado-masochism as a defense mechanism to seek an outlet of the terrible turmoil of hostile experiences. Kanyadaan is a powerful depiction of subdued violence, best expressed through the psyche of the Dalit youth Arun who is an embodiment of the repressed humanity whom the likes of Jyoti must join to attain an alternative voice.

In the opening scene one can witness a happy family gathering. At the same time, we feel a little disturbed at the fact that parents do not spend much time with their children, Jayaprakash and Jyoti. Nath is a busy man who is always on tour delivering public speeches. Seva is also busy organizing women’s rallies and camps. Children are accustomed to their absence and Nath is also aware of this, as their conversation reveals:

Nath : .... When she (Seva) goes to Bombay for a women’s camp, I stay here to lecture in Pune. If she comes to Pune, I go to Aurangabad to take part in a rally for people’s right.
Jayaprakash: Don’t worry, Dad; the two of us are always here. We keep conveying your messages to each other.

Nath: That’s just it: sending messages to one another cannot be called marriage. Isn’t there a thing called co-existence? Eh? This is all too much of a rush,

Baba: This matter will have to be reviewed seriously sometimes.

Jyoti: First the rush and scramble must stop. For both of you. (KN.3)

We are given the glimpse of the Devlalikar household. Jyoti has to discuss the question of her marriage- a matter of life and death to her in fifteen minutes, as the father has a bus to catch, which will take him to his speech making tour and the mother has just returned home tired after a rally. It is a comment on the quality of the family these two social reformers have been able to give to their children, despite their observance of democratic norms. Nutan Gosavi comments that: “Though, to all appearances, the atmosphere in the house is liberal and democratic, the cruel fact that the parents have really no time for their children, engrossed as they are in their own self-centric activities. In fact, the children are seen not as individuals with their own aspirations, but as mere extensions of their parents’ social experimentation.” (2008: 155)

Jyoti is not quite sure as to why she wants to marry Arun. Jyoti hesitantly tells her father that she likes to marry Arun, a Dalit youth, whom she has met in the Socialists’ study group. Seva is shocked but Nath is excited and dismisses his wife’s questions concerning boy’s background and occupation as irrelevant. Jyoti tells her mother: I feel he can be (trusted). His poems and auto- biography have inspired me with complete faith in him. (KN. 10).

Seva warns Jyoti of the consequences of her hasty decision saying:

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….you have been brought up in a specific culture. To erase or change all this overnight is just not possible.

He is different in every way. You may not be able to handle it. (KN.13).

Jyoti tries to dispel her mother’s fears by telling her that she will manage. She intends to bring Arun when they are both at home.
In the second scene, Act one, Jyoti is introducing Arun to her parents and brother. Arun is a dark complexioned, harsh faced, good looking man. Arun feels quite nervous and uneasy when he enters inside the comfortable middle class house. He does not want Jyoti to leave him alone, saying, “I feel uncomfortable in big houses.....”(KN.16). Jyoti is surprised. Arun continues:

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

It denotes that how his words express malice and hatred for Brahmins. It clearly shows the conflict between upper castes and dalits in our society. Tendulkar delves deep into this social evil and depicts as it is. Arun asks Jyoti that she can share a small hut with his parents and lead a very pathetic kind of life, which is craving for basic necessities. Jyoti finds it difficult to bear the harsh reality of life. She begins to weep uncontrollably on hearing Arun say:

And you thought of marrying me; our life is not the Socialists' service camp. It is hell, and I mean hell. A hell named life. (KN.18).

Further she cries for his rude words. Immediately Arun apologizes for being rude in his speech. Arun's inner consciousness retains the psyche of victimization. The comfortable and luxurious living of Jyoti becomes a powerful stimulus to stir his suppressed unconsciousness and it becomes a compulsive obsession in his life to seek an outlet. His suppressed fury takes destructive turn and he seeks in killing the compensation of his loss, “I want to set fire on the whole world, strangle throats, rape and kill. Drink up the blood of beasts, your high caste society. (18). Beena Agarwal rightly says: "the image of “beast blood” is an objective manifestation of the intensity of contempt hidden in his consciousness." (2012:164)

Jyoti laughs when Arun sings, “It's a jolly game, caught a Brahmin dame”. When Jyoti tells him that she is not a touch-me-not girl, Arun suddenly seizes her arm and twists it violently. This sudden change in Arun's behavior hurts Jyoti both physically and mentally. Arun always remains conscious of his lower class origin and
inflicts on Jyoti inhuman cruelties. Constant awareness of the suffering which Dalits have undergone such as eating stale food and flesh of dead animals, etc., renders him violent. His consciousness of Jyoti’s upper caste origin makes him feel inferior and restless. To overcome his inferiority complex and show his manliness he gets drunk and beats her. Even Seva witnesses this scene and hides her sorrow and asking Arun about his education, future plans etc. The moment hints at a ‘stable career’ Arun bursts out talking in a rather obscene language about the advantages of brewing illicit liquor. He says: “No problem, we shall be brewing illicit liquor”. Both Seva and Jayaprakash are shocked at his plan. Seva worries about the ill match of her daughter and tells Nath that Arun can not fit among them. Whereas Nath is pleased with Arun’s appearance and says:

……Seva, until today, ‘break the caste system’ was a mere slogan for us. I’ve attended many inter caste marriages and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense. My home has become Indian in the real sense of the term. I am happy today, very happy…. (KN. 23).

But Seva is well aware of the reality of their lives and tries to explain his uncouth behavior, Nath says:

Not only is he not a middle class man, he is a dalit. He has been brought up in the midst of poverty and hatred. These people’s psychological make-up is altogether different… We must try to understand him and that is extremely difficult. (KN.27). Both Jayaprakash and Seva are not ready to accept Arun as a bridegroom to Jyoti for his ill mannerism. But Nath gives an idealized speech to convince them, like this:

“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 actually married widows. Why did they do it…? That was also an experiment, a difficult experiment. But they dared to risk it.”

The above statement shows that Nath is highly immersed in his ideology and ready to experiment it on his own daughter’s life. Tendulkar denotes here even an educated working woman is unable to take decision of her life and becomes the victim. Nath speaks in defense of Arun’s degraded manners. Whatever may come, he decides to stand by Jyoti’s side. Therefore he says:
I am on Jyoti’s side .... He (Arun) may not be a gentleman, but neither is he a scoundrel. As a human being he has potential. He has intelligence, drive and creativity.... He is like unrefined gold. He needs to be melted and moulded. This is the need of the hour. Who can perform this if not like girls like Jyoti? .....I stand by you. Go ahead my child, let us see what happens. (KN.31)

The play depicts the need of intercaste marriage to bring harmony between the different classes. Hence, social reformer, Nath wants his daughter to take initiation in this regard, since she belongs to higher caste. For him his daughter’s marriage with a Dalit boy is a kind of successful gestures towards his efforts of creating a humanitarian society where human beings are treated as human beings not as animals. Father –daughter relationship in the play shows how idealism manifest in freedom of thought and action becomes the cause of misery. The irony is that the father is worrying about his dream which crumble into dust rather than the life of his daughter crumbled into dust because of his idealist experiment. Jyoti’s marriage for Nath is only a means of promoting his ideological agenda. It is not the marriage of two persons but of two cultures. It is on this high moral, idealistic note that the first act ends. The stage direction says that darkness descends at the end of Nath’s speech symbolically suggests the darkness is that going to descend on them.

However, their marriage, instead of being a source of happiness, turns out a nightmare. Act II opens to show us the character Jyoti who has become tired and crushed after a few months of married life with Arun. She comes home with the decision not to return to him. But mother reminds her marital status and now she is a stranger to this house. Jayaprakash says that she may adjust and suggests that those who are able to adjust to the changing conditions survive. “This is the law of life. Here Seva confidently says how one can create one’s own space. Thus, our Guruji did not teach us that we should change with the circumstances. Rather he would say you can change your circumstances. We have lived with the proud conviction that it is we who bring about the changes in our circumstances”. (KN.24)

Here the playwright portrays the women character that they eventually emerge as the determined type of individual trying to construct their own identity.

Jyoti returns to her parents seeking shelter but her father makes her go with Arun, and asks her not to care for personal happiness but to save the inter caste marriage which is in his view, “a wonderful experiment” in itself.
Meanwhile Arun enters fully drunk asking for Jyoti’s pardon. He says to Nath: I will see Jyoti and fall at her feet. I will beg her pardon. Don’t want anything else. (KN.42). He takes out a knife saying that he is going to cut off his arms with which he beat Jyoti. Immediately he is prevented by sensitive Jayaprakash and Nath. To Seva’s enquiry why he beats Jyoti he says: what am I but the son of scavenger. We don’t know the non-violent ways of Brahmins like you. We drink and beat our wives... we make love to them... but beating is what gets publicized. (KN.44).

Arun adopts sadism as a method and mechanism of wish fulfillment and an unconscious device of the assertion of his identity against the inhuman practice of caste prejudices. That is what the discontent in the life of Arun is not against Jyoti but against the system (caste discrimination) of which Jyoti seems to be a part. He asserts: The very victim of violence may go on to perpetuate the same brutal violence upon others. Perhaps they get a peculiar enjoyment out of it. Perhaps those who are hurt, derive great pleasure in hurting others when they get an opportunity to do so. The oppressed are overjoyed when they get a chance to oppress others. (KN. 51).

Jyoti, reluctantly leaves the house with Arun in order to prevent further embarrassment to her family members. At this juncture Nath feels proud of his daughter and says:

....Jyoti, I feel so proud of you. The training I gave you has not been in vain. (Suddenly dejected). If only I believed in God, then Jyoti, this is the moment I’d go down on my knees and pray for you... (KN.45).

This statement shows his lack of faith in himself and his training, and wishes to pray God for a happy married life of his daughter with Arun by fear. In Act II scene II we see the celebration of Arun’s creative writing which has just been published on the one hand and the other, Jyoti is pregnant. Nath is very happy and he has all praise for his son-in-law’s autobiography that he has shown the world that he is a powerful creative writer though comes from dalit background. But Seva is worried about her daughter’s position as she is advised rest by doctor is not willing to come home. Thus she says:

....The truth is that your dalit son-in-law, who can write such a wonderful autobiography, and many lovely poems, wants to remain an idler. He wants his wife to work.... On top of that, for entertainment, he wants to kick his wife in the belly.
Why not? 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 monumental mission he has set out to fulfill. (KN.47-48).

The patriarchal exaltation of self-effacing femininity pressurizes women to accept the master-subordinate relationship in marriage. It shows that society’s ideas and people’s consciousness are part of the objective social reality and they operate out of the relations of sex, class and caste. It denotes how Jyoti becomes a victim of caste politics. At this juncture, it is appropriate to quote Maya Pandit’s remarks: “In Kanyadan, Jyoti becomes a site, a battleground on which the clash between the upper caste and the dalit castes takes shape”43. (2007: 70). It is true in presenting Jyoti, Tendulkar depicts the inhuman attitude of male character to treat her as an object to fulfill their ulterior motive. Father uses his daughter as a tool to transform the society into a casteless society according to his dream. Husband uses and abuses her for taking revenge against people of high caste with his brutal and inhuman ways of loving sets his wife on torture. Thus, the play shows the authoritative, male-centered society where women become powerless in the institution of marriage. As Simone asserts, “The tragedy of marriage is not that it fails to assure woman the promised happiness- there is no such thing as assurance in regard to happiness-but that it mutilates her; it dooms her to repetition as routine.”44 (1947: 502)

When Nath is requested to chair a discussion on his son- in-law’s book but he out rightly refuses to do so, because of Arun’s hypocrisy and revengeful nature. Seva tells Nath:

“Shall I tell you what I’ll say if they ask me to speak? I will say that in this excellent book, whatever the author, has said about injustice and exploitation is hypocrisy of the first order. Because this man himself exploits my daughter. Like a shameless parasite, he lives on my daughter’s blood, and on top of that he gets drunk and bashes her up. Constantly he taunts her about her caste and her parents, heaping foul abuse on them for being highborn. (KN. 49).

Nath has now realized the pathetic situation of his daughter and all his dreams of casteless society is shattered. Arun comes with two others to have Nath preside over a discussion on his autobiography as he is proud of his creative writing. He considers himself a celebrated writer. But Nath refuses to preside over the function. Arun reacts sternly: “let’s shop elsewhere for a chairman”. At this juncture Nath gives vent to his rage after they have left. His outbursts:

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scoundrel...he wants to blackmail me ....As though I'd overlook my
daughter's and shower him with superlatives. Seva, he ....his visit has polluted this
drawing room, this house, and this day. It stinks.... Why did I have to come into
contact with a man like this?(KN.57)

Though he rejected, his name is printed in the invitation without Nath’s
consent. The invitation is really a trap for Nath: if he declines it, Arun can denounce
him for casteism and thus damage his public image; if he accepts it, he has no option
but to praise the book. He does go to the function and gives a hypocritical speech for
the sake of his daughter’s safety. Whereas his daughter confronts him with uneasy
questions in the last scene that why did he come to the meeting.

Even Jayaprakash praises him saying: “people were saying that Bhai’s speech
was the most balanced, measured and to the point”, (KN.59). But Jyoti is not
convinced by then and continued to hit him saying that it is all a lie, for she knows:
You attended that meeting and made a speech only because you were afraid that if
you didn’t, Arun would torture me more. (KN.66). She continues: ...It was the sole
consideration. There was no other consideration. Your speech today was not only
lousy, it was hireling’s speech. You attended the meeting against your wishes; you
praised that book against your wishes. (KN.66).

Jyoti’s words hurt Nath. His daughter has been a severe critic of his speeches
right from the time when she was eleven year old. He feels helpless and pained to see
all his dreams collapse before him. He implicitly suggests her to give up the ideals,
but she rejects it. When Nath asks her who will take care of her during delivery, Jyoti
rudely replies:

“.....I have my husband. I am not a widow. Even if I become one I won’t
knock at your door. I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devalalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun
Athavale, a scavenger.I don’t say harijan. I despise the term. I am an untouchable, a
scavenger. I am one of them. Don’t touch me. Fly from my shadows, otherwise my
fire will scorch your comfortable values”.(KN.70)

Jyoti leaves her father’s house with a firm decision never to return and to
accept life as it comes to her. Thus, she is willing to rather put up with a marital life of
misery and humiliation than forsake her husband. She rejects Nath as her philosopher
and guide and more painfully as her father. Nath breaks down and lies down on the
sofa, a totally defeated idealist-father. Likewise Jyoti herself verges on a tragic figure
in blindly following her father’s idealism and out rightly rejecting her mother’s and

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brother’s rational arguments. Jyoti realizes that his ideology and his public image were far more important to her father than his own daughter; that she has been a mere pawn on his ideological chess-board. The play ends with the background score rising to fury.

Tendulkar’s writings have an enduring quality in all his dramatic works that is economy of words and the ability to express maximum meaning in minimum words. The girl portrayed in the drama is unaware of the fact that the issues of caste and gender are interlinked. The dramatist tries to open the reader’s eyes through depiction of degraded, dishonored, despoiled women characters, which are subjugated by the male character irrespective of their caste, class, education and economic independence. His plays represent the uneasy relationship between modernity and gender issues. Kanyadaan won the playwright the Saraswathi samman. The play has got both praise and insult, but he is untroubled, as he says, “As its creator, I respect both verdicts”. He says further:

“It is an old habit with me to do what I am told not to do …My plays…contain my perception of society and its values and I cannot write what I do not perceive”45(2004:598).

Thus his play gives expression to a deep rooted malaise and its pains. Tendulkar treats the incidents he has witnessed in real life in an objective manner. He particularly wants to show what damage idealistic parents like Nath do to their children by adhering to this philosophy. It is often said that in a marriage a father loses his daughter, but in Nath’s case the Kanyadaan—giving away of the daughter—has been really painful because he has lost her in more than one way. His Kanyadaan has turned out to be a great sacrifice of his daughter on the altar of his socio-political ideology. The sustained sociological conditioning inhibits and restricts the full development of a woman’s personality such as a girl is expected to be meek, submissive, patient; she should subordinate her will and desires to those of the male magnanimously. This is practiced as a part of the gendered difference that emphasized from childhood the girl is taught to believe in the importance of ‘family values’—values which are presumed to be her responsibility and not the male’s. Thus one can notice such sexual dominion is the powerful concept of control in Tendulkar’s play. A woman becomes a faceless or a mother within the marriage.
Seva insists that the politics of the world has no place in the home at all and disregards the complex emotional bond that does develop between Jyoti and Arun, because she can see the ill-treatment of Jyoti only as Arun's revenge against the upper castes. Jyoti, in turn, holds herself to a standard of conduct that is meaningless in Arun’s world and at the end she makes an absolute but futile commitment to a man who has brutalized her in marriage. Nath loses not only his paternal authority but the right to protect his daughter in the exchange of kanyadaan. But Jyoti makes ‘heroic’ departure, the real place of vicimage is the home she is going to, not the home she has left. She chooses a worse life not a better one. In Tendulkar’s view, the “unaccomodated” quality of this life is also a mark of the disjunction between progressive politics and the actuality of oppression, which measures the failure of even the most committed resistance and reform to affect real social change.

It is assumed that all social practices are the external manifestation of certain invisible determinants but they essentially determine the nature and structure of human behavior. It obviously includes the comprehensive network of religion, morality, social practices, customs and traditions. The cumulative effects of all these agencies contribute to evolve the concept of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ in the life of an individual. The feminist writers have investigated the inner consciousness of the characters who have been the victims of ‘basic anxiety’ and childhood insecurity’ for the social conventions of caste and gender. The psycho-analytical investigation exposes the dynamics of disintegration found in the life of caste oppressed and gender oppressed. Beena Agarwal points out in this context that: “Arun Atavala, the protagonist of the play, is a sensitive, educated and oppressed youth. The experiences of tortures for his caste induce insecurity and rebellious attitude towards reality. For this suppression, instead of sublimation, Arun adopts sadomasochism to seek an outlet of the terrible turmoil of hostile experiences.” (2012:163)

In the context of Freudian ideology, Arun emerges as a paranoid personality, a person who feels that the world is hostile to him. Arun unconsciously looks forward for love and sympathy to escape the horrors of neurotic disorder. Freud in his famous study of Leonardo states:

We no longer believe that health and disease, normal and nervous are sharply distinguished from each other... we know today that neurotic symptoms are
substitutive formations for certain repressive acts... and we produce such substitutive formation."\(^{47}\) (1964: 178)

Arun asserts: The very victim of violence may go on to perpetuate the same brutal violence upon others. Perhaps they get a peculiar enjoyment out of it. Perhaps those who are hurt, derive great pleasure in hurting others when they get an opportunity to do so. The oppressed are overjoyed when they get a chance to oppress others. (KN. 51).

The main cause of the suffering of Jyoti and Arun is their mental deformity, the inferiority complex of Arun and Jyoti’s futile effort to translate her father’s ideals into reality. She states that man is essentially good and evil. Referring to her own specific case, Jyoti poses the question as to how to separate the evil Arun from the good Arun for both are inextricably twined up with each other; Arun is both the passionate lover and her evil tormentor. So she has to accept him as he is, because she cannot reject him. She emphasizes the theoretical inadequacies and a practical difficulty of human nature is fraught with. Jyoti says:

.....I grew up listening to such talk day in and day out.... No man is fundamentally evil, he is good. He has certain propensities towards evil. They must be transformed........ All false and vicious claptrap! The truth is, you knew very well that man and his inherent nature are never really two different things. Both are one and inseparable. ......Putting man’s beastliness to sleep and awakening the godhead within him is an absurd notion. You made me waste twenty years of my life before I could discover this. I had to learn it on the strength of my own experience... (KN.563)

The peculiarity of Kanyadaan as a “political play” is that every major character regards home as the touch stone of ideology as well as experience. For Nath home is a microcosm of the political world- indeed, of the nation-where by resorting periodically to the language of parliamentary process, legal rights, resolutions, and rules of order, he can claim to “uphold democracy vigorously in our home. Democracy in the world, but tyranny at home-we don’t deal double standards like that”. (KN.3) When Jyoti announces her interest in a Dalit mate, Nath immediately attaches himself to the symbolic significance of the event because the match would enable him to realize his political ideals on an intensely personal plane and make his home “Indian in the real sense of the term”(KN.20). Seva cautions Nath not to treat home as a partisan organization in which he can impose his “discipline” or reduce his
daughter to a catalyst in a radical social experiment. She also urges Jyoti not to let the fact of Arun's "untouchability" obscure the real issues that an educated young woman like her should consider, because her life of privilege cannot be erased overnight, while "everything about those people is different (KN.11). Seva suspects Nath of manipulating Jyoti's emotions to expiate his own inherited Brahmin guilt, while it is clear to her that Arun is unsuitable man whose upbringing will prevent him from "fitting in here, in this home" (KN.25)

Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan* pulsates with a modernizing energy that is committed to reform, progress and emancipation. As father and husband, Nath takes pride in not imposing his will on his family, and as a politician he appears to harbor public motives that are not patently coercive or corrupt. However, Tendulkar's preoccupation with the father-daughter relationship and the clash of male and female interests indicates his interest in "testing" the premises of modernity. The disastrous consequences of Nath's attempt to treat his home as a microcosm of the nation impose a limit on progressive agenda and enforce the idea that home and the world are not interchangeable. Nath's self-absolving view of Jyoti's marriage as an act of free will on her part also appears disingenuous because the final confrontation between them reveals that her choice was guided by a devotion to his ideas.

Thus, *Kanyadaan* is a complex play dealing with the cultural and emotional upheavals of the family. The violence projected in the play has three dimensions: physical, psychological and verbal. It deals with the violence in the sub conscious of a Dalit poet who is married to the daughter of a naïve socialist, and torments his wife. It deals with the degenerate mode of backward caste people in our society. Verbal violence can be seen in Arun's abusive, obscene language. However, after getting married to him, she soon realizes that the devil and the poet-lover are one and the same person, they cannot be separated, neither can he be cleansed of the vices (drinking, wife-beating) that are a part of him. In fact, there is strange malice in him, a sadistic desire to punish her for the suffering; his ancestors have gone through the ages. The complete submission of Jyoti, a self-willed, intelligent girl, to the violence perpetrated by her husband on her leaves no scope for any alternative solution. Jyoti deliberately chooses to become the model, ideal Hindu wife, who will follow her husband mutely through the paths of physical and psychological violence.
In most of his major plays Tendulkar projects women as victims. The individual existence of man and his social existence, the harmony and the disharmony between the two is shown in his dramas. The play, *Sakharam Binder* (1972) has an explosive subject matter. He brings out the dramatic tension among Sakkaram and Laxmi and Champa. It explores complexities of human nature. Tendulkar reaches into the depth of physical lust and violence in human beings. It is a study in human violence and terror, in how at the first opportunity people try to oppress one another. It is a cohesive, significant play, which consists of three acts. Each character in the play is the combination of good and evil, strength and weakness. Sakkaram, the protagonist of the play, appears unsophisticated, antagonistic, and violent. The play presents the life in all its ugliness and crudity. It is very difficult to believe such a harsh reality, despite the fact that it is inevitable. With the treatment of the details of actual life, his plays become more and more realistic. Besides, the ideas put forward in the plays are thought-provoking and revolutionary. Tendulkar opines:

> “I think a lot before I write. My creativity has been shaped more by experience than by imagination.”^48^ (2003: Introduction)

Thus he presents the existing reality of human predicament, as he observes with his own eyes. Hence his dramas present a perplexing, distressing, and complex situation in all its seriousness. Through Sakkaram’s character, Tendulkar exposes the masochism of the lower middle class male. He runs away from home because of his father’s ill-treatment. The bitter experiences he faces in his life makes him rude, vulgar and violent. This play is a study in human violence and terror, in how at the first opportunity people try to oppress one another. This came out dramatically in the three major characters sakkaram, Laxmi and Champa. The contrast between champa, the sexy girl Sakkaram picks up from the street and Laxmi the barren women who has lost the love of her husband, is anything but black and white. Both in their own ways are fighting for survival. Laxmi has a queer hold on Sakkaram even while he is attracted to Champa. Sakkaram lives by his own code. He is against the entanglements of any kind.

*Sakharam Binder*, according to Tendulkar, is a play of characters. But one can read various meanings in it. According to Pushpa Bhave, “Whatever angle one looks at *Sakharam*, it is a powerful dramatic statement. It expresses a pathetic situation which arises out of the denial of everything that is human. The problem of obscenity does not really arise because the dramatist is not trying to titillate the audience. The earthiness of the characters lends power to the play.”^49^ (1989: 146)
As Shailaja Wadikar points out, “The frustrated household life in his childhood crushes his tender feeling and leaves him a rough and tough guy growing like a resort cactus that stands on the onslaught of stormy weather” (2008:18). He does not believe in the institution of marriage. So he remains unmarried all through his life. He is the autocratic ruler of his small house in a lower middle class locality. He considers man-woman relationship is something absolutely commercial. He never minds to provide food and shelter to a helpless, deserted woman in the society but he needs them for his sexual desires and for looking after his house. It is like a mutual contract. Wine and women are his chief attractions. He has his own rules and special moral code, which he expects his temporary mistress to abide by. Totally he wants to enjoy his life without hating anyone.

The play opens, when Sakharam brings Laxmi to his house, the seventh one in the series of his women or “temporary wives” to call them so. Laxmi is conventional kind of character who tries her best to fulfill his needs. Laxmi is deserted by her husband because she does not beget any children by him. Now, for her Sakharam is her husband. She fulfills his needs though he fails to understand her expectation and exploits her physically as well as psychologically. Sakharam is able to be so cruel due to the thrashing of his father at his tender age. He says to Laxmi

“Born in a Brahmin family, but I’m a Mahar, a dirty scavenger. I call that a bloody joke! I ran away from home when I was eleven. Got fed up with my father’s beatings. Nothing I did ever seemed right. You’d think I was his enemy or something. The way he’d thrash me!” (SB.127)

The play portrays the ruthless violence that we witness in our society. The childhood experience of Sakharam is quite traumatic due to his parent’s ill-treatment. It leaves a deep, dark impression on the mind of Sakharam and results in childhood insecurity and it makes the individual “against” people. Sigmund Freud investigated three dimensions of consciousness that shape and define human personality. They are Super Ego, Ego and Id. It suggests that super conscious or super ego is governed by ‘morality principle’ and sub conscious or ego includes the domain of reality and rationality. It closely corresponds with social variables and controls human consciousness to accommodate with the surrounding of social reality. The third sphere is unconscious and it is the store house of id. It is governed by “pleasure principle” and is the store house of all these undesirable desires, unresolved conflicts, traumatic
pasts and inarticulate fears. It can hardly be expressed in the civil society. Its reaction with civilized social system leads to suppression. This suppression leads to all kinds of neurotic disorders. In this context, Freud considers religion and morality as the instrument of oppression. 51 (1964:261).

The bitter experiences, Sakharam faces in his life leave him rough and tough and foul-mouthed. The cruel, prejudiced treatment of Sakharam by his parents makes him to behave rebelliously. Though he hates his father, he follows him in many ways. He is as bad tempered as his father. Laxmi seeks shelter under the roof of Sakharam. She is not a Brahmin; yet she observes Brahminical culture. This brings about some good changes in his lifestyle. He starts taking bath regularly and becomes devoutly religious and transforms himself into a responsible “family man”. Though he noticed these changes in himself, but he is not ready to attribute this credit to Laxmi due to his male prejudice. Laxmi is very sensitive, calm, generous and tender-hearted. On the contrary to her, Sakharam is violent, aggressive and sensual. So the relationship between them cannot last for a long time. Laxmi fails to fulfill his excessive sexual desire and Sakharam remains blind to her expectations. As per contract, there is no reciprocal harmony and comfort. He uses rough language; he smokes tobacco and opium; he drinks liquor and enjoys sex without bothering the pain and pleasure of his partner. At last Laxmi leaves him and goes to her nephew for shelter.

After Laxmi’s departure, Sakharam brings Champa, the police Fauzdar Shinde’s wife, into the house. She is younger, slightly plump, and better built than Laxmi. She is fanciful by nature. All good, desirable changes in Sakharam’s life come to an end with Champa’s arrival. The difference between these two can be noticed by their behavior. Laxmi follows the conditions of Sakharam meekly though she has been starving for a week. But Champa never seems disturbed by his conditions rather she responds indifferently and asks him to prepare tea. Thus she dispels his false notion that the household work must be done by woman only. Their opinion about Daud is also contrary to each other. Laxmi doesn’t allow Daud, his friend to join in a prayer to Lord Ganapati, though Sakharam slaps her hard. Like this she proves to be obedient and loyal to her man. Whereas Champa shocks him by frankly expressing her opinion about Daud that he is a nice man. Laxmi accepts Sakharam almost as a husband and submits herself to him willingly; Champa, on the other hand, accepts him merely as “her man” in sheer helplessness. Champa shares bed with him.
reluctantly with a drink since there is no alternative. Somewhere in the corner of her mind she feels that all men are equally bad; a man is, in her view, either a “corpse” or a “dog”.

Champa’s character can be read as an elaborate examination of conventional gendered responses. Her sexuality, her relationship with Sakharam, her opinion about Daud and attitude towards household work display a constant struggle against the gendered norms governing a woman’s choices. Her attitude is in opposition to patriarchal norms which juxtapose male sexuality against the female. Women are encouraged to curb their sexual desires in conventional societies, by encouraging models of restrictive purity. To quote Simone de Beauvoir in this context:

“Because man is ruler in the world, he holds that the violence of his desire is a sign of his sovereignty; a man of great erotic capacity is said to be strong, potent-epithets that imply activity and transcendence. But, on the other hand, woman being only an object, she will be described as warm or frigid, which is to say that she will never manifest other than passive qualities.” (1949:397)

Champa’s frank pride in her body, as well as her admission of her sexual desire, goes against the patriarchal code. She also looks at sex as a means to escape the drudgery and loneliness in her life which indicates an absence of gendered inhibitions. In depicting Champa the dramatist is not using her as a sex symbol as alleged by many. She is the victim of a society which has treated her like a commodity since she was very young. So her curses are against the tortures she has undergone.

Laxmi is shown as a conventional, God fearing woman, her sexuality is expressed in many ways. Her kindness to Champa’s husband is meaningful. In the end, though Sakharam kills Champa, Laxmi is the active force behind it. Laxmi returns to Sakharam once again. But Sakharam beats her and asks her to get out. However Champa comes to her rescue and she is allowed to live with them. So, Laxmi does the house work and worships her Gods. She nurses Champa’s husband and scolds her for ill-treating him. She is disgusted to learn that Champa flirts with Daud. She tells Sakharam about Champa’s disloyalty. Sakharam kills Champa in his rage. She advises him to bury her secretly in the house itself. She justifies his action while he is stunned. Here one is reminded of Tendulkar’s statement that he is more fascinated by the fallen man because he is more honest than those with a pure,
unselfish self-image. Here she shows more presence of mind than Sakharam. She says:

Anyway she was a sinner. She’ll go to hell. Not you. I’ve been a virtuous woman. My virtuous deeds will see both of us through. I’ll stay with you. I’ll look after you. I’ll do what you say. And I’ll die with my head on your lap. Yes now don’t be afraid. We’ll—we’ll bury her. Where do you think? Not out there—no. Somewhere here. Inside. And we’ll say that she went away. No one will suspect. I’ll swear by God. He knows everything. He knows I am virtuous. He ‘ll stand by me. He won’t judge you. I’ll tell him to count my deeds as yours. I’ll do everything for you. (SB.196-97)

The playwright shows the tyrannical attitude of Laxmi also. Being victimized by male domination, she never minds to help the same man to bury Champa, who helped her to stay in his house. Laxmi, who is religious and tender-hearted, turns out to be cruel. She prefers tradition to human beings. Therefore, she accepts a husband however cruel he may be and detests Champa for her disloyalty. Moreover she believes that patriarchal tradition is right and sacred though it has caused immense suffering to all the women since its emergence. Here, symbolically it seems to imply, “she buries not only Champa’s dead body, but her uncivilized, barbaric, feminine desires also. Her power to fight injustice appears everlasting.” (1997: 68-73) The playwright shows that how women are unaware of the inhuman and harmful nature of the tradition. It highlights that patriarchy makes a woman imbibe the responsibility of upholding the morality though it harms another woman.

Champa is quite opposite to Laxmi in her attitude. She never bothers about the tradition. She is quite confident and brave. She is honest and sincere. But she is taken away by Fouzdar Shinde, who comes to raid her mother’s liquor shop. He tortures her by making her do awful things inhumanly! So, she is terribly frightened and runs away. Again he brings her back and tortures her further. As she grows bold, she leaves Shinde and joins Sakharam. Here one can notice that her position is moving from bad to worse. However, she is helpless, for the fulfillment of her bare needs such as food, clothing, and shelter, she has to satisfy his physical needs. She resists having sex with him, but later, she yields to him as she sees no better alternative: “Face half a dozen animals everyday! Easier to put up with this one.” (SB.181)

An excessive sexual demand by Sakharam exhausts her completely and she complains: My head and body – just a bundle of pain and aches.”(SB.179). so she
drinks liquor before she goes to bed with him. She thinks that Sakharam always takes his money’s worth out of a woman. When Champa realizes that he is impotent, she expresses her appreciation towards Daud, the friend of Sakharam. She prefers spontaneous love in Daud than the compulsive sex with Sakharam. She is honest in what she does. So Sakharam strangles her to death as a revenge for his incapacity to satisfy her sexually. She cannot forgive her husband because he has torn her heart. So that she suffers throughout her life span from the tyrannical male domination.

Millett views that woman as a group led a parasitic existence. They are dependent on their male rulers and as "a dependent class", live on surplus. Their marginal life makes them conservative. They identify their own survival with their masters. Hope of seeking radical solutions of their seems too remote for the majority of women until consciousness of the subject is raised.54 (1980: 53)

Due to dependency, many of Tendulkar’s characters suffer from the lack of identity. For instance, Sakharam, Champa, Laxmi, Sarita, Kamala, Miss Benare, Jaisingh Jadhav, Arun etc. All these characters are in search of their identity and try to be recognized. They want to prove themselves, but they are suffering from either the harsh treatment of the caste system or the tyranny of gender and power which prevail in the family as well as in the society. Disregard, carelessness and brutal treatment make them suffer and feel a sense of instability which is exhibited through out his dramas. Victims of violence turn out to be excellent tools of violence. After Champa’s murder, Sakharam is projected as bewildered. So he cannot follow Laxmi’s suggestions. He turns out to be more violent and rebellious. He wants to establish himself by emphatic violence or by aggressive behavior. Otherwise he is nothing. The want of love has generated a kind of fierceness. Sakharam kills Champa as a revenge for his incapacity to satisfy her sexually. He does not care the world but wants the world, particularly his women to care for him. Thus he turns into a tyrant and hides his weakness in inflicting pains and miseries on others. According to Marathi critic Vasant Palshikar: Both Sakharam and Laxmi are extremely selfish, lustful and dominating. In the conflict between Laxmi and Sakharam, the former naturally becomes victorious. The dramatic tension in the conflict is potent with remarkable effects. Throughout the play, Laxmi is portrayed as pious, patient and kind-hearted. The ending of the play throws light on her real nature. The success of the play lies in its presentation of Laxmi’s actual nature.55 (1973:17)
Veena Noble Dass applies the concepts of psychoanalysis to analyze *Sakharam Binder*. She observes: “It was in essence a protest against exorbitant demands of society, especially in the sexual sphere, on the life of the individual.” E. Renuka calls Sakharam ‘a dehumanized brutal wretch.’ She rightly points out that Sakharam’s nature is “as deceitful as that of a crocodile. Outwardly, Sakharam pretends that he is a savior of women, but inwardly he is reservoir of all that is bad in society, so far as man- woman relationship is concerned. Although he criticizes married life, he develops such a relationship, which is worse for the woman who suffers more with Sakharam than with her husband before” But, it is to be understood that he like any other character is a product of our dehumanizing culture. He pretends that he is a savior of women, but inwardly Tendulkar says:”Even in plays like *Sakharam Binder* and *The Vultures*, the theme is not violence. Violence comes as a way of life—a natural way of life if you consider the background of the characters. It is there as the part of the functioning of a character.” The inhuman violence of the human characters in these plays is only the result of the physical deformity. Ramakan and Umakan and Manik drink liquor and resort to violence in order to overcome their deep-rooted joylessness in the play *Vultures*. And violence is the last Sanctuary of the weak. Alienation corrupts and perverts all human values, as Marx puts it.

The play *Sakharam binder* explores the complexity of the frustrated and alienated young generation in the post-independence India. The alienation between the mind and the body, the major cause of physical deformity, makes people unhappy and makes their life meaningless as the bodily sensations are suppressed and prevented from reaching the mind. So people seek to get pleasure by consuming alcohol and drugs and indulging in mechanical sex and violence. That is why Champa drinks liquor and enjoys loveless sex whereas Lakshmi tries to drown her sorrow in religious rituals. According to Arundathi Banerjee, “In the portrayal of the lower strata of society. Tendulkar’s plays signified a definite departure from the main stream. Marathi drama mostly dealt with the more privileged section of the society. One of the reasons why there was such a reaction against *Sakharam Binder* was its burning naturalism. Here was a raw chunk of life with all its ugliness and crudity which was more than a shock to refined and prudish middle-class audiences. Such a direct confrontation with’ vulgar’ reality was difficult for them to bear.”
With the rise of ‘marginal discourse’, women have been frequently and prominently discussed in literature. It is no more a secret that women in India or anywhere in the world have been the most exploited, subjugated and oppressed classes. The literatures across the globe are full of the images of women who have suffered due to their caste/race and gender. They have been the victims of the lowest possible pay, the worst kind of poverty, and the most frequent targets of all sorts of violence, including battering, rape and involuntary infanticide. They have been viewed as an object of sexual exploitation and portrayed as oversexed, immoral, loose-women who are always available for instant sexual gratification. They have been given a number of stereotypical images which are deeply rooted in patriarchal tradition. These stereotypes have been detrimental and disastrous to the social progress of the women community. “The figure of “women” is refracted in numerous competing and contradictory ways within the legal system of a postcolonial nation; individual women get represented as empowered agents, invisible presences, signifiers of sexual, family and property relations, while law in its relation to women gets coded as arbitration, protection, conservation or liberation”\textsuperscript{60}.(Signposts). Tendulkar’s dramas are apt examples of such stereotypical images of women.

The dramatist shocks the sensibility of the conventional readers by rejecting the accepted and established norms, conventions and moral values. His plays comprise a critique on the vices, drawbacks and limitations of contemporary Indian society. The woman herself is trained to safeguard and perpetuate the system is perhaps the worst evil effected by patriarchy. Whatever be their socio-economic background Sakharam, Jaisingh, Kashikar and Arun all have one thing in common—they see women as subjects to be exploited, as possessions, not as individuals with feelings and desires of their own. The exposure of these baser or darker aspects of human life indicates his emphatic demand for a new code of conduct and morality. Probably Tendulkar is trying to say that the shackles of enslavement fashioned through social conditioning are not so easy to break. This approach is discussed further in chapter- V of the thesis.
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