

## Hypocrisy in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Rajevee Ranjan Tigga

<sup>1</sup>Research Student Rani Durgawati University, Jabalpur M.P.

Received: 07 July 2021, Accepted: 15 July 2021, Published with Peer Review on line: 10 Sep 2021

### Abstract

The name of Vijay Tendulkar has been in the forefront of the Marathi drama after the Independence. His personality both as a man and writer is multifaceted. He is the most creative and eminent dramatist among the modern Marathi Playwrights. His plays Sakharan Binder and Ghashiram Kotwal created a storm in society and at the same time, he won the highest award in the field of dramatics, on an all India level for his play Silence! The Court is in Session. His literary tendency can be observed through his numerous articles, short stories and one-act plays. Though his eyes are focussed on the middle class, his chief targets are the human mind, the way of life and the complexities there in. Most of the Tendulkar's plays are the studies in violence, exploitation, power, hypocrisy, greed and repression in different forms of the contemporary Indian reality. Exploitation is one of the most common themes in his plays as he portrayed the element of exploitation successfully. This Research article makes a humble attempt to explain how hypocrisy is successfully employed by the playwright, Vijay Tendulkar.

**Keywords:** Hypocrisy, Exploitation, Jealousy, Self-Alienation, violence etc.

### Introduction

Hypocrisy is one of the common subjects ever disused by the society in any part of the world. Wherever two are gathered in one place whether rural or urban, educated or non educated, male or female, upper cast or lower caste they discuss on this favorite topic of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is seen as inappropriate dealings since a hypocrite is usually someone whose saying is not in line with his/her action. The society is full of hypocrites. Some purposely act as hypocrites and put a mask over their real self at the same time there are some who unconsciously act as hypocrites in their life. They do such action which is actually inappropriate with their own standards. For example, a father who forbids his child to play PubG games in the mobile because the addiction of the games spoil the children while he himself is a PubG addicted. This action leads him to hypocrisy. His saying and doing does not match. By doing such action, he does not realize that he becomes a hypocrite. Hypocrisy may happen anytime, anywhere, any situation, and be done by anyone. There are various reasons and factors to become a hypocrite. Social factor is one of the most influential factors in pulling someone to be such hypocritical. A social member should obey the norms and rules of society in which he/she lives. Besides, an individual is usually forced to fulfill the expectation of their society upon his position and importance in society. The responsibilities as a social member moreover if someone having a high of honorable social status may be the reason of being a hypocrite.

It is very difficult to make a definition of hypocrisy. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary, "behavior in which someone pretends to have moral standards or opinions that they do not actually have." (Oxford Dictionary) Hypocrisy is derived from the Greek word 'hypokrisis' which means acting or act of playing a part on the stage. Its literal meaning implies that a hypocrite is someone who acts like an actor that is full of pretense. A hypocrite is someone who creates an image that is not suitable with his/her real standard.

According to Wikipedia

Hypocrisy is the practice of engaging in the same behavior or activity for which one criticizes another or the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform. In moral psychology, it is the failure to follow one's own expressed moral rules and principles. According to British political philosopher David Runciman, "Other kinds of hypocritical deception include claims to knowledge that one lacks, claims to a consistency that one cannot sustain, claims to a loyalty that one does not possess, claims to an identity that one does not hold". American political journalist Michael Gerson says that political hypocrisy is "the conscious use of a mask to fool the public and gain political benefit". (Wikipedia)

Hypocrisy is a social as well as religious evil which is condemned by every religion. Many saints and sages have spoken against this social and religious evil. In Bhagwad geeta 16:14 Lord Krishna says,

*dambho darpo 'bhimanash cha krodhah parushyam eva cha  
ajnanam chabhijatasya partha sampadam asurim*

In these lines Lord Krishna expounds upon the six traits of those people are obsessed with demoniac natures. They are hypocrites, meaning they show themselves very virtuous and pious externally but inside they are selfish and trenchers. This creates an artificial show off personality, which is impure internally but has the external appearance of being pure.

The behavior of hypocrites is arrogant and disrespectful to others. They are proud and conceited about their bodily possessions and designations, such as wealth, education, beauty, position, etc. They become angry when, due to lack of control of the mind, their lust and greed are frustrated. They are cruel and harsh, and devoid of sensitivity for others' sufferings in their interactions with them. They have no understanding of the spiritual principles and hold unrighteousness to be righteousness.

In some translations of the Book of Job, the Hebrew word *chaneph* is rendered as "hypocrite", though it usually means "godless" or "profane". In the Christian Bible, Jesus condemns the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites in the passage known as the Woes of the Pharisees. He also denounces hypocrites in more general terms in Matthew 7:5.

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them. <sup>15</sup>Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. (Mathew 7:13-15)

As it is seen in the above discussion hypocrisy might emerge as the result of the complexity of human soul. Each person has different desires to tempt him/her into different directions. Moreover, it has become the nature of every human being to be willingly and curiously pursue those desires and ignoring the probability of being unfulfilled. By cheating themselves the unfaithfulness to their own rules and beliefs and the choice to do what is appropriate in a particular situation will just lead them to be hypocritical.

Tendulkar exposes the splotches and failures of unrealistic and unfeasible reforms and movements in his plays. It mainly deals with the powerful expression of human idiosyncrasies and quirks. In his plays, he never tries to infuriate the people but he does his utmost for the improvement, refinement and enlightenment of society. While on one hand, his plays are a powerful criticism of the corrupt politicians, policemen, prostitutes of the contemporary society who are the sole cause for a social disharmony, lawlessness, injustice, inhumanity, corruption, hypocrisy, adultery, vices, confusion,

mayhem, it also upholds the nature of power on the other hand. Thus, the researcher explores the new subject matter which is quite different from the previous research, and this chapter will be titled *Hypocrisy in the plays of vijay Tendulkar*.

Through his play *Silence the Court is in Session* Tendulkar exposes the hypocrisy of the urban middle class society. He unveils the hypocritical social structure of marriage, caste system, politics and journalism. He holds them all to ruthless sarcasm.

There is a theatre group named **Sonar Moti Tenement progressive association** which belonged to the urban middle class. This group used to perform regularly in Mumbai. This group contains some experienced artists and some junior artists. One of them is Mr. Kashikar a so called a social reformer. In the play frequently Mr. and Mrs Kashikar appear together in the public or in private. Mrs. Kashikar is extremely docile and gregarious as his character is concerned. Another character in the play is Balu Rokde who is a helpless student dependent on the Kashikar family. Sukhatme the other character is a lawyer by profession but a pretentious man. Ponkshe is also a member of this team who is a clerk but is not much educated. The female protagonist is Miss Benare who is a school teacher and a very bold and thoughtful lady, and the last important character is professor Damle. Tendulkar uses all these character in order to highlight the hypocrisy of the middle class society.

The play *Silence the court is in Session* is one of the best examples of hypocrisy prevalent in the middle class society. Here the writer narrates how In a woman in mid-thirties has been made a victim of the hypocrisy of patriarchal society through a legal system. The male of that time were very orthodox and they did not want any change. They did not want woman to give an equal place in the society. The protagonist of the play Leela Benare loves her life and leads it with full spirit. She is proud of her teaching and declares that her life is her only; no one has the right to interfere in it. It is this attitude of her makes her rival to social norms. According to her;

Benare: My private life is my own business. I'll decide what to do with myself: everyone should be able to! That can't be anyone's business: understand? Everyone has a bent, a manner, an aim in life.(Tendulkar, 117)

Tendulkar has used Benare as central character, through her he puts the insight into the mind of the audience so that the audience can get into the mind of the other characters.

This play describes the middle class hypocritical mentality and its pettiness. The members of the theatre group have verities of characters but one thing was very common in them was their being of a hypocrite. Tendulkar has very wisely dealt their nature of hypocrisy and have unveiled their dark part. The members of this group are bored, frustrated and repressed ones. They are like the white tomb which looks beautiful from outside but there is hollow inside. The first character of this theatre group is Mr. Kashikar who is the president of the group. And along with him there is his wife Mrs. Kashikar. This couple has no child so they have adopted one child. They are the big hypocrites. They live a life of show and pretend. They just show that they are the happy couple. They pretend that they are the good lovers and show their intimacy by giving gift to each other in the public. But in their real life Mr. Kashikar is an orthodox husband who never allows his wife to argue with him or to express her wish. They call themselves a social worker and they have adopted one boy named Balu. Miss Benare ruthlessly unravels their pettiness and plainly tells that they have adopted a boy for their selfish motive rather than helping him. The reason behind adopting Balu is to lessen the monotony of their lives. They have deprived that child of a separate identity and maturity. Benare says- "And that they shouldn't die of boredom! – gave shelter to a young boy. They educated him, made him toil away, made a slave out of him." (Tendulkar,18) So they have adopted Balu Rokde, not out of generosity, but out of sheer need, "in order

that nothing should happen to either of them in their bare, bare house – and that they shouldn't die of boredom!" (Tendulkar, 23)

Tendulkar by each character shows how these characters have made them a hypocrite. Everyone in this theatre group represents an unfulfilled dream. Boredom pervades their lives. Benare sarcastically describes about their failure in life. She says about Balu Rokde –

Well, we have an expert on the Law. He's such an authority on the subject, even a desperate client won't go anywhere near him! He just sits alone in the barrister's room at court, swatting flies with legal precedents! It shows Balu's failure as a barrister. (Tendulkar, 27)

About Ponkshe – she says "And there's a Hmm! With us sci-en-tist ! inter – failed !" (Tendulkar, 32) So, it's clear that Ponkshe fails to become a scientist. Tendulkar turns the opening scene of silence into a marvelous piece of satire by pitting the self-consciously independent, vehemently assertive and immensely cheerful Benare against the utterly selfish hypocritical and malicious amateur artistes who she subjects to merciless psychical dissection in order to expose their real, seamy inner selves. When Mrs. Kashikar supposed desire to buy a garland for her Benare retorts,

The garland flew away- Pouf! Or did the dicky-bird take it? I never want garlands. If I did, couldn't I afford to buy them? I earn my own living? You know. That's why I never feel like buying garlands and things. (Tendulkar, 38)

Since Professor Damle was absent on the occasion of the staging of the Mock Law Court "Causes many a ripple amongst the amateur artistes." (Tendulkar, 53) This suspenseful dramatic occasion was utilized by Tendulkar to expose the real natures of Kashikar and Sukhatme. They expose themselves through their own utterances. Kashikar's sense of social obligation, though a false one, is aroused when he says- "How can I not worry? We owe something to the people, Sukhatme, A performance is no laughing matter." (Tendulkar, 43)

Sukhatme as a lawyer is a failure. Karnik is inefficient as an actor. Since Miss Benare is a successful woman in her life all these characters feel jealous about her. This petty lot finds in Benare a suitable enemy.

The witnesses during the mock – trial of Miss Benare, try to show her as immoral, but actually it shows their failure in making their relations with Miss Benare. They wanted to use her as they wished. They used to impress her by admiring, her intelligence, sharpness, beauty as a woman. All of them want to keep secret relations, secret enjoyment with her but no one wants to be tied down with her in a way of marriage. For life partner, they all need "ideal woman". They also feel humiliated that she has rejected them as a companion and she has established relations with Prof. Damle. All these hollow mentality becomes clearly evident in the dock of the court. Balu Rokde, as a witness reveals that once he had seen during night Miss Benare alone at Prof. Damle's house and his sudden visit astonished them. But Miss Benare reminds him the expression on her face arisen as Prof. Damle snubbed Balu in front of her as he was insulted before her. Balu, must have entertained secret love for her, but it is not materialized due to his parents. And it becomes clear when he says that while accosting Miss Benare at night, she held his hand and he gave a slap to her. By revealing this he wants to prove himself as Pure man, who is not interested in such woman. But Mr. Karnik, as a witness says that the story is different. The accused Miss Benare, asked for marriage to Rokde, but he was not ready and said "If I marry you when you're in this condition, the whole world'll sling, mud at me. No one in my family's done a thing like that - Don't depend on me". (Tendulkar, 53) And Miss Benare gave him a slap. Even Ponkshe reveals that he was invited by Miss Benare in the Udipi restaurant where Miss Benare, revealed that she was pregnant and she desired to marry Mr. Ponkshe, But he rejected her. This very act of Mr. Ponkshe indicates that if he

is really an ideal man he must not have accepted Miss Benare's invitation to meet her alone. If she had not revealed this he must have enjoyed a cup of coffee with her. All these witnesses reveal the pettiness of human minds. The commencement of the 'mock-trial', which constitutes a 'play-within the-play', offers Tendulkar ample scope to dissect and lay bare, the dormant ills of discontent in the psyche of these urban hypocrites. Though, they gang themselves up against a helpless Benare, for the time being, they have nothing but spite for one another. Kashikar, the mock – judge, banging the gavel, spitefully silences his wife "Silence must be observed while the court is in session, can't shut up at home can't shut up here!" During the trial, Samant, an innocent villager, makes a passing remark "Miss Benare is really amazing". At this Ponshe gives a deliberate twist to innocent remark "In many respects" Sukhatme, the counsel for the prosecution calls Ponshe as his first witness in a tone soaked in sarcasm "My first witness is the world – famous scientist, Mr. Gopal Ponshe.

They start dissecting Miss Benare's private life, - they talk about her age, the reasons for remaining single, her relations with Prof. Damle, her past affair with her maternal uncle, her attempt of suicide, her free life, her attempt to get married to give a name to her illegitimate child etc. They feel pity on her and they criticize her as well. Their comments reveal that society has created very tight, rigid, suffocating rules for a woman. A woman must not be free. She must not laugh loudly. As Mrs. Kashikar says :

Should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a woman? An unmarried woman? Look how loudly she laughs! How she sings, dances, cracks jokes! And wandering alone with how many men, day in and day out.(Tendulkar,65)

While showing the contempt for this helpless woman, a fierce psychological violence becomes evident. The latent sadism of the characters of Sukhatme, of Mr. & Mrs. Kashikar, of Ponshe, Karnik or even Rokde, surfaces during the process of the trial. In delineating these characters, Tendulkar has explored their psyches to the extent of revealing the hidden sense of failure pervading their lives – the inefficiency of Sukhatme as a lawyer, the childlessness of Mr. & Mrs. Kashikar, the non-fulfillment of Ponshe's dream to become a scientist, the vain attempt of Karnik to be a successful actor and the inability of Rokde to attain an independent, adult existence.

They all try to show their power as an individual. Since they are failure as an individual they feel jealous about Miss Benare who is economically and academically very much successful and has got the reputation as a teacher. No complaint about her teaching, or being late or absent on her job. Her professional life is not stained with any blame of corruption or mal-practice or un-fair means. Whereas her group-artists are unsuccessful on professional front in one way or the other way. It is but natural that they can derive pleasure by criticizing Miss Benare's personal life which according to them is very much contrary to social norms. Only on this front they find themselves superior as compared to Miss Benare, as they are leading their lives on this ground, according to social norms, they try to establish themselves superior and try to remind Miss Benare that though she is successful woman on professional level yet she can never consider herself above others as her personal life is stained with immorality. They try to cut her down. But as Samik Bandyopadhyay in the Introduction of "Collected Plays in Translation" rightly writes – "It is part of Tendulkar's dramatic strategy that Benare's immediate persecutors in the play are as powerless as she, and all their exertions to cut Benare down to size are more their striving after power than a real exercise of power. As a matter of fact, Tendulkar's plays at considerable length on the individual and powerlessness of each of her assailants, each of them grabbing every opportunity to expose and humiliate another, and ganging up only to attack Benare, in the process exposing their own hypocrisy and their desperate need to assume a pretence of power in the collective! And yet the invisible presence of power dominating over all of them is subtly woven into the scheme with reference to the networking of forces to throw Benare out of her job as punishment for her sin.



One very important character is Samant who is an outsider of this theatre group. He is a very simple villager but Tendulkar uses him to satirize against the hypocritical city people. He brings Samant to play a key-role in the mock-trial to highlight the gaping holes in the moral pretensions of his urban counterparts. When Sukhatme asked him to give the answer to the question what he saw in professor Damle's hostel room, he with rustic innocence and ignorance replies,

Where, No, No, why that room's in Bombay! And I was in this village Hardly! It's silly – I don't know your professor Damle from Adam. How could I get to his room: isn't that right.(Tendulkar,67)

All those characters who put blame on Miss Benare are hypocrites. Their words and actions prove, beyond any doubt, that they are neurotic, sadistic, conspiratorial and even treacherous. It looks that these people have joined drama not because they love drama but they have turned to theatre only for a sheer sense of their own personal failures in real life. They are frustrated, Dejected, discontented so they can only behave cruelly towards one another. Thus Tendulkar, excellently satirizes the modern middle class hypocrisy by the members of "The Sonar Moti Tenement (Bombay) Progressive Association" – An amateur theatre group.

Another play for the discussion is *Kamala* which is well known for its irony and hypocrisy. It draws attention towards issues like the flesh market, the condition of typical Indian women (as portrayal through the characters of Sarita and Kamala), the unsolved discord in the marital lives of Indian couples etc.

In *kamala* Tendulkar has raised the issue of hypocrisy by subjugation of woman in the Indian family system. He depicts how the Indian marriage system is just hypocritical. He satirizes the marriage system by showing the reality of the relationship between Sarita and her husband Jaisingh. Jaisingh is a press reporter who tries to make sensational news that trade of the women are still prevalent in some part of our country. He performs a great social feat in bringing to focus a crime perpetrated against women. The flesh trade prevailing is exposed with the press conference where he brings proof of the woman he has bought. When Sarita his wife enquires about the lady who had accompanied him he feels its unsafe to disclose the secret behind it. He feels that its not safe to disclose any secret to a lady. Later he tells her the truth and when enquired he states that he wanted to inform the society of such happenings. Jaisingh is delighted about his accomplishment to have bought Kamala to expose the crime committed against women. He presents himself as savior of the slave girl. But is just a hypocrite who is doing all this to earn name and fame for himself. Tendulkar exposes the excruciating pain and the psyche of Sarita in this play. The opening scene of the play itself shows the position of Sarita in her house. When her uncle receives the phone call from someone, she asks for the name of the caller, not for the sake of knowing, but to inform to her husband as she was instructed to do so. The phone rings several times and she records the name of the caller. We come to know from her talking on phone that her husband doesn't give much importance to her and so he never informs where he goes and when he returns. She comes to know about his arrival through an office phone call. She says that she has been habituated to that. She tells her uncle "often my husband isn't at home. And I would not know where to look for him. I \_ve got used to it." (Tendulkar,13)

Sarita, who has been an independent girl before her marriage, has come from a princely house. It's very evident in the play that Jaisingh's friend Jain calls Sarita "lovely bonded labourer." Any rebellion on the part of wife is bound to show her real place in her home. An Indian wife is not supposed to open her mouth before others. That's why Jaisingh, when he has to answer to the questions of Kakasaheb, loses his temper. When Sarita tells him that she had to tell Kakasaheb because he had asked her, Jaisingh retorts rather sorely why don't you admit that you told him?

We have many instances of loose temper and humiliating ways. Jaisingh is just like most of the menfolk in a patriarchal society who does not have the least respect for any woman be it his own wife or any other woman. He buys a village woman kamala for two hundred and fifty rupees to create sensational news about the selling of human beings. He brings her to his home only to exploit and deceive her. When he brings kamala to his home he says to her to think of that house as her own. The open auction for women at Luharguda discloses the hypocrisy of the Indian society.

Jaisingh: The men who want to bid - handle the woman to inspect them. Whether they are firm of flabby. Young or old. Healthy or diseased. How they feel in the breast, in the waist, in their thighs and... (Tendulkar,14)

He is impatient to take kamala to the press conference as she is, in her torn and dirty sari, without allowing her to have a bath. When Sarita says, "she's a woman, after all. And her sari is torn," the voice of Jaisingh rises, "I know, I know! You don't have to tell me, understand. I have a very good idea of all that" (Tendulkar,112) Again in the second scene when Sarita objects to his decision of taking kamala to the orphanage, he says, "it is I who takes decisions in this house, and no one else." (Tendulkar,113) Poor kamala, being an innocent village woman thinks she has been brought to love in this house for ever as she was told by her master, Jaisingh. Her sympathetic words for Sarita open latter's eyes to the reality of her status in her own house. Sarita realizes that she is living a life of slave in her own house. she says,

I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. I have no rights at all in this house. Because I'm a slave. Slaves don't have rights, do they, kakasaheb? They must only slave away. Dance to their master's whim. Laugh, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up. When he says, come to party, they must go. When he says, lie on the bed, they ... I will never think that this is my home.(Tendulkar,46)

Kakasaheb concerned tries to console her saying that there is nothing unusual in Jaisingh's behavior and that the behavior of most of the male in our society is like that. He even accepts that in his times he was not different from Jaisingh as far as his treatment with his wife was concerned.

His arguments reveal the mentality of patriarchal society and the discussion between the niece and the uncle can be called a fine example of the views prevailing in such a society on the issue of right to equality for women. The restrictions on women in India are not to be found anywhere in the world. The wife cannot leave the husband; if she crosses the boundaries the society does not respect her. She has no courage to break the walls suffocating patriarchy forts. Because of her qualities of compassion, endurance benevolence, sacrifice and love for her family and her husband, she cannot leave her husband in adverse circumstances. She yields before her fate and always chooses the traditional path to be humiliated again and again. That's why when Jaisingh faces the threat of dismissal from his job, Sarita postpones her revolt. The play reveals the fact that the annihilation of self of woman. Freedom, for a wife, is the fruit of forbidden tree. If she dares to taste the fruit, she will have to be ready to be expelled from her heaven by her god to be devoured by so many hungry wolves.

Tendulkar's plays are mainly centered on women characters from the middle class society. The protagonist Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and Sarita in *Kamala* try hard to win over their male counterparts. They represent the modern woman who tries to confront the male subjugated world. The main factor is that they represent the common society. The urge for liberty to prove them to establish their existence in this so called cultured society is seen on the plays of Tendulkar. All his plays revolve around the female characters. Through these characters Tendulkar has exposed the hypocrisy of Indian family which looks very beautiful and pious but inside it has got plenty of drawbacks.

In the projection of life Tendulkar appears to be a detached observer neither praising nor condemning either the cruel or violent characters or the kind and tender heartedness. Tendulkar's plays are dealt on real life incidents and not imaginary one. Though he tries to stand apart from society his sympathy for the female characters is deeply expressed through mouthpiece of his characters. He stands as a remarkable writer unlike others by bringing to light the reality of life without blending any bogus or superfluous incidents.

The plays *Kamala* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* depicts Indianness and portrays the characters as one among the common lot. The play grapples with several problems faced by women and the forceful male supremacy who decides the fate of woman. It also emphasizes on the incidents taking place in an Indian family or about the social issue on which people shut their eyes. It kindles a sense of guilt on those who represent the male character and sense of rethinking and reasoning power for those who represent the female characters.

Thus Vijay Tendulkar is the true champion in the art of exposing the personal hypocrisy deeply rooted in socio-cultural relationship in Indian society. His plays are a searching and a deeper analysis of the middle class hypocrisy. All these plays discussed above reveal the 'hidden secrets behind the mask of hypocrisy'.

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