

Reflection of Woman in Tendulkarian Drama: A Study

DR JAYANT SHEVTEKAR

Associate professor, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad,
(Maharashtra) INDIA

Abstract- *At the outset in interview by Marinne Ahrne asked GROTOWSKI JERZY that what attracted you to theatre, Grotowski says*

“Theatre has been an enormous adventure in my life. It deeply conditioned my way of thinking of analyzing things, of seeing people, of looking at life. I would even say that my language has been formed by theatre. But I didn’t come to this work looking for theatre, and I was always searching for something else. When I was very young, I asked myself ; In what profession could I search together with a human being, the other and myself, how could I search for a dimension of life that is rooted in what is normal, organic, even sensual but at the same time goes beyond all that, that has a kind of axiality, a kind of axis, another dimension – a higher one – that goes beyond ourselves.....”

(Grotowski ; 2006 ; 219)

I. INTRODUCTION

I find all these elements and instincts in Indian Drama. Indian Drama gives us new vision, new attitude, new approach, new subjects, and challenges to think. More so we find the reflection of Indian culture and tradition in the frame of Indian Dramas.

Great Indian culture has a rich tradition. Richness, nobleness, and broadness, are the principle which is depicted in Tradition and Culture. We learn Broadness in visionary life by accepting basic values and implementing them in real life. Indians have impact, and are impressed by the same. Though invasions took place no one has damaged the noble thought of culture and tradition. The roots of oriental and traditional thinking are the part-n-parcel of Indian life, and therefore day by day the roots are strengthening the base.

When we think Indian drama in the culture of

occident, we see Indians life in Indian Drama. Indian has got great pleasure from having a rich tradition and culture. The impact of the same has created on Indians' minds which have been also impressed by outsiders. From the ancient period to the modern era the art has got more impacts on Indians. Dance, drama, music, painting, sculpture is a part of Indian life. In ancient times Sanskrit drama flourished. Kalidas, Shudrak, Vishakhadatta, Bhasa, Harsh, etc has written Sanskrit dramas from that drama art is still playing an important role in making drama tradition rich. All the classical drama in those days has taken poetics as the base. Epic stories generally put into drama and tragedies are prominent in the story.

When we see the pages of history of Indian drama with reference to context, the gender base, division of labour divided the whole human being into male and female.

HOGIE WYCKOFF a transactional analyst writes

“As women and men we are socialized to develop certain parts of our personalities while suppressing the development of other parts. This programming promotes a predetermined, stilted and respective way of acting life.”

(Ghashiram kotwal : 2003: 27)

Taking into consideration, gender history of India, women play an important role. From ancient times she is treated to be an ideal. Though she has been kept inside the kitchen she has given prime importance. In the eyes of others her place is treated to be mother, wife, sister, sakhi, goddesses, etc still he has been put into various obligations and with limitations. This causes and results in a suppressed and depressed mind set up. She has always been kept away from socialistic approach, from politics, even in the decision making of family matters. She has no voice to say her thoughts on an open platform. Even her right

to take education is also deprived. So here we find the dictatorship of man in democracy. Apart from bears and brings up children her place is considered as in minus. So in process it is the situation of Indian women that she always has the tension and fear in her mind. Feeling of insecurity in her own house creates her life critical to herself.

Sudhir Kakar, a psychoanalyst points out that

"It is only a woman, a female sexual being, that the patriarchal cultures horror and scorn are heaped upon by a hapless wife. It is clear from its context that the oft-quoted verse, 'her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth and her sons protect her in old age a woman is never fit for independence, refers to a protection not from external danger but from a woman's inner sexual proclivities... Yet guarding her by a force is realistically possible and perhaps it is better if she is thoroughly engaged in household work and thus fancy free"

Such is the case study of Indian women, but now the image of women in contemporary society has changed drastically. Now she is not treated to be a weak person. Traditional faces of Indian women are now reflected in a positive and aggressive manner.

Due to lack of education, poverty causes her not to come outside the kitchen. But now they said the image has changed. Modern Marathi writers have tried to change this image in a more realistic manner. One such writer is Vijay Tendulkar. Not only for Marathi theatre but to Indian theatre he pioneered the experimental theatre movement. From his 28 full length plays, Marathi theatre has got proper guidance and much more contribution to Indian theatre. In every drama we find new concepts, new thoughts, new structure, new setup and above all new revolutionary subjects. So whatever we find in the frame of Marathi theatre major credit goes to renowned Marathi play writer Vijay Tendulkar. From Kalidasa's Shakuntal to today's frame of Indian women we have seen a lot of changes, ups and downs in Indian drama. Indians have got oriental and traditional way of life. Various Indian dramatists' tries to put the women's portrayal in various frames. When we turn the pages of history we find various types of women came as a representative

of Indian women. From the angle of gender, she is always in garb of tension. She wants progress with unity. She has the key position in her family, but still she has been kept away from decision making. No doubt she is dedicated and devoted to her family still she has fear and insecure feeling in her mind

Indian Drama that to Marathi Drama took away Indian women out of the kitchen, and they have given her voice to say. Gender biased mind of male always used women as a tool for selfish purposes. From Shakuntala her frame is different but Shakuntalas is still there. In the process of transformation, now she is trying to search her new way of life without deviating from roots. She becomes a bridge between tradition and modernity, and this is the subject of study done by the occident. In the process of achievement Indian women never forgets the thoughts of the roots. It is very clear that when the culture and tradition reflects through your life then life goes beyond that. These basic elements we find in Indian drama. And the west is trying to search through dramatic art what is life beyond that. So the seed centers of social transformation attract the occasion. In the lifestyle of Indians Myths and modernity goes with heart and reflects in the mirror of life that is Indian drama.

Pointing to what she saw as the arbitrariness inherent in such classificatory logics, Rubin insisted that;

"Men and women are, of course, different. But they are not as different as day and night, earth and sky, yin and yang, life and death. In fact, from the standpoint of nature, men and women are closer to each other than either is to anything else. The idea that men and women are more different from somewhere other than nature.

*.....
far from being an expression of natural difference, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires repression:
The division of the sex has the effect of repressing some of the personality characteristics of virtually everyone, men and women."*

(GENDERS; 2007: XXIV)

In the history of Indian drama if we see the pages of Marathi theatre various dramatists not only put Indian

women as a character but they have shown her reality in a natural sense. Vijay Tendulkar, a great dramatist in Marathi theatre highlighted the gender biased elements and commented clearly.

In civilized society there should not be difference as a human being. In the introduction of Indian Drama Today it is clearly stated that....

“By nature human beings are neither masculine nor feminine. Men become masculine by suppressing their potential for nurturing and intuition while women become feminine by suppressing their potential for controlling and rationality. In obeying the sexist culture, both men and women suppress their potential for spontaneity.....This is the gender deformity. It deprives both men and women of the real joy of life. But women suffer more than men in our patriarchal society.”

(INDIAN DRAMA TODAY: 1997: 13)

From the classical to today's modern drama we find gender biased trends. From the gender point of view cultural, social, political, physical, mental, and spiritual deformity should be studied and discussed so that not only women but men also live in a realistic and natural way of life. All these support and sustain one another.

In Indian Drama Today in conclusion clearly stated that

"Gender deformity seems to have preceded the other cultural deformities. Human beings are originally neither masculine nor feminine, but cultural attributes go to make men masculine and women feminine. Social deformity brings about inequality though human beings are born equal .If political deformity is not there, all human beings are equally powerful. They have enough power to help themselves and change their way of life for the better. Physical deformity evolves as division, hierarchization and alienation invade and alienate. In spiritual deformity division and alienation enter the innermost core of human personality. Life and death impulses are divided and alienated.

(INDIAN DRAMA TODAY: 1997:

145,146,147,148,149)

Indians are leaving with oriental and traditional ways of life. The roots reflect through behavior as well it is in the blood. In the process of development Indian women became selfish. She has the center place for building the moral and ethical status of society at large, she never thinks for self. She is treated to be ideal.

In all junctures she is always conscious about her character. It is very difficult to know her mind setup. Though she leaves in obligation and limitations still she leaves as a free bird within the same frame. She always has a vision of progress and development but at the same time she leaves with roots.

In Indian drama her portrait is framed from all the corners and nicks. With due respect, she is an unavoidable human being. History says that the gender biased male system has the cause of portraying Indian women in negative form. Drama as a powerful medium brought Indian women out from the kitchen. Tendulkar in his drama's he puts Indian women as it is. He has a clear view with regards to the gender system in India. Tendulkar has never feminist view, but he portrayed images of women and commented in real and natural sense. Modernism along with Orientals is the combination of Indian women I will try to discuss his three plays "SHANTATA COURT CHALU AAHE i.e. silence! The court is in session, "SAKHARAM BINDER" and "GHASHIRAM KOTWAL" as these dramas had made revolution in Indian theatre putting gender issues in real sense. Tendulkar has given new vision, new thought, and new attitude and made the spectator intro ward

Portrayal of women in Marathi play ' Shantata Court Chalu Aahe.'

Basically, Tendulkar has written all his drama not for professional purposes. To him inspiration is from society. While traveling the whole INDIA he is victim of all types of violence. He has keenly observed the lifestyle of lower- and middle-class society. Their dialect, relationship with each other, and so on. In his drama he tries to put moral value through characters which he wants as in real sense. Leela Benare is the heroine of a drama sexually exploited by her own

uncle in her teen age. He does not marry her. Benare overcomes from his shock. Then she completes her education and becomes a teacher and tries to earn goodwill as a good teacher here also Prof. Damle exploits her sexually. He also refuses to marry her. She asks Balu Rokde and Mr. Punkshe to marry but they are also helpless. In court she speaks openly and frankly in front of the judge.

The other actors plan to take out her in the name of mock trial; they expose her private life, humiliate her and hurt her. In this drama though she is exploited she herself tries to overcome. She speaks truly and on actual facts. To Samant she directly says that "She likes him very much". All the characters, who always tries to victimize Benare and put all the blames on the shoulder of Benare. Their say is because of her, we unnecessarily got disturbances in our life.

In the beginning, Benare tales her Philosophy of life that, *"my life is my own. My will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill those. I will do what i like with myself and my life"*

Here one question comes in my mind why such type of dialog does not come in women's real life. With no mistake of women she was always blamed by the males. Today in India the women have crossed all the boundaries still they have fear and unsecured feelings. Male oriented culture does not permit women to become courageous. Funny thing is that old women are against younger women though they have gone through all the process. Even educated female characters in society have no say or no value to their say. In this connection Benare is teaching lessons to all to whom she is supposed to be a victim.

With the discussion with Punkshe, Benare asked him, "Are you fixed up somewhere Punkshe said unless I find someone just to my taste I am not interested in marrying. I want a mature partner. Here what Benare says is noteworthy she asked don't you think that maturity-that is fully developed understanding comes to a person only with experience, and experience comes with age, with the slightly unusual way of life. And this sort of experience is never happy or pleasing. It gives pain to other people who gain it. And it is usually intolerable to others but will you bear with it?"

Here it is only for 'the fruit of that love' is in her womb. By doing all ponkshe said oh! Poor girl! Her luck seems really bad. Whose is scoundrel responsible?

Today also such a type of something is happening. With full devotion Indian women keep faith in him but in her life she has no answer for her devotion. In her life faith is so cheap that she never thinks of that. Who is responsible may be the question of debate? But someone should share the responsibility rather than both should be. But he, who so ever it may be, thinks that he has not committed the mistake. Here it should be kept in mind that enjoyment means not to disturb or scratch others' life. It is very sad to note that still such types of practices prevailed.

To prove that she is not guilty she always speaks whole heartedly and with true zeal, but male portion of the society does not accept though they are guilty. If we think today's portrayal of women we will find thousands of BENARE is still living. When they will be given justices is the question. Tendulkar puts smt. Shirish pai's poem which has created Benare's central character.

*And the wound that is born to bleed Bleeds on
forever faithfully,
There is a battle sometimes, where Defeat is destined
as the end.
Some experiences are meant
To taste, then just to waste and spend*

(New Directions In Indian Drama; 1994; 19)

In this mock-trial courtroom drama to pass the time, a group of amateur artists plays the various different roles and plays starts. The focus of the drama is on Benare's behavior, she is charged by putting that you are only the culprit. She faces the same and says in the court that she is not alone guilty. In the drama she is mentally and physically torched but she doesn't have a voice. This type of system we find from ancient times. In this drama she is mentally harassed from all the corners of the society, but still she could not find a way of hope to live in this world as a gentle human being. Through this drama Tendulkar raised several questions about love, marriage, sex, moral values,

relationship, professional ethics, and above all primary rights which human being is supposed to enjoy.

When the time of clarification comes Mr Ponshe says "On the whole, she runs after men too much". And again with the imaginary conversation between Damale and Benare their clandestine affair resulted in her pregnancy. In this juncture Damaly refuses to marry for his own reputation. When the question comes why she was still not marry at the age of 34 Mrs.khashikar has an answer which is very interesting she says

"That's what happens these days, when you get everything without marrying. They just want to confer. They couldn't care less about responsibility.....it's the new fashion of women earning that makes everything go wrong. Further she says should there be no limit how freely a woman can behave with a man.

When the case comes for the final prosecution rests what Sukhatme says is to be taken seriously.

He says

"Milord, the nature of the charge against the accused Miss Leela Benare is truly dreadful. She has made a heinous blot on the sacred brow of motherhood, which is purer than heaven itself. For that any punishment however great, that the law may give her. Her conduct has blackened all social and moral values. Motherhood without marriage has always been considered a very great sin by our religion and our traditions. I have a dreadful fear that the very existence of society will be in danger.....Before our eyes our beautiful dream of society governed by tradition will crumble into dust.

The accused has plotted to dynamite the very roots of our tradition, our pride in ourselves, our culture and our religion. No allowance must be made because the accused is a woman. Women bear the grave responsibility of building up the high values of society. Women are not fit for independence.....That is the rule laid down for us by tradition. "

(Indian Drama Today; 1997; pp- 38,39)

Here is the tragedy of Indian women. To give her punishment, Tradition, Culture, Religion, Society,

Moral ethics, brought into picture, and because she is a woman, no excuse to her. Question is who has decided that women are not fit for independence. It seems that in tradition there is no place for women, no voice to women. Tendulkar by putting Benare's character raised the issue of women's portrayal. He really makes male introverts, rather he tends to think about women's position in this age. This drama gives lessons to all those and asks to think wisely. No doubt this drama has created a thought oriented process. The voice or the say of women is taken into consideration as an impact of this drama.

"For so many years, I haven't said a word. Chances came, and chances went, but each time I shut my lips tight. I thought no one will understand, no one can understand, how stupid everyone around me. How childish, How silly all they seemed. Even the man I call my own. I wish.....life is like this, life is so and so, life is such and such, but life is fraud, life is drug.....Milord life is a very dreadful thing, life must be hanged. life is not worthy of life.

Hold an enquiry against life. Sack it from its job.

Why? Was I slack in my work? I just put my whole life into working with children. I loved

it. I taught them well. I knew that life is no straightforward thing. only one thing in life is all important - THE BODY you may deny it, but it is true. To children I taught them beauty , I taught them purity. I cried inside, and I then made them laugh.....My private life is my own business. I will decide what to do with myself, everyone should be able to, and that can't be anyone else's business.

(Comes out from the witness box and wanders as if in class). speaks to children, who are all

these? (light illuminates each face one by one)..... she says these are the mortal remains of some cultured men of the twentieth century. "

(Collected Plays in Translation; 2009; pp - 117/118)

With all charges Benare fights alone and boldly faces the charges. In her argument in front of court she puts the finger on the very roots of our systems and

traditions, culture and religion. Not in real but in drama it is very true that Benare as a woman puts it, all say in front of court, whether such is in real life is the question.

Here the series of questions starts. Why does a woman always have a fear and unsecured mind? Why mental harassment? Why is she always treated as guilty? Why is she deprived from primary rights? Who is responsible? What is the role of moral ethics? What society is doing? Such type of questions rose due to this type of drama and naturally the end becomes positive. This is the power of today's Marathi theatre.

So in this Drama Tendulkar has shown Benare as a modern woman who is capable of protecting herself, & her body in male dominated society. She knows that the male who is responsible for her fate will not confess; still she is determined to defend herself.

Mirror of women's portrayal in Sakharam
Binder play

Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa are the main characters of this drama. The poor laxmi sakharam brought her as she was barren. First sakharam puts all his conditions regarding how to leave and what to do. So the duty of laxmi is to please and satisfy sakharam. Sakharam leaves like a free bird. He does what he wants, he doesn't believe in the marriage system. His principal is without harming enjoys your life, but don't be a liar or fraudulent in nature. He asks Laxmi to love him openly as if he is her real husband. If this deal is agreed then stay or doors are open to get out. To survive she has no alternative but to stay. After some stay when she goes out of sakharam's house sakharam brings champa and puts the same conditions to her.

First thing is very clear that whatever sakharam does is accepted fact, he takes the opportunity that laxmi is poor and barren and he gives shelter cloth food to her and expects what he wants. So to fulfill all types of demands sometimes he became crud and even he often beats laxmi. By speaking bad and ugly words. He always torches laxmi like anything. Laxmi tolerates all, but she also has limitations. Laxmi is an ideal Indian woman, she never argues, even she doesn't speak though she has got painful trouble. Her condition is to accept the fact and leave as per

sakharams will. Physically and mentally she is harassed by sakharam. Sakharam always gives the threat that if she does not behave as per say then she will be kicked off.

After various punishments and torturing one day Laxmi burst and open her mind and says

laxmi :- You think i am afraid to tell you ? How much more can a person bear? It's a year now since I entered this house. I haven't had a single day's rest. Nothing but work, work, work .All the time you torched me in day and night.

Sakharam :- so what I brought you, gave food, clothes, shelter no one can do this which I did. You have to be here as per my wish and you have to behave as what I say.

Laxmi :- My life is not that worthless. Maybe I am helpless now but I come from a good family.

We find so many laxmi today in the society. Like laxmi they are very loyal, they know her limits, always put under garb of tensions, they are poor in conditions, no education, no godfather, nobody to listen what she is in her mind, the blame is always on her, always threat in her mind, economically backward, always feels unsecured, has no right to speak in front of male, causes her life to live with what were the conditions is.

Tendulkar raised the basic question of why laxmi is not free to leave. Why she is deprived from right to express, right of equality, and right to get necessary for life. Because of such types of dramas the awareness in the society helps to stop such types of unnatural behavior and to stop shameless systems. Male part of the society knows that without him, females cannot leave safely. Her life is incomplete and unsecured. So he always leaves in freedom, without caring for her .Indian says that his wife is her life partner but in actual fact says something different.

In one situation sakharam says :- Once a woman is thrown over, nobody calls her respectable.

Laxmi :- I have never heard a kind word here. Always breaking order. Threatening to throw me out.

Kicks and Blows.....after i belted you wanted me to laugh, laugh and laugh again. Here I am at the point of death and I'm supposed to laugh .Hell must be a better place than this. If i die, I'll be free from this once and for all.

In the drama Laxmi is deserted by her husband because she does not have any children. So she takes shelter under the roof of Sakharam. When she lives with Sakharam though they are not a married couple she proves to be loyal. Today also when Indian wife doesn't get a child she is treated to be medically unfit and then utmost torturing starts and ends in death. She treats her husband as a god. She praises him like anything, thinking that she should be thrown from the house. As against Laxmi's character CHAMPA she enters when Laxmi goes from Sakharam's house. Champa is bold, confident and has guts to face any challenges. Knowing all the facts she leaves in Sakharam's house. She is disloyal to Sakharam. Her language is vulgar. She likes Dawood, a friend of Sakharam, and says to Dawood you are nice. Often she drinks Sakharam. She wants to be a free bird. When Laxmi returns, Sakharam doesn't like Laxmi coming back. Sakharam asks Laxmi not to stop for a single minute. Laxmi humbly says my nephew kicked me out, so any other place then this to me for survival.

She asks Champa before coming to you. I am here with Sakharam, now I will act what you say but don't send me out. At any cost Sakharam does not agree that Laxmi should stay in his house. Here Laxmi says i will be here till my death, I want to die on your lap. To Champa she says i will do all the work of the kitchen, Champa agrees and says to Sakharam ok let Laxmi leave with us. One day I will tell Laxmi not to leave with us. For the time being, Sakharam agrees, and the daily routine starts. One day Laxmi saw the Champa with Dawood enjoying sex when Sakharam is in press. Laxmi doesn't like this type of disloyalness with Sakharam, and she told to Sakharam about the same, Sakharam got angry after clearing all the doubts and one day he murder Champa.

Here the mentality of male acts with extreme stage. He as a male does not want any one's obligation and responsibilities, but in the same manner he does not like the same behavior of a woman which he is close with. This contrast behavior pattern creates

problems in familial systems in India. Not to argue, not to talk with strangers, leave with limitations, leave with obligations, cover face in front of strangers, not to speak, answer only when it is allowed, take the permission for new implantation of ideas, don't ask questions to male. Etc, are the conditions in which women are leaving. Tendulkar in this drama shows two types of women and has shown how she leaves.

WOMEN PORTRAYAL IN GHASHIRAM KOTWAL

In brief, Ghashiram a Brahmin comes to Poona from kannauj for livelihood, Accepts job as a servant in courtesan (darbar) in Gulabi's house. One day when Nanasaheb visit's Gulabi's house in the evening and joins the dance hurts his ankle, Immediately Ghashiram rushes there and puts the injured foot on his back. For this Nana gives rewards to Ghashiram his necklace, Gulabi does not like this and snatches from Ghashiram. Ghashiram one day charged as a thief and the soldiers beat him and threw him away. To take revenge Ghashiram joins Nana's house as a servant with his smart and beautiful daughter and gives her in the hands of Nana and there by asking Nana to make him Kotwal of Poona. This type of cruel game is played by Ghashiram and for this he doesn't want to discuss it with his wife.

It is the history that the women are used for personal ambitions which occur from hatred. When the ego of male hurts, he behaves like a fool, in this juncture he becomes a vagabond, he never cares for anyone. He goes to an extreme stage, and there also no one is for him. If the ambitions are beyond the capacities still he tries and starts with bargaining. This happens in this drama.

If we see history we find that from ancient times the same attitude and approach. As time changes the issues are different but the tendencies are the same. We find that women are used as a tool to complete and satisfy the selfish need. Here we see that not to consider women at any level is the habit of male and same practices are still in the blood.

After becoming kotwal of Poona Ghashiram behaves like anything. After getting power and position of kotwal Ghashiram takes revenge from the Poona

people and goes to an extreme stage.

Lack of education, economic freedom, depressed mind, familial tensions, non consideration of her identity, are some of the reasons for which she is targeted. Tendulkar from these three dramas tries to show the real conditions in which women are leaving. Through these drama's voice of women comes out and they have knocked the door and put the question in front of the society, that can we think and give independence to women. And also ask the society at large who are the hurdles in the progress of women, whether Tradition, culture, Religion, or we as society.

I conclude with the words that gender becomes an important part of Indian drama, and this texture of oriental and occidental has helped to locate a proper human with its feeling which is lost because of the cruelty which prevailed in the psyche of humans. These plays are lively to get back to our own way of understanding human feelings and emotions, to make the earth the best place to live.

REFERENCES

- [1] Paul Allain: 2009: Calcutta: seagull book.
- [2] M. Sarat Babu: 1997: New Delhi: prestige books.
- [3] Sudhakar Pandey, Freya Barua : 1994 : new Delhi : prestige books.
- [4] M.sarat babu: 2003: new Delhi: Asia book club.
- [5] Vinod Bala Sharma: 2001: new Delhi: Asia book club.
- [6] David glover and Cora Kaplan: 2007: Routledge: New York.
- [7] Tendulkar Vijay: 1992: new Delhi: oxford university press.