

WOMAN AS SCAPEGOAT IN TENDULKAR'S GHASIRAM KOTWAL AND SAKHARAM BINDER

Parag Nema

Assistant Professor (English)

SSN MIMT College

Narsinghpur

Abstract

Decolonization movement, as it appears, is a global phenomenon and aims at emancipating the people of the colonial countries from the political, economic, social as well as mental bondage developed due to long colonial rule. This paper, tries to pinpoint how women are made scapegoat in Tendulkar's Ghasiram Kotwal and Sakharam Binder. Ghasiram Kotwal is a pure political satire based on the life of Nana Phadnavis. In this play, Vijay Tendulkar exposes the lust for power within an individual and shows how man in power gives rise to ideologies to serve their purpose. We come across morally corrupt state of affairs. Being ill treated Ghasiram takes revenge and gains power and in order to gain power he barter his own daughter. It also exhibits the total degradation of moral values in order to achieve post of Kotwal. The play exposes thirst for power. Once Ghasiram becomes powerful, he is arrogant and uncontrolled which makes loss of interest in Gauri it results into her the death. The play exposes a man's attitude towards women and how in this male dominant society, woman is made a scapegoat to attain success in life. Woman's place is of greatest concern to Vijay Tendulkar because of the abysmal difference that women experience in relation to men. While dealing with the evils and drawbacks of the Indian society, Tendulkar throws light on the human relationship within and outside of family and brings out their complexity and connectivity in his plays. He thoroughly scrutinizes and explains the blood relationship at various levels. In the play, Sakharam Binder is a foul-mouthed womanizer though he gives shelter to woman yet he is ever more troublesome to them. The present paper proposes to study Vijay Tendulkar's plays in the light of studying his woman characters and how they are used as scapegoats.

Key-Words: Scapegoat, Power, Sex, Violence etc.

WOMAN AS SCAPEGOAT IN TENDULKAR'S GHASIRAM KOTWAL AND SAKHARAM BINDER

- Parag Nema

The history of humanity contains many things. It is a history of glorious accomplishments, of wondrous achievements but simultaneously there are many examples in the history of human desire in which shame evil and adverse circumstances for a woman. Society made woman as scapegoat. The way women have been treated by many men has been as such scapegoats. The myth of the fall gives us an example of this. Adam blamed both Eve and God for his sin, women often have taken the blame for the sins men do. Even rapists have blamed their victims: if only they had hid themselves, if only they had covered themselves up, the rapist wouldn't have felt it necessary to do what they did. The problem of unjust "placing of blame" upon all women – on using women as scapegoats – is one which finds not correction, *but reversal*, in radical feminism. Men are coaxed, bullied and intimidated into hiding their masculinity from themselves and from the world. Radical feminism blames men for both history's and the world's wrongs and injustices and demands apologies, reparations and withdrawal of male needs and viewpoints from the public forum. If all men and all the ways of men are suspect, then what we have done is create a new hierarchy, not a new way of dealing with the world. When women or men (or any gender group) are blamed and labeled as scapegoats for social problems and a woe, the evil ferments, grow, and multiplies repression. The solution is to reject the condition of scapegoat and to refuse to blame the "other" for our own faults and ills within society. This path becomes possible only by mutual recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of each other and forging forward-moving relations so that men and women can work together, complementing each other in unity instead of competing with each other in a vocal and harmful power contest of blaming.

We all grow up listening to fairy tales and the emphasis is always on the Knight in Shining Armor, who always makes his appearance to save the weak and fragile queen. The children are made to believe in Santa Claus, the tooth fairy; our faith in Superheroes is not disturbed even when we grow up. When, as kids, we believe in fairies, we tend to believe in supreme goodness and the evergreen notion of good triumphs over evil. The belief somehow fades away with the arrival of maturity as we wake up to a different reality every morning. The whole confusing journey from fairy tales to established moral standards, then moving onto grim realities present a gloomy picture. It looks like a dark tunnel that we have to go through and the hope to see the light at the other end is absent most of the times.

The moral lessons we receive while growing up adds to the agony and frustration of a grown up. One is left confused between his own will to be happy and to surrender to the conventions of the society and gain reputation. We sow the seeds of love in the young minds and frown upon the resulting inter-caste marriages. We praise the knights fighting for righteousness but do not like our children indulging in those fights. The whole structure of society is based on such numerous hypocritical notions where a stark contrast is visible in what we preach and practice. This disparity is strongly depicted in the plays of eminent Indian playwright Vijay Tendulkar who, through his works, exposes the real picture, which is deprived of superficial moral standards.

Vijay Tendulkar started his career as a journalist and successfully created the image of Angry Young Man of Marathi theater. The literary environment at home promoted young Vijay to take up writing. He took part in the 1942 Indian freedom movement leaving his studies while contemporary writers were continuously exploring the limits of social realism, Vijay jumped into the creed of political awareness and courageously exposed political hegemony of the powerful and the hypocrisies in the Indian social mind set. His powerful expression of human anguish had resulted in his simultaneously receiving wide public acclaim and high censure from the orthodox and the political bigwigs.

Many of Tendulkar's writings include a biography, two novels, five anthologies of short stories; 16 place for children including Bale milt at and patlachya poriche login and 5 volumes of literary essays and social criticism including Ratrani, Kotwali Unhe and Phuge Sobanche. Tendulkar started his dramatic career with his well known play Silence! The Court is in Session then wrote Sakharam Binder, Vultures, Ghasiram Kotwal Encounter in Umbugland, Kamla, Kanyadan etc. He also wrote some movies such as Nishant, Akrosh and Ardhsatya. The number of awards acclaims his works.

I will try to discuss the psychology of such prominent women characters of Tendulkar's play Sakharam Binder and Ghasiram Kotwal who show us two different sides of the same society and became the scapegoat for the manly world.

His plays dealt with burning issues like caste discrimination, male dominance, human trafficking and how women emerged as worst sufferers in 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 womanizer and takes pride in his manners towards women. Both the plays were eventually banned their too natural depiction of reality.

Vijay Tendulkar, in his play *Sakharam Binder*, challenges not only the institution of marriage but also the accepted moral standards associated with it. The play revolves around Sakharam, who works in a local press and gives shelter to women who are abandoned by their husbands, or widows who are destitute. The only favour he asks for, in return, is that his needs are taken care off. He loathes the whole concept of marriage and thinks himself a superior being than others. The renunciation of his socially superior caste and adopting an inferior one, or refusing to surrender to the normalcy of society by not getting married, show us how less he cared for society. The problem lies with the fact that his indifference towards society does not result in anything good, instead adds to the malpractices taking place in it.

The play begins with the introduction of Laxmi as the seventh woman brought by Sakharam in his house. She is portrayed as a shy, innocent, average looking woman who is submissive and timid. An argument with her drunkard husband led to her fleeing the house. She eventually finds shelter in Sakharam's house. Sakharam instructs the duties to her which consist of cooking, cleaning and satisfying him sexually. The play progresses and we come to know the violent side of Sakharam in the following scenes when he beats Laxmi for talking to an ant and not allowing Dawood (Sakharam's friend) to attend Puja. He beats her with a belt and the torture continues for months to come for reasons varying from evening Puja to her resistance to his physical needs. Laxmi, all this while, is portrayed as a submissive, religious, pious woman with high moral standards. A twist comes in the play when Laxmi decides to leave Sakharam when she can no longer bear the torture. A sudden stand from a weaker sex looks as a fresh change unless we come to the end of the play.

The next woman is introduced as Champa who is flamboyant, outspoken, is more exposed to the world and lives on her own terms. She refuses to surrender to Sakharam and we can notice the shock received by him. Champa eventually compromises with Sakharam after realizing that both their ends will meet through this. Her only resistance to Sakharam's physical needs is subsided by her drunken state. Champa, even after coming from a good family, is portrayed as the social rebel. She is too bold for her time and society and the initial impressions she leaves the audience cannot be considered very positive.

The striking contrast in the portrayal of both the women characters stand for the huge gap between orthodox social setup and acceptance of the reality. Champa stands not only as a bold rebel but also as a symbol of freedom. Her brief affair with Dawood seems unpardonable to Sakharam and Laxmi as a result of which Champa loses the battle for her liberty, happiness and life. We suddenly become a witness to the double standards and hypocrisy of people. A womanizer and a mistress kill another woman

because she could not satisfy their set standards and wanted to live on her own terms. If Champa had not convinced Sakharam to accommodate Laxmi after her return, Laxmi would have had to live a miserable life.

The world becomes happy place if we fulfill our desires in the social structure. Laxmi is symbolic of how people around us keep changing the name of God while committing sins. We never worship to thank but to seek forgiveness, and mostly to make Him our partner in crime. We try to justify our Karma in the name of God, thinking, had we done something wrong He would have punished us. It is through Laxmi we get to see beyond the conventional reality. Her character works in layers and the deeper we delve, the darker the scene gets. The journey of Laxmi's character from a timid, submissive, subservient woman to the outspoken, firm one in the end scene is a piece of reality. It is her subtle shrewdness that forces Sakharam to eventually submit to her authority, what he gets in return is her support for committing a crime. She justifies the murder by saying, "Anyway she was a sinner. She'll go to hell. Not you. I've been a virtuous woman. My virtuous deeds will see both of us through. I'll stay with you. I'll look after you." Laxmi does not doubt herself even for a moment. The thought does not cross her mind, that may be, in the slightest chance, both of them have done something wrong. She is ready to sacrifice her good deeds for Sakharam, "I'll tell him to count my good deeds as yours."

Laxmi disregards the sunlight that brings hope and joy to everyone's life as she thinks, "in the day man reigns. And men are sinful." On the other hand, the darkness of the night is embraced by her, "Night is when God rules." She constantly claims to be, "a virtuous woman" but leaves her husband and comes back to Sakharam and tells him that she has tied the sacred thread around her neck in Sakharam's name. She backstabs Champa because of whom she had found shelter. The character of Laxmi presents an image of the hypocritical society. What we preach is not followed by what we practice and the difference is what causes imbalance and frustration in our lives. The complexity

of our lives is a result of our own confusion. The devotion of Laxmi changes from her husband to Sakharam and when she realizes someone else is taking her position, she revolts. The suppressed desires of a young woman- the physical needs, the authority over a household, and the power over a man- are surfaced in the form of a conspiracy. She picks on the weakness that a man cannot tolerate his woman going out with another man irrespective of any other fact. Towards the end of the play, Laxmi emerges victorious as she gets everything a woman may desire. Champa, on the other hand, loses the battle to the shrewdness concealed in Laxmi.

The worldly intelligence we all look for, all our lives are nothing but a deep understanding of human consciousness. We want to learn how to behave, talk, and sit in front of others not because we want to create an impression of our own, but we look for a reaction from others. If the received reactions are not met with our preconceived judgments, we strive harder to create the desired response. Champa fails to understand the possibilities of giving shelter to a woman who has come back after leaving her husband to a man she abandoned earlier. She does not realize that Laxmi could be a threat to her life and might get intimidated by her position in the household which in the past belonged to her. The long-term consequences are overlooked by Champa and lead to her own doom. Champa symbolizes the naïve, truly innocent sect of the society, who tends to believe in the supreme goodness. Both the women characters have their own thinking capacity which is cleverly portrayed by Tendulkar. We might find these women around us disguised as someone else, and their thoughts and deeds manipulated on various degrees.

Woman should have the same rights, power and opportunity that men have. Obviously, believing that women have been denied their real status in the society and personal relationship by man. Vijay Tendulkar has deep concern to the women and society. Women are mercilessly denied opportunity for open expression of their true feelings in the tradition – bound Indian society. In this respect and in many other

respects they are at great disadvantages when compared to men. This article tries to present the women character in Ghashi Ram Kotwal. The position of Indian women right from the beginning, they were deprived of their rights in many ways. Ghashiram is a true story of portraying of women, women play a key role in Tendulkar's plays. His characters are drawn from day-to-day life is Kamla, Leela Benara, Gauri. Women play a central role in Tendulkar's plays. His female characters are mainly from the lower and middle classes, 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: "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."

His characters are often composites of contradictory personality struggling between emotion and intellect, espoused values and conflicting actions; seeking independence yet submissive, struggling between physical desires and conscience. Tendulkar tended to minimize his personal influence on these characters and their personality development. They are in the play "with their own minds, ways and destiny," he said. Each of them her own separate existence and expression. Gauri, Gulabi, Brahaman wife each may individualized through distinctive expression, appearance and gate. His notable creation remain his outstanding play for its bold societal themes and characterization. The depiction of women character is highly different Gauri is the central character in Ghashiram Kotwal. Nana become happy and expresses his carnal desire to see Gauri. Nana. "Oh, can we ? can we fine her ? How beautifully formed ? What a lovely figure! Did you see ? Erect! Young! Tender! Ah! Ho ho! We've seen so many handle so many, but none like that one. None her equal. We wonder who she is. Ghashi Ram. Whoever she is, if the order is given, this servant will bring her." Gauri charm bewitches Nana to such an extent that Nana says, "If she is not found, no one will help his head! Our grandeur's gone if she's not had. We tell you, if she is found, then this Nine

Court Nana will conquer Hindustan! What a bosom! Buds just blossoming... We'll squeeze them like this!" She titillates Nana's desires to such an extent that he is forced to wear his heart on his sleeve. "The chant continues. Nana comes in dancing to this rhythm. The young girl comes in, ready to dance. She moves to the rhythm, makes sensuous gestures, moves around Nana elusively, driving him berserk. She doesn't touch him. Every now and then, Ghashiram is seen. Nana throws him favours and dances behind the girl. Brahamans sing to the rhythm of drum and cymbals. Turning their backs to the audience, the Brahamans from a garden. Nana chases the girl through the garden." When Ghasiram comes to know reality he cries out loud. Ghashiram. "Now he's in my hands... Oh, my daughter....the beast..... Oh, you people. Look I've given my beloved daughter into the jaws of that wolf! Look. Look at this father. Putting the child of his heart up for sale. Look at my innocent daughter a whore. That old overripe bastard! Look at him, eating her like a peach.... Spit on me. Stone me. Look, look, but I will not quit. I'll make this Poona a kingdom of pigs." After the death of Gauri there was great change in Ghasiram. He feels wretched. Ghasiram. "Oh, my child. My Gauri. A piece of my heart. Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! What has become of you ? What happened? What did that devil Nana do ? That monster. Gauri, my dear-what happened to you, my daughter?" Gauri is voiceless, powerless and victimized. She silently accepts the dictates of her father. Gauri is the symbol of exploitation of female sexuality to represent the loss and destruction in the struggle for power. Gauri's death represents the flip side of Indian women for their use and abuse in all walks of life. Gauri seems to enjoy power for some time. She loses her honor, respect and finally life when her father was looking for a groom. She is pitiable character in the play. Her death brings a change in Ghashi Ram, he is mad with rage. He rocks the city of Poona with his Ire. Gulabi, the Courtesan is a dancing woman. Her house is tilted with the people. The Brahamans of Poona are much charmed by her Lavanis. The people enjoy of her dance. They shout and throw their turban in the air. She becomes a special invitee of Nana and enjoys his patronage. She is

the woman who give shelter and employment to Ghashi Ram. She tells to Nana that he is the foreigner and have no food. She gives shelter to live. Maratha women have been sketched in passive colors. They are the mute spectators of the tragedy. They do not say anything of their husband when they visit Gulabi's house. They are also the victims of nana's lust. Tendulkar shows women of Poona not virtuous. Some have relationship with Maratha Sardars. Gauri's mother is silent sufferer. She does not object anything. She is also shown weak. She does not object when Ghashiram hands over Gauri to Nana. All women in Ghashiram Kotwal are passive sufferer.

Tendulkar has delineated powerful female figures in several of his plays. The women are minor figures. We see several kinds of women: Gulabi, representing the prostitutes, the Brahman woman forced out of her house and accused of being prostitute, Gauri young and innocent representing all the young women preyed upon by people like Nana portrayed objects of exchange. The female characters and their status shows as sex objects. They are in the play – pawns and play things in the political game of Nana and Ghashiram. Ghashiram is not the declaration of a new aesthetics. According to Tendulkar, the combination of Marathi folk forms which he used came in answer to his search for a way to tell the story he wanted to tell: "Ghashiram started with a theme, then came the specific 'story' or incident which was historical and then the search for the form began."

The play shows moral deprivation, degradation and degeneration. The person who is in power his shown immoral. Gender based in heritage laws and practice deprives women of their economic, social and cultural rights. Violence against women is rampant and this is well shown in Ghashiram Kotwal.

Works Cited-

<http://www.newfeminism.co/2012/05/women-as-scapegoats>

Sakharam Binder. Tr. Shanta Sahane and Kumud Mehta. New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1973.

Tendulkar Vijay, Ghashiram Kotwal: Subhash Bisaria, New Delhi India Pvt.Ltd. 2010.

Tendulkar Vijay, Ghashiram Kotwal: Trains Priya Agarkar, Madras Oxford University Press 1978.

Tendulkar, Vijay. Five Plays, New Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks, 1995, Eight Impression, 2006.



Higher Education &
Research Society