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## Women discrimination in Vijay Tendulkar's plays

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### ABSTRACT

*Vijay Tendulkar is one of India's most influential playwrights. He is the most prolific and controversial dramatist among the Post-Independence Indian play writer. Vijay Tendulkar, is one of the significant dramatists of Indian English genre. He is realistic in showing the problems of common man, conflict between human relationship and discrimination against women in the patriarchal society. Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) is a leading contemporary Indian playwright who writes in Marathi about emerging issues in globalization. His prolific writing over a period of five decades includes thirty full-length plays, twenty-three one-act plays, eleven children's dramas, four collections of short stories, two novels and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism. His female characters are mainly from the lower- and middle-class families such as housewives, teachers, mistresses, daughters, slaves and servants. The issues of gender discrimination, greed for money, sexual norms, violence, man-woman relationship, social issues, power and morality have been featured prominently in his plays. He deals with all the problems and conspiracies, of the contemporary society. The conspiracies are discussed in this paper under the heading – Woman Discrimination.*

**Keywords**— *Women Discrimination, Gender Inequality, Violence*

Women discrimination and Gender Inequality is the problem percolating since the ancient ages. In the patriarchal society in the shadow of women empowerment still women are discriminating and man always enjoys more power than the women.

In the Vultures It also concentrates on different aspects of the human character and complexity of man-woman relationship. The play depicts male oriented society in which women are mere slaves for the achievement of men. It exposes the inhuman violence in its verbal form of the patriarchal society against women. The themes of the play are based on the present socio-economic situation, family and marital relations:

Umakant: First settle our account! Then I'll move! Pappa's hidden hoard. Manik's money. Mother's jewels....  
Ramakant: Ask from outside! Then you'll get them! All after you've got out! Out! Umakant: Go on. Wait. As if I'm all ready to leave. I'll quit when I've got every single paisa, you bastard! I won't let you get away with it. I'll sit on your neck. I'll make you puke it out! Bloody animal! Swindler! I'll see you in the gutter. (2003:250) The quarrel was not between two brothers, yet it is not over. They also harass their sister, Manik. They both wanted whole property and don't want share it with Manik. They also blackmailed Manik's lover- the Raja of Hondur for money and create hindrance in their relationship. They broke the leg of Manik so that she can't meet her lover. When all were playing cards, Umakantried to choke Manik to death. When they come to know that Manik's lover, Raja of Hondur died due to heart attack, they shocked that their plan to blackmailing him failed. They crossed all levels of brutality to fulfill their need of money. They kicked Manik's belly hard as she was pregnant by Raja of Hondur, because they wanted that Manik should abort this child. It shows their vulgarity and greed for money. It is the heartless relationship of Ramakant and Umakant with their own sister.

Manik has a fear of being killed. She does not believe them. She was blaming her brothers for mixing poison in her medicine when she was suffering by typhoid. In this context, she says: "...When I had typhoid last years, far from looking after me, you'd all plotted to put poison in my medicine" (2003:206). It reflects that these two brothers can go any level to grab money. There is no value for blood relations. It shows that they want money to succeed in getting the bank balance.

In the Act II, Rama pleads her husband, Ramakant to leave the house because nobody can be happy in such a haunted house. Umakant wants his share and possession of the mortgaged house, but Ramakant refuses to help him to pay his debt. Thus Umakant takes revenge on his brother by telling him that Rajaninath is the real father of Rama's child. On hearing it, Ramakant becomes restless. He broods over it and decides to abort. The play ends with Rajaninath's soliloquy about human destiny:

The tale of the five vultures

Had this end.

The story of men accursed.

Or else of vultures cursed

To live their live as men.

.....

The burning-ground and its ghat

Where the sinful soul

Burns off its being,

Takes its first free breath. (2003:265)

Sakharam in Sakharam Binder shows this fact that how male discriminate woman. He declares, "I'm hotheaded. When I lose my temper, I beat the life out of people.....Won't put up with slipshod ways.....I'm the master here." (127) Laxmi deserted by her husband has to yield herself to Sakharam's despotic ways. Without becoming his legal wife, Laxmi fulfills all his needs but in turn she receives only rebuke and blows. He never lets anyone to boss over him. He says, "I had six before you. I disowned my own father. I wouldn't let anyone boss over me." (148) He is the master of the house and he treats the woman he has brought worse than slaves. He is a self-styled man and is not even afraid of God. He says, "This Sakharam Binder – he's a terror --- He's not scared of God or of God's father" (Unlike Laxmi, Champa is physically strong, plumb and looks charming. Both Laxmi and Champa are forced by destiny to live with Sakharam. Sakharam exploits both the women and squeezes them for the food and shelter he provided for them. He demands more from the women than what he actually provides for them. Though Sakharam boasts of his honesty and straightforwardness, he behaves like a tyrant master. He calls her a slut, a bitch and a giggling bit of a cast-off woman. His ego is hurt because Laxmi dares to raise her voice against him. He couldn't digest Laxmi bossing over him. Laxmi who suffocates all these days bursts out: I've never heard a kind word here. Always barking orders. Curses. Oaths. Threatening to throw me out. Kicks and blows. [Wipes her eyes with the end of the sari] There I was in agony after I'd been belted, and all you wanted me to do was laugh. Laugh and laugh again. Here I am on the point of death and I'm supposed to laugh. Hell must be a better place than this. [Whimpers] If I die, I'll be free of this once and for all. (148) For Sakharam, it is easy to rule cast-off women like Laxmi and Champa as they cannot claim their rights. He wants to enjoy all luxury of family life without the bondage of marriage. His infatuation for Champa reduces the intensity of his tyrannical nature. His lust for her body weakens him. Laxmi who has come back to Sakharam couldn't bear her place replaced by Champa. Innocent Champa permits Laxmi to stay with them against the will of Sakharam.

Laxmi is waiting for a chance to throw Champa away from home, because she lost her control over Sakharam. Champa submits her body to Sakharam by force. She shocks Laxmi by her secret affair with Dawood, Sakharam's friend. Champa is very stubborn and gives her body to Sakharam only after taking alcohol. Moreover, the presence of Laxmi in the kitchen makes Sakharam impotent. Champa shouts, "Stop that 'Champa – Champa— 'You're not a man – not since she came. She's made an impotent ninny of you. Don't have the guts to take me before her. You turn into a corpse – a worm." (193) Unlike Laxmi, Champa is able to overpower Sakharam because of his lust for her body. Her affair with Dawood is out of her own will. Innocent and meek Laxmi becomes villainous and reveals Champa's unfaithfulness to Sakharam. This provokes Sakharam to murder Champa. Sakharam loses all his power and becomes weak with this murder. Laxmi makes use of this situation and turns the wind in favour of her. The power structure changes at the end with Laxmi assuming more power to lead Sakharam. In Sakharam Binder the issue is sexual power. When that power is threatened, the protagonist is confused and lashes out viciously, taking a life. The equations change in an interesting round of musical chairs that tilts the balance off and on, and each character seems to reflect the role of another. (Agrawal 199) Ghashiram Savaldas in Ghashiram Kotwal is not basically a power monger. His arrival with his wife and daughter to Poona is to seek his fortune.

Gouri the daughter of Ghashiram, he uses her as a means to acquire power and fulfill his oath. He decides to sacrifice his daughter to Nana in exchange of power. Since Nana is in love with Gouri, Poona comes under the reign of Ghashiram. People are whipped, sued and arrested. Any sin can be committed with the permission of Kotwal. Power makes Ghashiram insensitive to the sufferings of people. Sutradhar says, "Gauri orders, Nana does, Ghashiram rules" (387) Without Kotwal's permission nothing can be done. Kotwal's permission is necessary even to walk on the road at midnight and to call a midwife to attend a delivery. Gauri's sexual power fetches Ghashiram a chance to reign Poona as Kotwal. He was like a dictator and people are like his slaves. And Nana becomes the puppet in the hands of Ghashiram. He was using him as per his convenience

His woman characters— Gauri, Rama, Mitra, Sarita, Kamala, Laxmi, Champa and Manik—are no doubt the victim of existing norms of the society. Through his plays He presents women discrimination of the society. He believes that gender inequality is not today's problem it is perculating since ancient ages. Women discrimination is the reality of our society.

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