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Depiction Of Domestic Violence And Immorality In Vijay Tendulkar's Sakharam Binder

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Abstract:

The present article aims at depicting the domestic violence and immorality of the protagonist Sakharam. The complete play moves around the protagonist and sins committed by him. The violence, sexual exploitation, suffocation, slavery, and mistreatment of women are the major elements found in the play. The concept of violence and society are interwoven and inseparable and they are everlasting in the modern civilized world. The appearance of violence is seen in the various forms as physical, verbal, political, psychological and sexual violence. Vijay Tendulkar's Sakharam Binder presents ample amount of violence of all these types in the play. The paper attempts to deal with these expressions of violence in Sakharam Binder in order to aware readers from the negative impact of violence rather describing violence such a significant part of real life with all its forms

Keywords:

Violence, Society, Exploitation, Frustration, Aggression, Suffocation, etc...

Introduction:

Tendulkar was born on 6th January 1928 in Mumbai, Maharashtra and started writing at the age of eleven. He picked on various flaws present in the contemporary society and is well known as a controversial writer for writing plays like *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972), *Sakharam Binder* (1972), *Kamala* (1981) and *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1967). His plays dealt with burning issues like violence, caste discrimination, male dominance and patriarchy, human trafficking, introduction of angry young man and new woman. Women are depicted as the most sufferer human beings of his time. His play *Ghashiram Kotwal* was a political satire against the established government of his time. *Sakharam Binder* narrates the story of a binder named Sakharam who is a lady-killer and takes pride in his manners towards women. Both the plays were eventually banned for their depiction of bitter natural reality.

Vijay Tendulkar the most renowned playwrights of post-modern India and through his plays, he has focused on the evils and vices taking place in the modern society. We, as human beings are awarded with the most superior minds. Hence, we consider the most intelligent beings on the planet and that, with changing times has given rise to numerous ambitions and desires. These emotions, if not fulfilled, give birth to enormous pain. We are left agitated, frustrated, unhappy and what not about our helplessness. These negative emotions bear the fruit of further animosity towards our fellow beings. Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder* portrays the suffocation and sexual exploitation of Laxmi and Champa, two prominent women characters, show two different sides of the same society.

Violence and Immorality in the Play:

"Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become" (Lewis, brainyquote.com).

Tendulkar's play *Sakharam Binder* totally relies on different shades of violence and dominance of patriarchy. It explains conflicts among characters in relationships, such as interpersonal and personal relationships. The expression of violence used by different characters is seen throughout the play. The central point of the play is the relationship of Sakharam with his seventh and eighth mistresses i.e. Laxmi and Champa respectively. The whole story moves around these three characters mainly. Dawood is a minor character of the play, a friend of Sakharam Binder, who belongs to the Muslim community. In the first half of the play, Dawood is represented as a calm and well-mannered person. Later he proves to be a deceitful character as he cheats his friend Sakharam Binder by building an affair with Sakharam's eighth mistress Champa. Another minor character Faujdar Shinde, husband of Champa, is



also portrayed as a violent person who drinks and beats his wife Champa. These characters are portrayed as violent characters who express their violent behavior in different expressions of violence such as physical, psychological, political, sexual and verbal.

The play is divided into three acts basically. The first act of the play opens with the beginning of Laxmi, Sakharam's seventh mistress, in Sakharam's house. Sakharam's aggressive attitude and excessive demands make Laxmi uncomfortable to stay with him and she leaves the house at the end of the first act. The second act deals with Sakharam's lustful relationship with Champa who is revolutionary. This act deals with the fact that Champa ruins Laxmi's efforts of turning Sakharam into a religious and soft-hearted person and makes him a drunkard. The second act ends when Laxmi comes back to Sakharam's house as she is humiliated and driven out by her nephew on the charge of stealing. The third act deals with the worst condition of Sakharam due to the presence of Laxmi and Champa. It also deals with his frustration and aggressive behavior. His impotency later enforces him to beat Laxmi and to kill Champa. The third act also shows the complexities in human mind as well as in human relationship.

Tendulkar's way of introducing the life and characters of the lower level and the impact of violence on their life and society is remarkably presented. He also shows how these characters react and express their anger towards violence when they become victims of it. The notable fact is that Tendulkar shows all offensiveness and ugliness through the character of Sakharam who is Brahman by caste. This caste is considered to be the most honored caste of the society. It becomes stunning and unendurable for those who are in the habit of seeing Brahmans with honor in society. In spite of being a Brahman, Sakharam denies following moral and religious values of his caste and society and on the contrary becomes the part of violence. Tendulkar represents how hollow men like Sakharam tortures and harasses her physically, mentally and sexually. Not only Sakharam is presented as an exploitative person, but Champa also shows the instincts of violence. She exploits, beats, abuses and humiliates her husband for being an impotent. Her exploitative attitude helps in proving the fact how an oppressed turns into an oppressor due to evil circumstances faced by an oppressed. She is first victimized by her husband and then victimizes him back. Laxmi, who seems a good woman, plays tricks with Champa when she threatens Laxmi to drive her out. Laxmi traps her by exposing her affair with Dawood. She also supports Sakharam's evil deeds when he kills Champa in anger and frustration. So, every character is indulged in the act of violence.

Sakharam is shown as a violent natured man who beats, threatens, kicks and abuses his wife. Outwardly, a committed and virtuous wife's role is played by Laxmi who follows Sakharam with no objection, but at the end she plays a violent role. Her violent reaction can be seen when she provokes Sakharam to kill Champa and soothes him after killing her. Being a religious lady, Laxmi neglects Sakharam's criminal act and she herself encourages him to kill Champa. So, it is proved by Tendulkar brilliantly that everyone has the instincts of violence. Tendulkar admits that violence cannot be driven out from society as well as from the mind of people as he himself asserts:

Unlike communist I don't think that violence can be eliminated in a classless society, or, for that matter, in any society. The spirit of aggression is something that the human being is born with. Not that's bad. Without violence man would have turned into a vegetable. (Mahida. 14)

One of the cruellest expressions of violence which he depicts in this play is physical violence or use of physical force to overpower other. Undoubtedly, violence is widespread in man-woman relationship and Tendulkar's elaboration of it helps us in determining the underlying power politics and the need of subjugation in every relationship. Beating, pushing, kicking, slapping or hitting with a weapon is very common in physical expression of violence which may result in permanent disability or even in death of a victim. The more brutal example of physical force appears in the play when Laxmi is beaten by a belt at the occasion of *Ganpati Puja*.

Champa's distressing condition leaves a strong effect on the mind of audience and makes them feel sad. No doubt, she is tortured to great extent by the hands of her husband, but all her sufferings make her bold. Now she reacts violently at Sakharam's house. It seems that she has made her mind to take revenge on the society for her exploitation and also for not to tolerate such violence in life again. She lives her life according to her own will. Her violent behavior can be seen when her husband Faujdar

comes to her at Sakharam's house to bring her back with him, but she gets angry and starts beating him by recalling all her tortures that she got from him. She kicks him with her full strength and hits him on his face that makes his mouth bleed.

Violence is a means of catharsis for a person like Sakharam. When he faces Laxmi, he becomes angry and recalls what Champa calls him. So, in aggression he points exit door to Laxmi. But Laxmi plays her trick and exposes Champa's affair with Dawood that makes Sakharam more frustrated than ever before. Consequently, he loses his temper and kills Champa in anger. Apart from this brutal expression of physical violence Tendulkar also describes sexual expression of violence that is inherent in the complex relationship of male and female. Tendulkar portrays most servile form of sexual violence in the play. He brings rejected, neglected and homeless women and gives them shelter. But he does not keep them with him for so long. He exploits them sexually to fulfill his physical need and treats them as servants. His conversation with his friend Dawood shows his inhuman nature. It proves him to be a person, who does not treat deserted women as a human being and uses them as a thing to play as he says,

"While it lasts, she has a roof over her head, and you get home cooked food. That's a cheap way fixing all your appetites" (Sakharam Binder. 129)

Another expression of violence which is depicted in this play is verbal violence that is especially shown through the character of Sakharam and Champa. They are more vulgar and more aggressive than any other character. In verbal expression of violence, a victim is dominated through abusive language of victimizer that usually results in physical expression of violence. Sakharam is presented as an abuser while Laxmi and Champa are subjected. Champa, after subjugation, plays a role of an abuser and targets those who have assaulted her ever. For children, playing outside of Sakharam's house, it is a matter of mockery to see another woman who comes to stay with Sakharam for some time, so they crack jokes and laugh at them. Sakharam reacts angrily on their laughing and abuses them. His reaction to those children shows his aggressive, frustrated and abusive behavior. It is true that frustration compels a person to react violently as Sakharam does in the beginning of the play. He uses vulgar language when he is laughed at by the children. The same is depicted in Dollard's Frustration Aggression Displacement Theory that if one gets disturbed while doing something, he gets frustrated and behaves violently.

She knows well the pattern of violence as she gets it on regular basis. Although, Champa tries to subjugate Laxmi verbally and mentally yet a feeling of insecurity can be felt at her face too. All the characters play their trump cards to take advantage of the opportunity when they get the chance. Champa's authoritative attitude is presented when she agrees to Laxmi and allows her to stay with her in Sakharam's house on an agreement that Laxmi will look after the house and she takes care of Sakharam. But it is not as simple as it seems because Champa allows Laxmi to stay with her, not to show sympathy towards her pathetic condition, but to take advantage of her, as she wants her to stay at home when she goes out to meet Dawood. This shows Champa's arbitrariness as she uses Laxmi as a tool to fulfill her physical need. She also traps Sakharam by calling him an impotent so that she cannot be exploited sexually by him because she has an illicit relationship with Dawood. Sakharam's realization of his impotency creates chaos in him and he decides to drive out Laxmi as she is the only reason after his mental turmoil.

Conclusion:

Thus, various sort of violence can be visualized through each and every character of the play whether one is victim or victimizer. Physical, verbal, psychological, political and sexual violence is part and parcel of the play and is very realistically delineated by Tendulkar through the failure of institutional marriage as well as live-in-relationship. Neither the concept of institutional marriage nor live-in-relationship provides any security for women. Man like Sakharam provides shelter to the deserted woman and tortures her mentally, physically, sexually and verbally. Tendulkar does not just present the panoramic picture of violence in middle class society rather he adds to it by making the audience relate to such violence and how violence can turn into failure of relationships. Tendulkar indirectly conveys the message that to live a happy married life, there must be adjustment, adaptability, trust, freedom and above all understanding in relationship while violence of any kind leads to destruction and failure.



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