

# Vijay Tendulkar: A Prominent Voice in Indian Theatre

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**Abstract:** *The post- Independence Indian English drama was benefitted by the increasing interest of the foreign countries in Indian English literature in general and Indian English drama in particular. Vijay Tendulkar seems to be prominent figure in Indian English drama. The post independence phase includes the translation trade and influence of postmodernism on the literary writing of Tendulkar and other contemporary dramatists. In the present research article the focus is on notable contribution of Vijay Tendulkar in the tradition of drama. His plays including realism and other themes related to the life of human being. With the active contribution of Vijay Tendulkar, the post independence drama has got a valuable touch. He has introduced notable themes and having a realistic approach towards life. The postmodern Indian drama and Tendulkar's plays are interdependent.*

**Keywords:** Realism, Postmodern Indian Drama, history, myth, sentiments... etc.

## **Introduction:**

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) was a very popular contemporary Indian dramatist. He was well-known as a screen playwright, T.V. writer, essayist, journalist and sensitive commentator. He gradually opposed against the convention and became the dramatist of the new age—Vijay Tendulkar was sort of rebelling in the field of stage and in society in general a rebellious and he violated all the frames of traditional drama (Loksatta, 20th May 2008). He is the versatile and most influential dramatist in Marathi. He is well-known for his fundamental and progressive views. His contribution to Marathi theatre is remarkable and outstanding. He wrote thirty full length plays and twenty-three one-act plays. Some plays have become classics of modern Indian theatre. Vijay Tendulkar played a vital role in the modernization of Indian theatre. Indian theatre was traditional and backward until his plays appeared on the stage. He made so many changes in Marathi drama. He mingled facts and fiction in his drama. He emphasized the reality of the world in various colors. We can see a real picture of the present society in his plays. Being a journalist he came in contact with various people. He could fulfill his requirements from the newspaper reports or incidents described to him. He protested against the old tradition. He became the dramatist of the new age. Before the arrival of Tendulkar, Marathi drama was related with history, myths and sentiments. He destroyed these values and converts it into a powerful dramatic medium. He disturbs all the frames of traditional drama.

## **Vijay Tendulkar's Plays: A cause of enriching Indian Theatre:**

Tendulkar plays very important role in the modernization of Indian theatre. Indian theatre was traditional and backward until his plays appeared on the stage. He has made so many changes in Marathi drama. He mixes facts and fiction in his drama. He emphasized the reality of the world in various colors. We can see a real picture of the present society in his plays. Being a journalist, he came in contact with various people. He could fulfil his requirements due to the newspaper reports or incidents described to him. He protested against the old tradition. He became the dramatist of the new age. Before the arrival of Tendulkar, Marathi drama was mostly related with history, myths and sentiments. He destroyed these values and converts it into a powerful dramatic medium. He disturbs all the frames of traditional drama.

Tendulkar is the only Marathi playwright who has taken Marathi drama to a highest level. According to him, writing and they are Sayami twins and nobody can separate them. He is undeclared king of Marathi theatre. He was engaged in innovative activity till the end of his life. Till the last phase of his life, he was writing the study of Indian History with socio-cultural perspective. His personality was very multifaceted like his plays.

He was a straight-forward person. Before his death he wrote in a straight forward way that the news about his death should not be informed to the media. He was away from money, publicity, fame and honors. In his dramas he dealt with the modern themes and presents them in a post-modern style. Tendulkar kept distance from the terms like intellectual and ideological. He was sincere to know about the man, his character, his behavior, the conflict which goes in the mind of the man. He opposed the traditions strongly. The themes of his plays and his specific style of writing brought him publicity. He was an activist and fought for the democratic rights of the people. He participated in Narmada Bachao Andolan. He kept the contact with the cultural movement like Granthali. He was a straight-forward person. Before his death he wrote in a straight forward way that the news about his death should not be informed to the media. He was away from money, publicity, fame and honors. In his dramas he dealt with the modern themes and presents them in a post-modern style. Tendulkar kept distance from the terms like intellectual

and ideological. He was sincere to know about the man, his character, his behaviour, the conflict which goes in the mind of the man.

While depicting violence on the stage, Tendulkar does not dress it up with any fancy trapping so as to make it palatable but rather keep it raw and natural. The plays *Chimanche Ghar Hote Menache* (1960) *Kalojanchi Shalai* (1968), *Ek Hoti Mugli* (1967) reveal Tendulkar's concern with authority and the idea of exploitation of individual. In the plays *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1968) and *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972), the theme of harassment dominates. *Sakharam Binder* (1972) is a study in human violence amounted to powerful dramatic statement. *Kamala* (1982) and *Kanyadaan* (1982) are written on the lines of naturalistic tradition. *Kamala* is a study of marital status as well as study in the theme of exploitation. *Kanyadaan* is a complex play about the cultural and emotional disturbances of a family. Tendulkar was related with New Theatrical Movement in Maharashtra. He presents a fictional reality in which the realism of life obtains a sharp focused character having rare dramatic power.

Vijay Tendulkar is known as an experimental dramatist. He does various experiments with the theatre. Throughout his life and career, he kept contact with theatre and film personalities like Ketan Mehta, Girish Karnad, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihlani, Kumar Sahani, Mani Kaul, Kamalakar Sarang, Shriram Lagoo, Jabbar Patel and Neelu Phule. He made his drama popular in our country and in foreign countries also. In America Tendulkar festival is celebrated. In that festival, the audience requested Tendulkar to write a play in English, as per suggestions he wrote his *Fifth Woman* a prequel to *Sakharam Binder*.

The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* creates a chaos and clash. Though the play is based on historical aspects but it is not a historical play. Tendulkar himself said that it is an unhistorical play. The play portrayed how sex, greed, lust for power and money have a corrupting influence on human beings. *Ghashiram Kotwal* is a simple revenge play. In the beginning *Ghashiram* gets a shameful treatment from the Brahmins and he comes back to humiliate them. *Ghashiram Kotwal* takes revenge on them by harassing them after he becomes the *Kotwal* of Poona. Apart from the deceptive diplomacy of *Nana*; it is normal to see the cruelty in *Ghashiram*.

The play *Sakharam Binder* is related to a man working in a press as a binder. He doesn't believe in marriage. He stays in a live-in relationship with women. He brings those women in his house who are abandoned by their husbands. He keeps sexual relationships with women to satisfy his lust. He is very arrogant, abusive and physically violent person. Every day he drinks heavily and justifies all his vices. He does not feel guilty about misbehavior.

The play *Silence! The Court is in Session* deals with the violence. It also tries to present the seduction of women by male. In her childhood *Leela Benare* is seduced by her maternal uncle then *Prof. Damle* seduces her. But *Damle* is not ready to accept the responsibility of her pregnancy. This play is totally based on the theme of power, its sources and appearance. The characters fight for authority and power. They try to trap each other through a metaphorical mock-court. This play presents the trial between the humanists and the anti-humanists.

The play *Kamala* deals with the predicament of women. *Jaisingh Jadhav* a journalist brings *Kamala* from the flesh market of Bihar. He is not interested in the pathetic condition of *Kamala*. He is interested only in his promotion and publicity. He arranges a press conference only for the sake of his own benefits. *Sarita* is his wife and her condition is also same like *Kamala*. She has no personal life. Her duty is to attend the calls and make a list. It tries to show the exploitation of Indian women by male. He presented the changes in modern society which are very complex. He did not care about old values. The modern man's problems are totally different from the past life.

### Conclusion:

According to him the old values cannot solve the problems of the modern man. Modern man is nervous, confused and dehumanized. Nobody is optimistic in modern society. His struggle is futile. He is fighting a losing battle. The complications, difficulties, conflicts, humiliations and suffering of the modern man have become the themes of the plays of Tendulkar. He surpassed the boundaries of the country. He performed his plays in foreign countries. He was related with journalistic career. After receiving the fellowship of the Nehru memorial fund committee in 1974, he travelled all over the country and minutely observed the life of the common people.

He worked on the patterns of violence. There is full of complexity in the life of modern man and it becomes the soul of his plays. He depicted the realities of human life. The struggle in the minds of common man, their tensions and futile struggle against the evils are the issues handled by Tendulkar. He tried to emphasize the individual character. These days man is going away from man. Day after day man is leading towards isolation.

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