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Caste Conflict in Vijay Tendulkar's Play 'Kanyadan'

Dr. Sanjay Johari*

**Assistant Professor, Department of English, K.G.K. College, Moradabad, India.*

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Abstract: Literature is the mirror of society. This is so because literature gives shape to civilization and impacts on social norms. It changes the entire atmosphere. Mostly literature changes the political issues and it also exposes in justice. Literature presents before us the real human existence. In English literature there are many dramatists who present the emerging issues in the contemporary life. Girish Karnard, Mahesh Dattni and Vijay Tendulkar are the famous dramatists who show the mirrorto the society by their deft artistic excellence. Vijay Tendulkar one of the most celebrated marathi dramatists, who presents the realistic problems of human society which are emerging in contemporary life. No phase of problem is intouched with his literature that is not depicted in his writings. That is why his plays become the high criticism of Indian society. He penetrates into the inner souls of his characters, especially the women in patriarchal society. In this way Tendulkar presents the complexity of human relationship in contemporary life. He has shown conflicts, violence and sex characterized in his plays.

Keywords: Civilization Emerging Depicted Penetrates Patriarchal Complexity Conflicts Violence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Kanyadan is the most controversial plays of Tendulkar but when it was staged in Marathi, Tendulkar was criticized and he faces the angry look of the audience. Kanyadan deals the texture of modern and social change in India when marriages are solemnized between two people of different caste and backgrounds.

Vijay Tendulakar, one of the most celebrated Marathi dramatists who present the realistic problems of human society which are emerging in contemporary life. No phase of problem is in touch with his literature that is not depicted in his writings. That is why his plays become the high criticism of Indian society. He penetrates into the inner soul of his characters, especially the women in patriarchal society. In this way Tendulkar presents the complexity of human relationship in contemporary life. He has shown conflicts, violence and sex characterized in his plays.

His aim is to show the condition of subalternatity of marginalised community and evokes the conscience of the society by exposing the hyprocrisy of the middle class people. Kanyadan is the

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most controversial play of Tendulkar. For this play Tendulkar was awarded the Saraswati Samman. But when it was staged in Marathi Tendulkar was criticized and he faced the angry look of the audience. Kanyadan deals the texlure of modern and social change in India whenmarriage is solemnized between two people of different castes and background. But the audience considered it as an anti-dalit play. In this play Tendulkar tells us the story of an inter caste marriage between Arun Athawale who is a dalit of Mahar caste and Jyoti Devlalikar, a Brahman girl. Though the marriage is out of love, it is expected to have a happy ending, but the marriage is disaster. Infact it is the story of spousal abuse and the domestic violence.

In the beginning of the play, we meet Nath Divlalikar, M.L.A. & an idealist of Gandhian thought and also a social worker. His wife Seva is also a social worker who indulged in her work for the upliftment of women in society. They have two children Jyoti and Jai Prakash who are brought up on the basis their father's philosophic ideas. Nath hates castesim and he plays on active role to abolish this social evil and to be a supporter of dalit upliftment. In the beginning we see Jyoti announces her decision to marry Arun who is a Dalit, Nath becomes embarrassed and excitedly says:

"Marvellous if my daughter had decided to marry
into high caste, it wouldn't have pleased me as much."[1]

But this creates a critical situation. On the other hand, Seva is shocked. She is against. Nath plays as an idealist reformist, supports Jyoti as a solider, ready to face any situation. He consents Jyoti to get married with Arun. He does not accept the negative approach of Seva. He says to Seva,

"Seva, until today, break the caste system, was a mere slogan for us. I've attended many inter caste marriages and made speechless. But today I have brokenthe caste barrier in the real sense. Today I have changed."[2]

Jyoti further tells that she is doubtful in case of marriage because she has known Arunonly for two months. At this Nath persuades her to stand on her decision. He has to face the resistance from her wife Seva and young son, Jai Prakash. Seva opposes too much for this marriage, the she cries out, "I will opposethes marriage in your words I shall break party discipline and revolt. Does Jyoti's revolt seem sensible to you. Tell me as a father, on heart." But Nath does not agree with his wife and said to Jyoti, "He gives coenage & support. I stand by you. Go ahead my child. Let us see what happens." Nath is the mouth piece of Tendulker. Tendulkar himself said,

"Nath Devlalikar, the protagonist of Kanayadan is me and many other liberals of my generation whom I understand completely. The pain of these people(liberals) today, the defeat they have suffered, the fundamental confusion and naivety that has eed to their pain and defeat, these from the theme of Kanyadan and I wrote about it because it come so close to me."[3]

In the next scene, Jyoti comes with Arun who is sworthy in complexion and appearing
B.A. Jyoti is very much fascinated by his poetic composition and autobiography. He is a dalit boy & having a poor financial condition & he is very conscious about his 'class- discrimination.' When he reaches there, Arun feels uncomfortable in 'big houses' and he becomes nervous so he leaves house at once.

In the seemd act we see that Jyoti is perplexed and unhappy. Arun follows her but he is in intoxication of a liquor. Arun flaunts his abusive language that perhaps shows his behaviour as

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conditioned by his difference from upper caste society. He tells Jyoti ourtongues always tasting the flesh of dead animals and with relish. Surely we can't fit into your unwrinked Tinopal world. He can there be any give and take between our ways and younger tongue, ghee spread, what bread culture? ..... At times a fire blazes I want to set fire to the whole world, strangle throats, rape and kill. Drink up the blood of the beasts, your high caste society.

He sarcastically remarks on Jyoti that **she is unable to deal with hardship of his world. She replies that she is not one of those delicate touch me not creature. I belong to the Sevaa-Dal tradition. Arun's response is to twist her arm until she cries of its pain.**[4] Jyoti is beaten by her husband. He asks for Jyoti's forgiveness for this act. This is very shocking for a father like Nath. He doesnot want that his dream will be broken before his eyes. Through he is very conscious about the miserable plight of his daughter.

After this Arun persuades Nath to make a public speech on his autobiography but Nath denies this to do so. But how can he forget the miserable plight of his daughter, he is compel to do this. He made a hypercritic speech unwillingly in praise of Arun, Nath only wants to protect her daughter from the maltreatment of Arun. Finally being a responsible father, he says to his daughter Jyoti that she may stay in his house with Arun. In this way he can save his daughter from abusing word and physical fortunes that are given to her by Arun. Jyoti also wants to avoid horrible situations but she cannot consider what to do. Finally she refuses to stay her home and decided to live with Arun forever. Jyoti being an ideal daughter does not tolerate these ill treatment before her parents. She leaves her house not out of love but to save her family from a drurkard, ill natured husband, Arun, Nath and Jyoti both are in disillusionment with Gandhian Hindu reformion but they have a radical change in their opinion and they believe that may be different cast really mean different people. In the end of the drama, Kanyadan, Jyoti confronts with her father.

I grew up listening to such talk day in and day out - 'Hatred, not for the man but his tendencies. No man is fundamentally evil, he is good. He has certain propensities towards evil. They must be transformed completely uprooted and destroyed." 'All false, vicious claptrap,' Man and his inherent nature are never really two separate things." Nath is completely disillusioned because he fears that his high idealistic notion about the social upliftment have been gradually demolished. At the end, Nath who is idealist turned into a realist. In the end of this play he says angrily that the entrance of dalit in his house has polluted it. Nath is an energetic and zealous man who feels that he is superior to other caste Hindus, being a Brahmin, and as a reformist it is his social duty to uplift dalit community. But this social experiment proves harmful for his own family and also the responsible for the ruin of his family.
But Jyoti does not accept her father's behavior against her husband Arun and after demolishing her father's Gandhi an reformist beliefs, Jyoti decides that she has chosen never to meet her parents and leave her home for ever and make a compromise to live with her husband Arun. The last lines of the play that are spoken by Jyoti, are really provoking.

"I have a husband, I am not a widow. Even if I become one I shan't knock at your door. I am not Jyoti Nath Devlalikar, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger, Me Mahar-niahe,

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Maharani nahi." (I am a Mahar, not a queen).[5]

Tendulkar wants to show that inter-caste marriages are common in contemporary life in India. He gives allusion on casteism in his writing. **"Caste is a nation it is a state of mind", writes Ambedkar, which prevents us from having a 'consciousness of kind.'**[6]
In the words of DR. Mitali Mukerji of IGIB Delhi, **"There is no logic to talking about caste and sperm and which community has better genes, Indian all have opinions, but the caste system has no genetic basis."**[7]

The problem is there that a high caste girls become obstinate to marry into a lower caste, it is certainly not a fantasy. There is an example of such situation. Goparaju Ramachandran Rao write a letter to Gandhiji, **"So I discussed my idea with my wife and with my eldest daughter (Manorama). They accepted my programme. My daughter agreed to marry an 'untouchable'. At this Gandhiji replied; "I have your letter. I like it.I am also glad that you have resolved to marry Manorama to a Harijan."**[8] This article deals the miserable condition of Nath Devlalikar who is the protagonist how he faced hazards in real life in his attempts abolish caste system. No doubt the play also gives us the hints of the pitiable condition of women in a patriarchal society. It shows how the traditional hindu custom of marriage is to give a marriageable daughter by one's gourgrans to an eligible young man who will give her safety and security in life.
Sometimes the possessive nature of father in concerned with his daughter proves harmful. A father has to face the reality in society and no to adhor his own Gandhian view points in post colonial society. Being puffed up by false romantic notions and by his own Gandian refermist theory on the Harijan; he ruins the life of his own daughter.
Tendulkar's play 'Kanyadan' expresses the realites between the public and the private, between art and politics, language and action and the delineation of Dalit's masculinity can only be analised by Tendulkar's own engagement with such literature, In the words of Apaina Dharwoder about Kanyadan',
"This cannot be read as a topical vehicle about the politics of 'Untouchability' a loaded-but as a 'play of ideas' about the relation of the political to the personal and of the public to the private."[9]
Thus it is clear that Tendulkar's Kanyadan is a political drama. It exposes the upper caste. It shows that in the contemporary society the wall of division between the upper caste and the dalit class is still erected and it creats a deep gulf between the two poles of society. It also presents how on the political level, people use this disturbing issue to gain profit in their own field.

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