

CHAPTER -1  
— VIJAY TENDULKAR —  
LIFE AND WORKS

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### **Vijay Tendulkar – Life and Works**

It seems that words fall short while dealing with such a dramatist who tried his hand in dramas for the last four decades. Even these works seem to be simple on the superficial level, but all these dramas require deep rumination and hence demands specification before articulating any opinion. Vijay Tendulkar has been one of the most renowned as well as controversial playwrights of India. Like any litterateur, Tendulkar is also a product of his upbringing and his environment. The writing from the different perspectives stirs so many controversies at any occasions it has been alleged that the plays written during the beginning of his literary career have been affected by the western dramatic works.

There are some critics who have made allegation on him that his plays are translated from other languages which is in fact a groundless argument. It is certain that the dramatist like Vijay Tendulkar's stature must have studied the western dramas, but such inspiration should not be considered as plagiarism or stealing. Any talent of the modern literature whether it be a dramatist an actor a dance or a poet should always be willing to draw such creative inspiration. Plato the great philosopher shares the same ideology

about inspiration, which he called as 'creative imitation'.<sup>1</sup> As we know the films and traditional folk dramas also marks their impact on the mind of the writers so it cannot be neglected that may be Vijay Tendulkar gone through under such partial influence of western writers. As a matter of fact Tendulkar himself highlights the references which occur in his plays; even those works in which he does not refer to these sources may be influenced by the western dramas. But it is quite improper to say that his whole dramatic world has been under the direct western influences. The number of his dramas and its quality prove the fact that any plagiarist cannot produce so many dramas of merit.

'Vijay Tendulkar' was a leading Indian playwright, movie and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist, and social commentator. He mostly writes in Marathi language but his plays translated in so many international languages. He is most known for his plays, 'Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe', 'Ghashiram Kotwal', 'Sakharam Binder', Kamala, Gidhade and other. He won Maharashtra State government awards in 1956, 1969 and 1972; and "Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar" in 1999. He was honored with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1970, and again in 1998 with the Academy's highest award for 'lifetime-contribution', the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Ratna Sadasya). In 1984, he received

the Padma Bhushan award from the Government of India for his literary accomplishments. In 1977, Tendulkar won the National Film Award for Best Screenplay for his screenplay in Shyam Benegal's movie, *Manthan* (1976). He has written screenplays for some of the important art movies of India, such as *Nishant*, *Aakrosh* and *Ardha Satya*. For the past five decades, Tendulkar has been a highly influential dramatist and theatre personality in Maharashtra. Vijay Tendulkar can be acknowledged as the precursor of modern Indian drama. His contribution is marvellous and bulky in the development of modern dramatic sensibility.

Though he did write much more in Marathi, the translated work from Marathi to other Indian language is really mind blowing. His plays were translated in English as well as more than ten international languages. His plays were performed internationally in different languages. He was born in Kolhapur and grown up in a ritualistic Brahmin family; he began to write when he was only six years old. He didn't believe in idealism as his many plays derived inspiration from real life incidents or social upheavals which provides clear light on harsh realities. So we can say that Indian literature is fortunate enough to produce a versatile genius like Vijay Tendulkar whose contribution is remarkable not only in the development of the Indian drama

but also lies in providing proper name and magnitude to Modern Indian drama.

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar was born on January 6, 1928 in a Bhalawalikar Saraswat Brahmin family in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. He spent his early childhood in Bombay. There was a literature friendly atmosphere in his family. In addition to holding a clerical job, his father also ran a small publishing business. He was an amateur actor and director as well. The house was full of books and his father encouraged him to read. The literary environment at home and his interaction with books and writers at his father's shop inspired young Vijay to take up to writing. He at the age six he wrote his first story.

When Vijay Tendulkar was a child he was living in Bombay. He witnessed the communal riots from his balcony. He saw the incidents of stabbing. As a child he found difficult to understand death and suffering, but spectacles implant deep impact on him. His father, Dhondopant, was Head-Clerk at Longmans, Green and Company, a British publishing firm. He had been invited to join a professional theatre company but he refused because a career in the theatre was not considered respectable. Every Sunday morning his father takes Vijay to the large bookshop owned by his publisher friend.

So the books in the house and outside had become young Vijay's favourite friends and companions. At age eleven, he wrote, directed, and acted in his first play. At age of fourteen he participates in the 1942 Indian freedom movement, and leaves his studies.

Vijay Tendulkar's elder brother Raghunath was actively involved in the Gandhian movement. Raghunath was got blacklisted in college. Vijay's and Raghunath's temperament started clashing with each other. Due to frustration of life incidents Raghunath becomes an alcoholic during prohibition. Sometimes he can't able to walk by himself to home and hence Vijay had to pick him up from the liquor bar and take him home. The atmosphere of liquor bars and the people drinking over there opened up a new world for him. He was suddenly open to the elements to the uncivilized people of society. He became aware of the violence inherent in man. He starts to inspect more closely at the people around him and found the same things in them. All this entered into his plays later.

Vijay spent some part of his childhood in Kolhapur. He Witnesses the procession of the King pass by on the road with its escort of cars. It was an interesting experience for him. Watching the palace elephants, horses and leopards was Vijay's hobby. A Marathi film company's production manager

was a neighbour of the Tendulkar family. He gave a chance to Vijay to see the shootings. He even performed in two movies as a child artist.

Tendulkar at the age of thirteen shifted Poona with his family. He went to a new school. This period was the period of 'Quit India Movement'. Mahatma Gandhi called upon the students to boycott the schools run by the British Government to end the British rule in India. As many students responded to that call Vijay also responds and begins to attend secret meetings and distribute seditious pamphlets. He was also associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh and communist party for a while. These incidents bring out the fearlessness and adventurous nature of Tendulkar and his love for his country. These qualities later performed in his writings. Due to these activities Vijay Tendulkar was arrested but as he was a minor, he was let off after giving a serious warning to his father. Dhondopant prohibited him from taking any more part in the nationalist movement. Due to these activities he had fallen far behind in his studies. He would often be made to stand on the bench or leave the class. When all this became unbearable, Vijay began to bunk the classes and spent his time watching movies with the money given to him as the school fees. Sometimes he spends his time at the city library. After some time his parents came to know about this. They did not beat or scold him but this resulted in his alienation

from his family and friends. He was alienated from family and hence writing becomes his outlet. Tendulkar tells Mukta Rajyadhyaksha in an interview:

“I participated in a small way in the 1942 movement. Owing to that, I stayed away from school a lot and was often humiliated whenever I turned up in class. I was confused, a loner without many friends, not much of a talker. Writing was an outlet for emotions.”<sup>2</sup>

Most of these early writings were of a personal nature and not intended for publication.

Tendulkar got his early education from the municipal schools in Mumbai, Kolhapur and Poona. He has given the credit of creating his interest in literature to his teachers such as V.V. Bokil, N.M. Sant and P.G. Sahastrabuddhe. The knowledge and guidance provided by these teachers, helped in shaping the writer inside Tendulkar. In Poona, young Vijay came into contact with Dinkar Balkrishna Mokashi and Vishnu Vinayak Bokil, both well-known names in Marathi literature. In an interview given to Gowri Ramnarayan, Tendulkar admits to having been influenced by the personalities and the style of writing of these two authors.<sup>3</sup> Bokil teaches Marathi language in Vijay's school. Vijay gets influenced by his thoughts. Many of bokil's stories become conversational as well as successful. Bokil



never runs away from controversy. He inspired Vijay to develop his freedom of expression and questioning attitude without afraid of anything.

The incidences of Vijay's maternal uncle's suicide and another uncle's admission into mental asylum create traumatic effect on his personality. He acknowledged that he developed a soft spot for cranks and insanity because of his uncles. Vijay faces a large responsibility when Dhondopant was severely ill in his last days. Raghunath had left home after a quarrel with father. Vijay's elder sister, Leela, was forced to work to support the family. She could not get married because her father was against the custom of dowry. Thus Vijay had come into contact with suffering at an early age.

Tendulkar worked as a proof-reader in various printing presses from 1944 to 1947. Then Tendulkar started his career writing for newspapers and magazines. In 1948, he worked as sub-editor in daily 'Navabharat'. He also worked for 'Maratha' and 'Loksatta'. He was the executive editor of magazines 'Vasudha' and 'Dipawali' for some time. He wrote columns for 'Manus' and 'Maharashtra Times'. He also worked as a public relations officer for the Chowgule Group of Industries. During his career as a journalist, he got an exhaustive knowledge of society and human life. His

varied professional experience brought him in touch with people of all classes. While working for daily 'Maratha', he came into contact with Acharya Atre, an eminent Marathi playwright. Atre's guidance had a significant impact on Tendulkar's writing. Tendulkar's journalistic background sharpens his objective and narrative style of writing. According to N.S. Dharan:

“Tendulkar's creative genius sharpened by his keen observation and seasoned by journalistic experience, found expression in his plays.”<sup>4</sup>

Tendulkar settled in Mumbai in 1966. Along with his journalistic career he writes full length as well as one act plays. His collection of one-act plays 'Ajagar Ani Gandharva' wins the Maharashtra State Government Award in 1966. He also writes plays for radio. He comes into contact with Nirmala Sakhalkar at Mumbai Radio Broadcasting. They find life partner in each other. Their marriage blesses with three daughters, Sushma, Priya, Tanuja and a son, Raja. Due to Tendulkar's controversial plays his family members suffer a lot. He takes all the oppressions, threats and insults as challenges of life. He regards these disastrous incidents as learning experiences.

He had already written a play, "Amchyavar Kon Prem Karnar". At the age of twenty he writes the play "Gruhastha" (The Householder) but did not receive much recognition from the audience. After initial failure as a writer he swears that never to write again. Breaking the vow, in 1956 he writes "Shrimant", which establishes him as a good writer. "Shrimant" shocks the conservative audience of the times with its radical storyline. The play is about an unmarried young woman decides to keep her unborn child while her rich father tries to "buy" her a husband in an attempt to save his social prestige. His early struggle for survival, living in Mumbai "Chawls", provides him access to the full-bloodied stories from the urban lower middle class, which were prevailingly not present in modern Indian theatre, or presented in romanticized or sketchy versions. This rapidly changed the very storyline, of modern Marathi theatre, which flourished in the 50s and the 60s with experimental theatre groups like, 'Rangayan', where actors like, Shreeram Lagoo, Mohan Agashe and Sulabha Deshpande, brought new authenticity and power to his stories, while initiating new sensibilities into the modern Indian theatre.

In 1961 he writes 'Gidhade' (The Vultures) but it was first performed only in 1970. It was a play circle around in a morally collapsed family structure. He furthered explored within the theme of violence, and then he

worked on investigation to all its forms, domestic, communal, sexual or political violence. As Jabbar Patel says in an interview:

“He first depicted violence in his earlier work, 'Shrimant', that way 'Gidhade' turned out to be a turning point. For the first time Tendulkar came into his own terms and projects his explicit writing style through his characters for the first time”.<sup>5</sup>

His play 'Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe' ('Silence! The Court is in Session') was performed for the first time in 1967 and became his finest work. It is inspired by a short story 'Die Panne' (Traps) by Friedrich Durrenmat. Satyadev Dubey in 1971, made a film based on 'Shantata Court Chalu Ahe' for which Vijay Tendulkar wrote his first screenplay. In 1970 Tendulkar's play 'Silence! The Court is in Session' gets the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award. With success of this play Tendulkar gets recognition on the national scale.

This was only the beginning of his explorations; soon he switched gears to attacking gender hegemony with his next play 'Sakharam Binder' (Sakharam, the Binder) in 1972. The subject is about a man who doesn't believe either in conventional marriage, morality, or social codes yet want to use the society for his personal motives, without any personal ethics to guide him. He regularly gives 'shelter' to cast-off wives, only to later use them

himself for his personal gratification. All through this, he remains unconscious of the emotional and moral implications, as he can justify his every act, through his arguments and claims of modernity. He seems to be questioning is the garb of modernity and unconventional thinking which is used to enslave the women in our times into another kind sexual stereotype which even they buy into, as they want freedom so badly.

Gender violence of 'Sakharam', gave way to political violence. Political form of violence depicted in his most noted play 'Ghashiram Kotwal'. A political satire, created as a musical drama set in 18th century Poona. This play consist elements of traditional Marathi folk forms with contemporary theatre techniques. It was a new presentation style in Marathi theatre as well as Indian theatre. Today with over six thousand performances, both in the original and in translation, it remains one of the longest-running plays of the modern theatre. Tendulkar's 'Ghashiram Kotwal', written and staged in 1972, won him an international reputation. A section of the society bitterly criticized him branding the play as anti-Brahmin. The agitation against him rose to such a high pitch that he had to seek police protection for his family.

He received Nehru Fellowship in 1973-74 for a project titled “An Enquiry into the Pattern of Growing Violence in Society and Its Relevance to Contemporary Theatre”. He travelled across the country to understand the reasons of the rising violence in the country. Amar Nath Prasad and Satish Barbuddhe aptly write:

“He was not satisfied with the ‘second hand’ information which he got, while sitting in the newspaper office. In his study tours he got ‘first hand’ information of the outside world.”<sup>6</sup>

Tendulkar tries to conquer the limitations of his bookish knowledge and ignorance. He observes the social problems and the oppression of the poor and the subjugated peoples. Through his plays he tries to sensitize the reader-audience to these matters.

His explorations of anger and violence also showed up in his screenplays of films like Nishant (1974), Aakrosh (1980) and Ardha Satya (1984). In all, he has written eleven films in Hindi and eight in Marathi, including 'Samana' (Confrontation, 1975), 'Simhasan' (Throne, 1979), and Umbartha (The Threshold) (1981), a revolutionary feature film on women's activism in India, starring Smita Patil and Girish Karnad, and directed by Jabbar Patel. During his career spanning over five decades, he wrote over 27 full-length plays and 25 one-act plays, several of which have proven to be

modern Indian theatre classics, his plays have been translated and performed in many Indian Languages, across India.

Vijay Tendulkar always came across controversies. The subjects of his dramas, his interviews and the circumstances made him controversial. Some people accused him that he knows the pulse of media and publicity and for the sake of the success of his plays he involves in controversy. When Makarand Sathe asked him about it he reacts:

“I don’t know about success, I don’t know why people felt that way but I think I was very honest and responsible regarding my statements. And if you want to talk about success, I must have to submit that I am very successful to share my thoughts.”<sup>7</sup>

Tendulkar never scared to express his thoughts in public. He talks on the death sentence, he talks on Godhara riots, he talks on Narmada dam, and his statements always make underground eruption in society. He became one of the most virulent and radical political voices in India, providing his scathing insight and viewpoint on every social event and political upheaval.

In theatre, while his contemporaries were still safely exploring the limits of social realism, he broke them convincingly, by jumping straight into the cauldron of political radicalism, and ruthlessly exposed political

hegemony of the powerful, and the prevalent hypocrisies in Indian social mindsets. Though his subjects are intellectual, his plays have a sharp and cutting edge. His writing is always thrilling, contains shock elements, and very powerful hence as Shanta Gokhale says:

“He is considered as profound dramatist of India.”<sup>8</sup>

Tendulkar is chiefly associated with practical dramatic writing and practical stage plays, means he is not a writer of textbook drama, but he knows the language of theatre very well. He has a proper knowledge of ‘Rangantra’ and his plays are performance plays. He contributed successfully in the field of professional stage plays so Dr. Shreeram Lagoo gave him title

“A dramatist of the stage plays.”<sup>9</sup>

Tendulkar always invites innovative ideas, but at the same time respect age old traditions. If we take into consideration the dramatic devices employed by him, even his opponent would agree that he is a modern dramatist.

His thrust for human anguish, his explorations to prove it true and restless and distressful theatrical expression has got him worldwide acclaim.



He had to confront brickbats on home front as well, where the orthodox and the powerful, political bigwigs have tried to prevent his emboldened voice, sometimes by pressure and at others through censor, but nothing succeeded in hampering his expression or his pen.

His play “Kanyadaan” was criticized as an anti-Dalit play. He was awarded the Saraswati Samman for this play. While speaking at the awards ceremony, Tendulkar revealed that once he had a slipper hurled at him for this play.<sup>10</sup> Thus Tendulkar received awards and honours as well as curses and abuses at the same time for his plays. Arundhati Banerjee appropriately comments that Tendulkar is both a venerated as well as controversial figure in the country’s theatre scene.<sup>11</sup>

Tendulkar wrote plays such as A Friend’s Story and Kamala. He wrote screenplays for Marathi movies such as Samna, Simhasan and Umbartha. In 1977, he became a member of the General Council of Musical Drama Academy. In 1978, he worked as a guest lecturer at Tata Institute of Social Sciences. He became the Vice-Chairman of the National School of Drama in 1979. He won the Filmfare Award for the best screenplay and dialogue for the film Aakrosh in 1980. Late in his career, he tried his hand at novel writing with ‘Kadambari: Ek’ and ‘Kadambari: Don’. ‘Vijay

Tendulkar Festival' sponsored by the Indo-American Arts Council was organized at New York in 2004. A Drama Festival of his plays was organized by the actor Amol Palekar at Poona in 2005.

Most of his plays derive inspiration from real-life incidents or societal upheavals. The political, Social, Economical cultural power structures of caste, class, gender and religious domination was his main area of exploration. He is almost fascinated by the interplay and functioning of various forms of violence as an essential need of humanity in all forms of social relations.

This can be very well seen in 'Ghashiram Kotwal', and in 'Kamala' when a journalist is involved in the buying of a woman from the rural flesh market, and who uses the act to sensationalize and promote his career, then disregard, all about the 'bought' woman, and in the 'Mitrachi Ghosta', inspired by a real life actress, whose acting career was ruined after the revelation of her same-sex affair.

Tendulkar had not written the play of the Sangeet Natak tradition of earlier Marathi theatre. ('Vitthala' is an exception in which there are few elements of Sangeet Natak). But he lavishly employed the different types of musical devices in his plays. It would rather be appropriate to say that

element of music is very delicately weaved in his drama, especially in 'Ghashiram Kotwal'. We find a variety of style and colourfulness in his —dramas. As he says:

"In my writing, I like to give more priority to the dramatic purpose rather than structure and style, thus, style and structure only move to be a complement for the dramatic purpose".<sup>12</sup>

In his dramas, there is a perfect blending of structure, style and dramatic purpose in the real sense. In other words, he has not used structure and style for the gimmicks but he has wedded it to enhance the effectiveness of dramatic purpose. Tendulkar asserts that his intention lying behind writing these dramas is not self centred but as part of the society. He considers that it is his moral duty to spread the feeling of brotherhood and bring awareness about humanity.<sup>13</sup>

Though Tendulkar shares this ideology, it seems that this writing was spontaneous and there is no direct purpose to bring social awareness or brotherhood from the inner layer, it is more like that he is concerned with sex and violence and anxious about animal instincts in human beings. Tendulkar also not seems to be interested in giving remedy for the social problem. A quest for the harmonious and organized society for the human being is prominent in his works. Here the quest is in the centre not the

findings. It may be his purpose to explain 'man' with his basic rights. This sensitive writer is very much wounded by the social disorder. This can be easily seen in his dramas like 'Shrimant', 'Shantata Court Chalu Ahe', 'Gidhade', 'Sakharam Binder', 'Ghashiram Kotwal'. As he says in his speech at Mumbai conference, it is not his aim to raise questions and presenting answers. His real intention is to study the situations which create such questions and to dig out the dramatic elements in such an endeavour.<sup>14</sup>

Tendulkar wrote the play 'Safar', ('journey' or The Cyclist) in 1991, a metaphorical play. He decides to retire from writing and he does not write for ten years. But, after a decade he wrote another play. In 2001 he wrote 'The Masseur', followed by two novels, 'Kadambari: Ek', and 'Kadambari: Don', it is based on the sexual fantasies of an aging man. Then he wrote his first play in English, a one-act titled 'His Fifth Woman' in 2004, it is a sequel to his earlier explorations with the women of 'Sakharam Binder' (1972); the play was first performed at 'Vijay Tendulkar Festival', New York. Tendulkar briefly wrote for the television, a powerful TV series (1992), 'Swayam Siddha', starring his daughter, Priya Tendulkar, in the lead role.

His work includes 16 plays for children, including 'Bale Miltat' (1960) and 'Patlachya Poriche Lagin' (1965); five anthologies of short stories, two

novels, and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism, including 'Raatrani' and 'Kovali Unhe' (both in 1971) and 'Phuge Sabanache' in 1974; and a biography, all of which have contributed to a remarkable transformation of the modern literary landscape of Maharashtra and of India as a whole.

Tendulkar died at Poona on May 19, 2008, after five weeks at the Prayag Hospital battling the effects of the rare muscular disease Myasthenia Gravis. Towards the end of his life, Tendulkar faced sufferings like the long illness of a bed-ridden wife, the death of a son and a daughter and his own health problems. But nothing could destroy his love of life. He tried to live each moment of life as it came, attempting to make sense of the experience. Writing every day was as natural as breathing to him. He was writing an autobiographical account of his times when he died. His passing away caused a huge loss to the theatre and literature field.

He has been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in Marathi, the principal language of the state of Maharashtra, which has had a continuous literary history since the end of the classical period in India and has nearly seventy-five million speakers today.

Tendulkar's contribution in Marathi also includes eleven plays for children, four collections of short stories, one novel, and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism, all of which have contributed to a remarkable transformation of the modern literary landscape of Maharashtra and of India as a whole. He is also an important translator in Marathi, having translated nine novels and two biographies into Marathi as well as five plays. He is the author of original stories and screenplays for eight films in Marathi, including *Umbartha* (The Threshold) (1981), a landmark feature film on women's activism in India.

Even the aristocratic society is not an exception in inflicting pain on others, lust and violence, these snobs can bend down to any mean level. On the other hand we find a criminal full of humanity. As Vasant Davatar says:

“In Vijay Tendulkar’s dramas we find humanity with the blending of the embarrassing emotions spread out from the dialogues. Tendulkar does not praise or condemn any way of living but putting it in an ironic position. He portrays the nervous tension fantastically in the ways of living.”<sup>15</sup>

Tendulkar’s writing deals with the complexity of human’s instinctive relationship. Each contains a subtle critique of modern Indian society, and a distinct character and message. As we analyze his work we can see his

uniqueness in his character sketches. Tendulkar becomes meaning full through his character sketch. Through the interaction between characters, their Co-creativity progress and develop the plot. The characters are free to live their own lives. This may lead to unexpected events at the end of his dramas. For example, in the 'Shantata Court Chalu Ahe', Benare feels suicidal tendency. In 'Kanyadaan' Jyoti deserts her doting parents and starts living with her husband, who is violent and full of addictions and thus embraces uncertainty of life.

Tendulkar expresses the boredom resulting in human life by showing these individuals' broken dreams and their conflict with the society. Individuals' confronting with other individuals has already been the theme in Literature. The next step is the confrontation between the individual and the reality. The ultimate stage is the individual's conflict with his identity. The specialty of Tendulkar is he restricts himself to the individual. He is not a playwright commenting on social reality as such. The basic human instinct of sex-violence reflects through the theme of loneliness will come out as the major concern of Tendulkar in all his plays. Tendulkar says in his interview:

“Alienation of an individual from the society derived from the existential contradiction between human instinct and civilized society. The so called social system causes alienation in the

individual and as a result excitement increase in the subconscious state of mind and then the rebel is exposed in the form of disgust behaviour which is a part of human nature from existence of humanity.”<sup>16</sup>

Tendulkar did not get a formal education of playwriting from any institution. He learned by a trial-and-error method. He got his earliest lessons in theatre in his home itself. His father and brother used to write plays and also acted in them. They used to take young Vijay for rehearsals. Vijay felt amused as well as puzzled to see men playing female parts. Tendulkar tells Gauri Ramnarayan in an interview:

“From the time I was four years old, I was taken to those rehearsals. They were a kind of magic show for me. That’s where I saw living persons change into characters. At that time women’s roles were played by men. Imagine my amazement when I saw some of the actors suddenly changing their voice and movements to become women. They didn’t wear saris, but in some mysterious way their pants and shirts stopped identifying them as men. I often fell asleep in the middle of those rehearsals. I suppose father carried me home. All I knew was that I woke up in my bed the next morning.”<sup>17</sup>

Watching the performances of the rehearsed plays later with sets, lights, costumes and make-up thrilled him. The sense of wonder that he felt



in watching the transformation of the crude actions in the rehearsals into the polished performances which aroused tears and laughter from the spectators resulted in Vijay's being drawn to the theatre. Tendulkar himself comments:

"I always feel that this first and repeated experience of the mystique of the theatre has something to do with my being drawn to the theatre." <sup>18</sup>

In later days Tendulkar's interest in theatre led him to writing plays while at school, acting in them and discussing them with classmates. He became an avid play-watcher. Watching a play every day became a routine with him. He used to watch the complete play even if it was below quality. He tried to correct the faults of the bad plays in his mind. Thus it became an excellent exercise to learn the technique of playwriting.

Tendulkar's plays deal with the alienation of individual in diverse forms. The inter play of this basic existential contradiction is the heart core of the aesthetic beauty of the plays. Tendulkar never directly adhered to any ideology but to say that his works are free from the ideological constancy would be misleading. Many critics believe that ideology dilutes the aesthetic beauty the art works. The ideological adherence affected the artist in him. Tendulkar explores the ideology by various themes of individual's alienation. He tries to express or explain the functioning of these

contradictions at different levels. His explorations of social, economical, religious, moral and cultural levels and provide us a vivid canvas of this vast collage.

Another important influence on Tendulkar came from the Hollywood and Bollywood movies of the 1940s. The earliest movies which he saw were silent films, with an orchestra sitting below the screen and playing music right through the show. Then he saw the 'Talkies' of Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd. He said to Gowri Ramnarayan in an interview:

“As a schoolboy I had watched the Hollywood films playing in my hometown, not once, but each one over and over again. I still remember the visuals, not the dialogues which I didn't understand.”<sup>19</sup>

Tendulkar learnt the sense of structure, which is an important part of playwriting from various activities such as listening to classical music, reading poetry aloud and witnessing the fake yet dramatic freestyle-wrestling matches. Roaming around the art galleries and observing paintings taught him lessons in rhythm, form and structure. Watching the performance of Marcel Marceau, the French mimic, had a profound influence on him. He felt that Marceau's mimes had achieved the same effect as that of a complete

play and that too, without the usual accessories of the play such as words and multiple characters etc. Even Marceau's face was hidden behind the make-up of a joker. In an interview, Tendulkar tells Gauri Ramnarayan:

“...watching Marcel Marceau from the last seat in the last row (which I could manage) was an enthralling experience. Not a single word was uttered, but so much was expressed.” <sup>20</sup>

Tendulkar felt that using any number of words will not be enough to convey emotions as effectively as Marceau did through his mimes. Through this incident he learnt to use the words more carefully. He realized the unlimited possibilities of the visual and began to reflect on how to combine the visual with words to convey more out of his playwriting. Thus Marceau's mimes made him rethink on the concept of theatre.

We do not come across stereotyped events or characters from the plays of Tendulkar as they are full of uncertainties. It is a well established conviction from the analysis of various plays. This uncertainty does not distort the sequence of events any deviation or unexpected incident does not harm the harmony or unity of the play. Stage performance is the main purpose of his play; hence there is no binding of entertainment, percept ideal life, immorality etc. in the making of the play. Many of his plays have social families as yet each of it has a different background. Their culture differs

significantly. Different aspects of social order also get changed in his plays. It is perhaps because of this difference there is variety in sensitivity of his characters and in vibration of the sensitivity also, some characters have similar particularities. For example Raghu in “Baby” and Keshav in “Shrimant” gave the impression of madness due to imprisonment and of staggering, and due to starvation but both came from different family backgrounds, different place. Functions are also different in Raghu and Keshav. We can easily find various human values depicted in his works.

The question of humanity and protection of human values does not basically refer to rights but duties. It is associated with the consciences of human being and his sentiments and has nothing to do with laws rules or principles, now days there is a mad race between the powerful countries to dominate the entire world, by exploiting the weaker nation and harassing them in all possible ways. In such critical situation this process can be presented as a powerful symbol, in relation to male female in their relationship, through the medium of literature and art. Vijay Tendulkar had expressed the concept of sex and violence against women symbolically or broader expression of the human sensitiveness in his plays.

Tendulkar's take on violence is matter-of-fact. He feels that man is part of the animal kingdom and despite the veneer of culture; basic animal instincts are a part of his nature. As a writer, he is interested in the human tendencies and frailties that can change people almost overnight. He more than any other writer, read the pulse of society and foresaw the way in which violence rules us.

Vijay Tendulkar considers violence as a basic need of human life. According to him sex is also one side of a coin and violence is the other side.<sup>21</sup> We find different forms and different layers of violence and sex everywhere in his works naturally for example the characters of “ Shantata Court Chalu Ahe ” belong to middle class works who are educated so-called civilized people they are refined and sophisticated by compulsion. Hence there is a sort of microscopic and sugar coated forms of violence beneath cruelty. All character committed the crime on mental level. This play brings before us not only pain, agony and misery of a woman entrapped knowingly or unknowingly in the net of violence. The play is about sexual hunger, desire, ambition, exposes hypocrisy, snobbery, pretences, prevalent in our society. It shows us how cruel and violent our male dominated society is towards a modern woman having free and modern personality. It is a heartrending satire on the age-old traditional tendency to suppress and

exploit a woman. Contrary to this violence moves from verbal to physical forms in such plays as 'Gidhade', 'Sakharam Binder', 'Ghashiram Kotwal', 'Baby' etc.

It disturbs shocks and stuns the spectators witness violence against women characters so openly and aggressively presented through language and physical actions. The same type of violence can be found in racial forms in "Kanyadaan" as practiced by Arun Athawale against Jyoti Through his aggressive and cruel behaviour. Yet the basic conflict is that of revenge and dominance which underlies its background. In the same way it reflects in the play 'Baby'. The female protagonist becomes victim of great uncommon, inhuman mental torture because her brother has been declared insane and she has been forced to bark like a bitch, forced to drink liquor and raped by Shivappa. This Journey of a pious, dignified woman confining her to be only an ordinary helpless lady is a great blot on human society. Violence and cruelty towards women in the form of abuses, harsh thrashing and beating and killing exist without any difference in the characters of the play. Whatever social classes they represent but they belong to the same class of violent behaviour. Tendulkar firmly believes that plays do not help much to rise into revolt but can create a new consciousness at least, can awaken people and that is why the play write aims at stimulating the spectators to

think on their own and to react spontaneously. Here the character is free enough to live and behave the way he or she likes to in human and natural manner.

Tendulkar's writings reveal two aspects of his ideology as a playwright. One is his keen sense of conflict in life and the other is his deep faith in life. Conflict in his plays has many dimensions. It is between two individuals in some plays. For example, Vimal and Sunetra in *Our Sweet Little Home*, Sakharam and Laxmi, Sakharam and Champa in 'Sakharam Binder', Ghashiram and Nana Phadnavis in 'Ghashiram Kotwal', Shreedhar and Dadasaheb in *Shrimant*. There are conflicts between the individual and his family. 'Mi Jinkalo Mi Harlo' (I won I lost), 'Gidhade' (vultures). There are also a few instances of a conflict between the individual and the social circumstances ('Manus Navache Bet' (An Island Called Man), 'Kavalyanchi Shala' (The School of Crows), and 'Pahije Jatiche' (One Must be Born to be Like oneself).

Tendulkar's characters are simultaneously good and bad, weak and strong. For example Shreedhar in "Shrimant" (The Wealthy) is eccentric and cruel but very sensitive and emotional also. Tendulkar also shows the conflict between two value systems in some of his plays ('Silence! The

Court is in Session', Kamala, Vultures, etc.). In all these plays there is someone or something who or which is against the individual. However the subtle and significant conflict is within the individual himself.

His characters inflict pain to themselves while confronting with themselves. As a playwright an individual is most important for Tendulkar and therefore an individual's struggle with life is equally important for him. This research is focused on analysis plays of Vijay Tendulkar to show how he deals with the complexity in human life with the element of 'Sex' and 'Violence'.

It is obvious that a writer like Tendulkar deals with many complexities of life, but here the motto is to slice up the elements of sex and violence depicted in his work. Sex is the one side of coin and the other side of coin is violence. Tendulkar deals with the vibrant issues of the so called civilized society in his major plays but focus of the study is on three major plays which deal with different types of violence. These plays are Shantata Court Chalu Ahe, 'Sakharam Binder', and 'Ghashiram Kotwal'.

'Shantata Court Chalu Ahe' deals with the burning issue of abortion. The society talks about women empowerment, women's liberation but reality is different. Still an empowered woman not accepted out of the moral



framework of society. Violence is deeply rooted in hippocratic society. This research focuses on Silence the court is in session as ‘Cruel game of silence to suppress women’s sexual desire’ – ‘Shantata court Chalu Ahe’

‘Sakharam Binder’ is related to gender violence. The inter relationship of Sakharam-Laxmi-Champa is curious. This research focuses on ‘Sakharam Binder’ as “A curious case of gender violence” is perfectly suitable to the play.

‘Ghashiram Kotwal’ is partially based on the story of Nana Phadnavis of Maratha dynasty. Tendulkar skilfully weaved the element of Tamasha and other two traditional theatre forms into this play. The issue of power in politics is a core thread of the play. Once a human is oppressed by someone he may an oppressor in future. It is a constant process of transformation. This research focuses on ‘Ghashiram Kotwal’ as “A violent oppressive transformation of power”.

In all, Tendulkar has written thirty full-length plays. Out of these, the three plays which have been translated into English are the subject of this study.

A list of his plays is given below:

Gruhastha (The house holder)	Unpublished
Shrimant (The Rich)	1955
Manus Navache Bet (An Island Called Man)	1956
Madhalya Bhinti (Middle Walls)	1958
Chimniche Ghar Hote Menache (The Wax House of Sparrow)	1960
Mi Jinkalo, Mi Haralo (I Won, I Lost)	1963
Kavlyanchi Shala (School for Crows)	1964
Sariga Sari (Drizzle O Drizzle)	1964
Ek Hatti Mulagi (An Obstinate Girl)	1968
‘Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe’ (‘Silence! The Court is in Session’)	1968
Jhala Anant Hanumant	1968
Ashi Pakhare Yeti (So Come Birds)	1970
Gidhade (The Vultures)	1971
‘Sakharam Binder’	1972

Gharate Amuche Chhan (Nice is Our Nest)	1973
‘Ghashiram Kotwal’	1973
Dambdwipacha Mukabala	1974
(Encounter in Umbugland)	
Bhalya Kaka	1974
Baby	1975
Bhai Murarrao	1975
Pahije Jatiche	1976
Mitrachi Goshta (A Friend’s Story)	1982
Kamala	1982
‘Kanyadaan’	1983
Vithala	1985
Chiranjeev Saubhagya Kanshini	Unpublished
Safar	Unpublished
Niyatichya Bailala Ho (To Hell with the Bull of Fate)	Unpublished
The Cyclist	2006
His Fifth Woman	2006

In addition to the thirty full-length plays, Tendulkar has written twenty-five one-act-plays, two novels, a biography, five collection of short-stories, sixteen plays for children and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism. His columns in news papers like 'Kovali Unhe' and 'Ram Prahar' became popular. He has translated nine novels, two biographies and five plays by other authors into Marathi. In 1990s he wrote an acclaimed television series 'Swayamsiddha'. He has written screenplays for twelve movies in Hindi and eight movies in Marathi. He was invited by some noted producer-director such as Raj Kapoor to write screenplays. But he felt that he won't get the freedom to write the way he wants and so declined their offers.

Tendulkar won the Maharashtra State government awards in 1956, 1969 and 1972; and 'Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar' in 1999. He was honoured with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1970, and again in 1998 with the Academy's highest award for 'lifetime contribution', the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship ('Ratna Sadasya'). In 1984, he received the Padma Bhushan award from the Government of India for his literary accomplishments.

In 1977, Tendulkar won the National Film Award for Best Screenplay for his screenplay of Shyam Benegal's movie, *Manthan* (1976). He has written screenplays for many significant art movies, such as *Nishant*, *Aakrosh*, and *Ardha- Satya*. In 1991, he received the Kalidas Award. He won the Janasthan Award in 1999 which was followed by the Katha Chudamani Award in 2001.

Tendulkar always wrote whatever appealed to him and never bothered for blame or praise. His thinking about society and human life is reflected in his writings. He wrote about the defeated individuals struggle against antagonistic circumstances. M. Sarat Babu appropriately comments:

“Tendulkar perceives the realities of the human society without any preconceived notions, reacts to them as a sensitive and sensible human being and writes about them in his plays as a responsible writer.”<sup>22</sup>

Tendulkar proved himself as talented writer who has great faith in his passion. His humanistic and fearless attitude becomes apparent from his literature as well as his social work. His writing never hesitated while expressing his own views. Tendulkar belonged to the middle class and depicted the assessment and problems, hopes and misery, in the life of the

middle class society effectively. Commenting on Tendulkar's unique place in the history of Marathi drama, Chandrasekhar Barve writes:

“Tendulkar pioneered and guided the experimental theatre movement in Marathi literature.”<sup>23</sup>

In short Tendulkar is an exceptional personality who began writing as a means of earning ended up as a profound playwright of international standing.

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