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Human Relationships in Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*: A Study

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Abstract:

Drama in Indian languages has a remarkable growth in the recent decades. In post-independence era, contemporary Indian drama in English gives a brutal account of the social and political realities. Vijay Tendulkar is the most prolific and controversial dramatist among the Post-Independence Indian playwrights. Thematically Tendulkar's plays have ranged from the exploration of man-woman relationship to reinterpretations of social, historical and political episodes. His plays concentrate on different aspects of the human character and complexity of human relationship. He fascinated by the violent exploited-exploiter, husband-wife, brother-sister, lover-beloved relationship. His *Kamala* is a tropical drama inspired by a real life incident. It is an indictment of the male oriented society in which women are mere slaves for the achievement of men. In *Kamala*, the human relationship between man-woman is depicted as husband-wife and exploited-exploiter relationship. He exposes the inhuman violence in its verbal form of the patriarchal society against women. The themes of the play are based on the present socio-economic situation, family and marital relations, violence and male domination.

Introduction:-

Vijay Tendulkar, one of India's most influential playwrights, was born on 1928. His prolific writing over a period of five decades includes thirty full-length plays, twenty-three one-act plays, eleven children's dramas, four collections of short stories, two novels and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism. He is an important translator in Marathi, having rendered nine novels and two biographies as well as five plays. He is the author of original stories and screen plays for eight films in Marathi. He has written television serials in Hindi. He is a leading contemporary Indian playwright who writes in Marathi about contemporary issues. His plays have been translated and performed in English. In his plays, women play a central role. His female characters are mainly from the lower and middle class families such as housewives, teachers, mistresses, daughters, slaves and servants. These women bring not just variety of social station but also a broad range of emotions into the plays. Arundhati Banerjee, in her introduction to Five plays of Vijay Tendulkar, said: "...from the unbelievably gullible to the clever, from the malleable to the stubborn, from the conservative to the rebellious, from the self-sacrificing to the grasping." (p.X) His eight plays are translated in English and *Kamala* is one of them. *Kamala* is translated in English by Priya Adarkar and published in 1995. Tendulkar is also screen and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist and social commentator. Thematically, Tendulkar's plays have ranged the alienation of the modern individual. The themes of gender discrimination, sexual norms, violence, stability in the society, man-woman relationship, institution of marriage, social issues, power and morality have been featured prominently in his plays. The play has made an attempt to provide a comprehensive critical statement on human relationships. Such a leading contemporary Indian playwright, Vijay Tendulkar, died on May 19, 2008 in Pune.

About the Theme of Human Relationship:

Today our society is becoming more and more complex. Industrialization, globalization, capitalism, science and technology have made the life of man more mechanical. Life of the modern man has lost all sense of coherence and has become fragmented. All this resulted in the human relationships. In the total network of human relationships, man -woman relationship has always occupied a central place. The theme of man-woman relationship is universal theme in the world literature. Depiction of the human relationship in any literary work stands with cultural, social, economic, moral and political issues of the age. Today's society is becoming more complex in the context of psychological, sociological and patriarchic society. In the patriarchic society, woman's position is bad. Women have no ways to express her feelings, love and emotions in the patriarchic society. Beauvior describes the bad condition of woman to man upon both the old and new testaments in *The Second Sex*: "For the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man..... for the husband is the head of wife even as Christ is the head of Church. Therefore, as the church is subject upto Christ, So let the wives be to their husband in everything."(110) It shows that the man is not created for woman but the woman is created for man.

In the context of psychology, marriage is the most significant and socially recognized form of man-woman relationship. Marriage is a social institution supported by tradition, custom and social morality. The theme of human relationship deals with the major aspects of marital, premarital, post marital relationship and adolescent love. This type of relationship appears to be inexhaustible and the changing times and social situations have served to bring out its amazing diversity. In this context of premarital relationship, A.A. Khatri says: "There are two kinds of involvements in Pre-marital relationship-unilateral and bilateral. In unilateral involvement, a spouse prior to his/her marriage was romantically attached and/or erotically attached to another member of the opposite sex but latter did not reciprocate by love and/or erotic response. In another type of unilateral involvement, a spouse was an object of romantic love and/or sexual attraction of a member of the opposite sex but he/she did not reciprocate. In bilateral involvement, a spouse, prior to his/her marriage and another member of the opposite sex were mutually involved-romantically and/or erotically."(120)

Human relationships in *Kamala*:

Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala* (1995) is the most tropical drama inspired by a real life incident-the Indian Express expose by Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from the market of rural area and presented at a press conference. By using this incident, Tendulkar raises certain issues regarding the present condition of a modern society which is ready to sacrifice human morality in the name of humanity. The central character of the play is Jaisingh Jadhav, journalist, who treats the woman, Kamala to whom he has purchased from the flesh market as an object that can buy him a promotion in his job and a reputation in his professional life. Jaisingh bought Kamala for two hundred and fifty rupees but he has not thought about what will happen to Kamala after this expose. He sells Kamala who is poor and illiterate woman. Jaisingh discards Kamala in an orphanage. He exploits not only Kamala but also his wife, Sarita. Through the treatment to Kamala, Jaisingh makes Sarita realize that she is also a slave of him. Sarita observes how he refuses a bath to Kamala and takes her in clumsy clothes to the press-conference for his professional profit He uses both the woman, Kamala and Sarita as pawns in his game. He is the persecutor. For the stability in the society and reputation in the society, he uses Kamala as a slave. After his achievement in the job, he throws out Kamala. For this purpose, he uses Kakasaheb, a journalist of the old school, Kakasaheb provides the true ideals of journalism and

in contrast to these, Jaysingh Jadhav's reporting is shown in a critical manner. Jaysingh believes himself to be liberal-minded. At the end of the play, there is a hope that Sarita will get independence in the future.

The play *Kamala* indicates male dominated society in which women are only stepping-stones in a man's quest for power and reputation. In the play, there is the strange world of human relationships which are inherited.

In this play, Tendulkar has shown human relationships such as husband-wife relationship between Jaysingh and Sarita, exploiter-exploited relationship between Jaysingh and Kamala and the relationship between Kakasaheb and Sarita. Through the relationship between Jaysingh and Sarita, Tendulkar depicted Sarita as a sympathetic, kind and passionate but Jaysingh treats her as a slave in his home like Kamala. Thus the relationship between Jaysingh and Sarita is not cordial relationship as a husband-wife.

The relationship between Jaysingh and Kamala is called exploiter-exploited relationship. Jaysingh exploits Kamala as a slave. He has purchased Kamala from the flesh market. He wants to show her in the press-conference as a slave. He has to show the condition of women in the slum area. So he doesn't give any facility to Kamala in the home. He refuses a bath to Kamala and takes her in clumsy clothes to the press-conference because he has to show the condition of slaves in the modern society. After the achievement in the job, he throws out Kamala from home. He doesn't care about her future. He only uses her for his promotion in job. As a human being, he has no sympathy, kindness about Kamala. So the relationship between Jaysingh and Kamala is not cordial. Kamala brings not just variety of social station but also a broad range of emotions in the play. Tendulkar has also shown such types of relationship in his play which happens in the society. In an interview, Tendulkar said: "I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world in which I live. If they want to entertain and make merry, fine go ahead, but I can't do it, I have to speak the truth." (3)

Tendulkar also deals with themes that unravel the violence in human relationships. In an introduction by Arundhati Banerjee in *Collection of Five Plays*, Tendulkar noted: "...the basic urge (to write) has always been to let out my concerns as I perceive it."(p. x)

Thus, Vijay Tendulkar's plays concentrate on different aspect of the human character and complexity of the human relationship. He shows the position of women in contemporary Indian society through his woman characters. In this play, he depicts women as loyal, docile, hardworking, and tenderhearted. He deals with the existence of human being, human mind, human psychology and human relationship through his plays. The issues of violence, sex, illicit human relationships, power, stability in the society and social issues point out in all his plays in English translation. In this context. C.Coelho rightly points out: "In his portrayal of human relations and tensions, Tendulkar depicts the violent tendency of egotistical man and equally self- centered society. He liberated Marathi stage from the tyranny of conventional theatre with its mild doses of social and political satire for purpose of pure entertainment."(34) It shows that Tendulkar has shown different types of themes in his plays but the theme of human relationship is very complicated.

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