

Gender Discrimination in Vijay Tendulkar Silence The Court is in Session

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Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar is a leading contemporary Indian playwright. His Shantata ! Court chalu ahe (1967) is a well known Marathi play. Priya adarkar translated it as silence. The court is in Session (1978). He emerged as an artist with national reputation and recognition. In his plays he successfully depicts the social problems. Silence! The court is in session is his best known play. In this play, Tendulkar has been depicted the plight of a young educated urban women in a male dominated society. A traditional male dominated middle class society is reluctant to any social change. Benare, The heroine of the play is in search of a happy life after a few frustrations in her life. But society does not allow her to live quietly. It has elaborate stage directions, which enables the action of the play become very play wright, Tendulkar supports feminists, so he highlights women as sufferer of the male hegemony and oppression. Women characters are depicted as helpless victim of the conspiracies originated by men class. Thus Benare ill-treated by her friends and male characters menus and male characters.

Key words

- Ø Silence The Court is in Session
- Ø Benare
- Ø Women
- Ø Vijay Tendulkar
- Ø Play
- Ø Act I
- Ø Act II
- Ø Life
- Ø Kashikar
- Ø Society
- Ø Social
- Ø Damley

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Vijay Tendulkar is a leading contemporary Indian playwright. His *shantata!* Court chalu ahe (1967) is a well known Marathi play. priya adarkar translated it as *silence*. The court is in session (1978). He emerged as an artist with national reputation and recognition. In his plays he successfully depicts the social problems. He looks at the problems of society from a new and original angle. Over the past century there has been a great increase in number of women in the Labor force. Though there has been a lot of advocacy towards bringing equality. It is still a farfetched idea. Women's contribution to the present day business is very significant and rapid increasing. But women still have to face a lot of challenges to acquire a status of equality. Apart from economic Independence work is an essential means of enabling a person to develop a sense of identity and self- esteem.

Silence! The court is in session is his best known play. In this play Tendulkar has been depicted the plight of a young educated urban women in a male dominated society. A traditional male-dominated middle class society is reluctant to any social change. Benare, the heroine of the play is in search of a happy life after a few frustrations in her life. But society does not allow her to live quietly.

Benare is an educated woman of about 34 years. She is a school teacher by profession. She loves life and is full of spirits. She is very proud of her performance as a teacher and feel that her life is her own and no one has got the right to interfere in it. She is a member of an amateur dramatic association.

Silence! The court is in session presents the course of a mock trial where benare, as the accused is tried for an imaginary crime of infanticide. Though the trial is conducted in a game like and non-serious manner, it exposes the past life of benare and authenticates the feeling of superiority of men over women Indian society. The play *Silence!* Court is in session deals with the mental state of educated women in traditionally male dominated Indian society. The social workers like kashikar and his troupe show social reform. They are known for their double standard attitude. Tendulkar has expressed his attitude towards such people in the society

In *silence!* court is in session he directs his criticism against the hypocritical male attitude in Indian society where a women is quite suppressed and any small attempt by a women for her freedom is highly deteriorated. Tendulkar in highly artistic manner withdraw from making any statement which saves the play from being propaganda, a play. In order to be staged successfully needs to be rehearsal. The main body of play concerns the rehearsal of a drama on the theme of a court trial of an accused on some imaginary charges. That all preparations for such a rehearsal of a mock court trial have been made. Act-I, is an introduction to the main action of the real play which starts in Act-II, the play begins with the arrival of the

dramatic troupe in a village to stage a mock trial of a court in order to educate the rural folk about the functioning of a court of law. Since they arrive in the village much before the time of the actual performance they plan to spend the prime part of time in some sort of a game like activity.

The rehearsal of the play in the village suggests the main action of play. A detail analysis of act-I reveals the entire course of the drama while engaged in conversation with Samant. Benare tells him about her experiences as a popular teacher in a school. She further narrates how people around her are jealous for which they have instituted an enquiry against her for one bit of slander. This slander relates to her affair with Professor Dimly as it has been shown in the course of her trial as the accused. She argues:

Is that any kind of reason for throwing me out? Who are these people to say what I can or can't do? My life is my own I haven't sold it to anyone for a job. My will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill that anyone I'll do what with myself and my life. (Silence; the conetisin session)(5)

She is demoralized to silent suffering by the society around her. She is tricked into a trap by her associates of the theatre-troupe. In this play, although Act-I the playwright endeavors to create a game like and lack serious atmosphere but in the course of the mock trial much light has been thrown into the past life of Benare. The imaginary charge labeled against her personal life, so fact and fiction combine in the course of the play. The trial of Benare is the main theme of the play. The mock trial starts in Act-II. The real action of the drama begins with Kashikar's declaration that Benare, the accused, has been charged under section 302 of Indian Penal Code.

Actually this trial of Benare crops up like a play within a play with the intention of exposing the private and personal life of Benare. This trial begins in a light hearted and non serious way but gradually takes on a serious turn the moment the private life of Benare is brought into the corpus of the plot. It begins as a game and fun becomes a serious comment on Benare's private life and the society around her. This design is a well conceived part of the structure of the play. Even though Act-II is full of fun and mockery. It successfully exposes the hypocrisy existing in modern society. Not only does it educate the people about the trial in a real court of law but also it does make people conscious of the hypocrisy and artificiality that exists in our society. They decide to rehearse a mock trial with Benare as the accused. She becomes the central character in the mock court Kashikar acts as the judge and

sukhatme become the counsel for prosecution. When kashikar thinks the attitude of the society he observes.

Should revive the old custom of child marriage. Marry off the girls before puberty. All this promiscuity will come to a full stop (Silence).

Social workers like kashikar and his troupe show social concern for social reform. They are known in the course of the trial it is revealed that she had weaknesses for men. Besides it is revealed that as teenager she had an affair with her maternal uncle which was a failure. Then she came in contact with prof. damle who outwitted her: thus she has been most cruelly treated by society.

kashikar calls her “a sinful canker on the body of society” she was feared to become a mother without marriage. In violation of the laws of society she has dared to champion “unmarried motherhood” she is completely broken by the decree of the mock court that she is spared but the child in her womb is to be destroyed. Damle after she become pregnant by him shatter all her hopes. Yet she does not lose heart she struggles against hostile forces to lead a happy life. But she is dismissed from her job for her promiscuity. Instead of helping her, society indicts her. Mrs. kahikar is the wife of Mr. kahikar. She is a middle aged woman. She is domineering, energetic and uneducated. Even then she wants to pose herself as a snob. She talks like a sophisticated woman but acts like a village women.

Silence! The court is in session is a problem play with a difference. In a problem play the protagonist’s situation is so presented as to show that it represents a contemporary social or sociological problem. Also the dramatist uses a character of the play as the spokesman to highlight the problem and its solution. Referring to the writer’s attitude about the middle class, kumud mehta asserts.

In his earlier works he had dwelt on the woes of the middle class with a degree of sympathy, bordering on sentiment!

Tendulkar exposes this condition of women of the middle class family in the Indian context. Both Benare and Mrs. kahikar are presented as women who have fallen victims to male supremacy in Indian society. They both are not free to act independently. Benares’s attempt to lead an independent life on her own has been frustrated by the group of men surrounding her during the course of the mock trial. Her freedom has been mercilessly crushed. She argues.

***Don't you think that maturity... comes to a parson only with experience?
And experience comes with age, with a slightly unusual way of life.
(62.)***

She gradually becomes serious and depressed because all the male characters try to unravel her past life with a view of the humiliating her even Mrs. Kashikar joins hands with them to expose her.

It is further revealed that Benare is carrying the child of Darnley in her womb. Karnik discloses the fact that Benare in the youth, was in love with her maternal uncle and when that affair ended in fiasco, she attempted suicide. Further it is disclosed in the court that after her pregnancy through prof. Darnley, Benare attempted to get married to save herself from defamation. Sukhatme points out to the court that man is liable to error and youth leads a parson astray. He appeals the court to keep this in view and take a lenient view of his client's alleged crime and show mercy to her for humanity's sake. Benare admits all her crimes, she points out that her private life is her own business. She will decide what to do with her: everyone should be able to do. Everyone has a manner and an aim in life. She refers to her love affair with her maternal uncle and prof. Darnley she boldly admits her love affair with these two men. But she tells that both the men had deceived her they only loved the flesh in her but not the woman in her: neither of them had the boldness to marry her. She becomes meditative and says:

***Life is like this. Life is so and so. Life is such. Life is a book that goes
ripping into pieces. Life is a poisonous snake that bites itself life is
betrayal. Life is a fraud. Life is a drug. Life is drudgery. Life is a
something that's nothing or a nothing that's something.(73)***

Thus Benare represents the sly new fashion of women earning that makes everything go wrong. According to the view of Mrs. Kashikar, that's how promiscuity has spread throughout our society. Even Mrs. Kashikar does not hesitate to apply physical force to drag Benare to the dock. All these show how a woman who wants to lead an independent life is suppressed by the male dominated society.

The violence in the plays already raises in this play. In the persecution of Benare helpless women, a fierce psychological violence becomes obvious. The characters of Sukhatme, Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar Pankshar or even Rokde come to the front during the process of the trial. In depicting these characters, Tendulkar has

explored their psyche to the extent of revealing the hidden sense of failure pervading their lives namely the inefficiency of sukhatme as a lawyer. The childlessness of the kashikar couple the non fulfillment of ponkshe's dreams to become a scientist the vain attempts of karnik to be a successful actor. Tendulkar handles the women's issue in a very skillful manner. Though he exposes male supremacy, he never becomes vocal about woman's right. This artistic objectivity saves the play from being a mere propaganda play. Tendulkar also satirizes the called social workers. They do not hesitate to exploit others. kashikar and his wife exploit rokde. This has been satirized in the play. Besides kashikar's strong invectives hurled at unmarried young girls reveal his male prejudiced attitude which had been derided in the play. Tendulkar is a controversial playwright for his ideas. Though *silence! the court is in session* is not just a propaganda play, it contains bitter satire against the judiciary and the institutional social service organizations. It also point a finger at the male supremacy in Indian society where women are suppressed.

To establish the fact that conventional conduct should be modified by natural ethics he presents his heroine Benare with an independent spirit to fact and fight against outdated traditions and customs. Benare has an affair with prof damley. she bears his child in her womb. He abandons her. yet she tries to live happily. She proposes marriage to ponkshe and rokde. They refuse so she is forced to accept unmarried motherhood which is looked down upon in our society. she is accused of trying to dynamite the very roots of our tradition, our pride in ourselves our culture and our religion.

It has elaborate stage direction, which enables the action of the play become very Playwright, Tendulkar supports feminists, so he highlights women as sufferer of the male hegemony and oppression. Women characters are depicted as helpless victim of the conspiracies originated by men class. Thus benare ill-treated by her friends and male characters menus and male characters.

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