

# Exploitation of Women Characters in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar with Reference to Silence! The Court is in Session and Sakharam Binder

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**Abstract-** *Vijay Tendulkar The Marathi playwright is known for his prolific writing. His writings mainly deal with real life incidents. He is known as the angry young man of Marathi theater. Through his plays he portrays the gender bias that prevails in the society. In Tendulkar's plays women occupy the center position. His women prove to be efficient and refuse to be cowed down by men. The plays Silence! The Court is in Session and Sakharam Binder emphasizes on the status of women in the so called civilized society. Silence! The Court is in Session revolves around the character Ms. Benare a well educated lady who falls a prey to her uncle and later to an educated man Prof.Damle whom she adored as her God. Sakharam Binder is a play where many helpless women are being exploited by a single man in the name of giving protection. Tendulkar's plays brings to light the treatment of men towards women whatever be their status/ position.*

**Keywords-** Exploitation, Gender bias, Humiliation, Infanticide

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vijay Tendulkar The Marathi playwright is known for his prolific writing. His writings mainly deal with real life incidents. He is known as the angry young man of Marathi theater. Through his plays he portrays the gender bias that prevails in the society. In Tendulkar's plays women occupy the center position. His women prove to be efficient and refuse to be cowed down by men. The plays Silence! The Court is in Session and Sakharam Binder emphasizes on the status of women in the so called civilized society. Silence! The Court is in Session revolves around the character Ms. Benare a well educated lady who falls a prey to her uncle and later to an educated man Prof.Damle whom she adored as her God. Sakharam Binder is a play where many helpless women are being exploited by a single man in the name of giving protection. Tendulkar's plays brings to light the treatment of men towards women whatever be their status/ position.

Ms.Benare in Silence! The Court is in Session is the protagonist who seems to be sprightly rebellious and assertive in nature. She is conscientious in her work and commands the love and respect of her pupils. She is also an active member of the amateur theatre group. Her conversation with Samant a

village peasant where they went to stage a play brings to light her vigour and helpless position in which she is. She was harassed and crucified for the mistake which she had committed. The man who was responsible for her downfall was not crucified. she was left to face the trial on her own. Her troupe members were aware of her condition and rather than sympathizing they were trying to harass and humiliate her through a mock trial which they cleverly planned.

During the mock trial Benare was cleverly made the culprit and was brought to court for the trial. The mock-trial which eventually designed as a means to pass time took on a serious outlook in course of time. She was charged for "infanticide". Evidence after evidence piled up against Ms. Benare and it was at that stage that she realized that she was being targeted. She tried to move away from the situation but in vain. Benare in her monologue accuses all men as 'hypocrites' whose only interest is in her body and not the bleeding heart.

Tormented in pain she states that Prof.Damle one of the member in the troupe exploited her for his needs. She admired him as an intellectual- God and offered herself at his altar but her intellectual god took her offering and went his way placing her in such a pathetic condition. He did not even bother to accept the mistake he had committed. Benare mumbles feebly:

He wasn't a god. He was a man. For whom everything was of the body, for the body! That's all! Again, the body!(SC118)

Kashikar, the judge of the mock-trial states that the woman shall live but her child in the womb should be killed because it might be a threat to society if she delivers an illegitimate child. On hearing the verdict she retaliates because it was for her child that she had approached some of her male counterparts to marry her but in vain. The prosecutor stated that woman is not worthy of freedom and Benare proves to be the best example for it. Though she seems to be educated she proved to be an ordinary woman who easily fell a prey to a man for his sensual desires and this had taken place because she was independent. Benare strikes back stating who are they

to dictate terms to her. Her life is her own and that she has not sold to anyone.

The play highlights the conventions and hypocrisy of the middle-class male dominated society which is concerned only with a farcical moral code. It is Benare's fear of such code which made her crave for marriage and beg her male counterparts to marry her in order to play the role of a father to her child.

The play *Sakharam Binder* revolves around the character Sakharam and Laxmi. Sakharam though born in a Brahmin family considers himself to be a Mahar, a dirty scavenger. He does the work of a binder in a press and is also ready to do any menial job if he loses the job he is holding. He tries to be his boss and does not allow anyone to boss over him. He tries to provide shelter for helpless widows on condition that they should be a wife and slave to him as long as they stay in his house. They also have the freedom to leave the house when they desire to do so.

Though he advocates women's rebellion, Sakharam feels, at heart, that the suppressed wives should respect their husbands however inhuman and brutal they may be. This is noticed in his utterings like "I am the master here...the others must obey, that's all. No questions to be asked,"(19) and "No free and easy ways here, see? I'm not hot-headed. When I lose temper I beat the life out of people."(18)

Sakharam seems to be a frustrated man and he tortures the lady at home without any sense of guilt. He tries to lead a meaningless life who finds pleasure in drugs and women. He believes everything comes to an end so there is nothing wrong in getting involved in any sort of activities. After the entry of Laxmi he tries to change a little but that again gets exploited after the entry of Champa. He beats Laxmi and tortures her to the core but she tolerates everything and tries to be an obedient wife though she is not considered so. Champa on the other hand seems to take chance of the situation to exploit Sakharam to fulfill her needs. She does not care for modesty and willingly shares bed with Sakharam's friend Dawood. Champa seems to be a tough woman who ridicules the rules imposed by Sakharam. "Rule! Is this a school or a court or something?"(70) But her rebellion is only sexual. Both Laxmi and Champa had undergone harassment in the hands of Sakharam. They had to abide by the laws instilled by Sakharam because of their helpless situation. Champa's retaliating attitude made her lose her life and Laxmi's submissive nature led her lead a life of misery.

Tendulkar 's plays reveals the incidents taking place in the middle class society. Most of his plays are women centric and through his plays he depicts the atrocities faced by women in a male dominated society. Any amount of effort taken by women to rise from slavery proves to be in vain. They remain exploited unmindful of the harassments they are meant to face.

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