Antithetical Perpetuation in Society: A Study in the Selected Modern Indian Plays

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The selected Indian playwrights have questioned the modernity and its implications especially in context of the sanskritization, westernization and transformation of Indians due to the impeccable industrialized, material, secular, mechanized culture. In India, modernity has changed the concept of existence and it has driven Indians to the life of glamour and glitz of technology, gadgets, metropolis and enslavement to mechanics of machinery. Their day to day life is beset with a paradigm shift in their notions of being equipped at the best with techno-world. The playwrights' concern is not just to expose the reality of developing people, but they are also a part of that same change. The plays sensitize the readers and spectators with the individual unhappiness, despite the breaking of their weak boundaries and the building of their self-capacity. On one hand there is self-reliance, while at the same time there is heart of ruin. The authors question the value-added Indian legacy of humanity, which is fallen to hypocrisy and usury. These authors poignantly examine human life within the man-made dimensional laws that has wrought human sense eco-critically to understand nature's laws and human rights. Therefore these playwrights suggestively are self-critical to raise human intellect in order to do away with their cynical and skeptical concepts for the advancement of their lifestyle and life patterns. Metaphysically, they make aware Indians—how does their inner thought process relate their primary needs with the social milieu, external impressions, environmental issues and existential choices? How do Indians in contemporary reality of human existence correspond with free-will that is mostly in contradictory conflict due to greed, selfishness, and human need? How does their alliance with power, sex and religion trap them into the labyrinth of delusive aspirations?

Keywords: concept of existence, enslavement to mechanics of machinery, labyrinth of delusive aspirations

Introduction

The concept of antithetical perpetuation has been catalogued in the study of the selected plays from the two perspectives—one that the protagonists in the play emanate pain and disgust which is the consequence of the “urbanomics” (Norman, 2013, p. 366), while the portrayal of antagonists in the form of predators, stone-pelters, violators of law or as the power-players are the representations of urbanomics, who attempt to survive not to thrive, but rather to dispose weak and to overpower the weak. Both groups undergo a certain kind of restrictions imposed in the practice of capitalization of the economy—in which the weak seem to be the objects and are as commodities, while the strong turn to be the oppressor to play with the tool of victimizing the weak. The playwrights in an attempt to explore the antithetical perpetuation of societal beings, mean to explain

that the human beings in order to grab power, hegemony and monetary gains resort to employ the game of cat and mouse, where one is always chasing the other or escaping from the other just because of ghastly impositions, restrictions, exploitation, and inhumane deprivations.

The plays of the selected dramatists Manjula Padmanabhan, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani form a perfect picture of dichotomy within inert crisis and worldly realities, where will-power and free-will interface the concept of existence. The workers, laborers, women and the margins belonging to proletariat or bourgeoisie are the most affected ones of this ingenuity. Their socio-economic deprivations, bankruptcy, their internal menace and malignity are the result of political ghettos' exploitation and moralizing condemnation of their existential status at social and cultural level. Their unfortunate circumstances belie their ambition, eventually their temptations resort to the path of perversity. The dramatic narratives sensitize the characters' mental conflicts and physical desires who stake their self or life to fulfill their dreams. They step into Faustian bargain. Theatrically, artistically and culturally the characters in the plays enact their performance in a pleasant disguise of being existential survivors in a makeshift manner. Such characters assume a sense of self-importance and self-preservation and their search for "Real Me" is none other than a fallacy for necessary existence.

Their choice of actions and thought reflect that they want to relinquish their humiliation and poverty-ridden life with a sense of subversion against morality and ethics. They get drawn to politics of deputation which is a form of power not without its evils. The characters' passions, knowledge and the purpose reinvigorate the waning democratic spirit of the citizenry, besides to posit twenty-first century socialistic future ideals of a civilized society in India. The characters' existing sense of performativity in the material world manifests potentially progressive temporality and a rational positive determination what a character wants and what he/she does not want. Their emancipation objectifies reason, hope, and application of imaginary escape, social disciplining and calculative humanization of repression. It implicitly suggests mankind's intense mental crisis and lack of spiritual capacity to control shortcuts. It implies metamorphosis of conventional attitudes into non-conformity and antithetical perpetuation of the economic supremacy in society. The playwrights while illustrating the cultural and mental health of Indian societal beings attempt to collaborate with the facts of the cultural anthropologists, who have attempted to understand human psychology of social beings and they write in their respective language and with their own understanding regarding the status of the human mind in these contextual ways—Durkheim argued in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915) that there is a collective mind with its own stages, and Levy-Bruhl argued in *How natives Think* (1910) that there is a "primitive mind" beneath the "modern mind" (Booker; 1994, p. 10). The selected plays for the analytical study delve into the psychology of natives (who either had experienced colonization, or being referred as the people of the Third World Countries in contemporary times) as well as of the mankind in general whose sole aesthetics lie in gambling with the conflict zones of racism and color, weak versus strong, third world versus first world people etc.

Critical Analyses of the Plays

Mahesh Dattani's play *Final Solutions* is a representational human document of grasping a network of power and control of the human mind and imagination. It delineates the space of utopian pain and dimension of materialization. Communal riots as the backdrop of the play portray an experience of pure material signifiers in which the characters like Javed, Bobby present the moments of radical difference to contextualize negativity, anxiety, loss of reality in terms of positioning "Real Me". The political patterns and social psyche construct the

experiences of fragmentation and crisis of identity in these two characters despite being Indians, but as they are from marginalized community their euphoria of belongingness is jeopardized when mob chase them during communal riots and they seek shelter in the house of a Hindu family. While the members of the Hindu family Ramnik Gandhi, Daksha, Hardika, Aruna are a collage of radical difference in context of understanding the visuals and aftermaths of Holocaust of the partition of India. The playwright unmasks the “Real Me” to deconstruct the social and political requirement of building the nation. The dramatist “legitimizes the ways of understanding the self and the world, so that ‘real respectable me’ (McRobbie, 1993, p. 529) can be evolved to mobilize the recourse to communal harmony and to rationalize the process of politicization of pluralism for the sake of making the nation. He tear opens the tapestries of illusions of the characters and exposes the truth behind their social, cultural and religious patterns (Shrihande et al., 2013, p. 1).

The play *Final Solutions* awakens the audience’s subconscious mind that consciously pretends to evade the orientation that actually society imparts. The play make the audience realized Rousseau’s *Social Contract Theory* which conforms to the fact that man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains. Rousseau says in his book *The Social Contract* that modern states repress the physical freedom that is our birthright, and do nothing to secure the civil freedom for the sake of which we enter into civil society. According to him legitimate political authority comes only from a social contract agreed upon by all citizens for their mutual preservation. The dramatist problematizes the real structure of modern nation-states that condition human life to get suppressed by the socio-economic or political injustices. The general will is subjected to surrender its consciousness to the power structure that tends to thrive on violence, disintegration and decadence of nature’s laws. The narrative plot of the drama is designed to convey that destruction of individual’s freedom is the priori proposition of the communalist ideology, so that man turns enemy to another man, and man unknowingly throws his body to self-destruction, just for the sake of causing displeasure in disharmony in other’s life. The atmosphere of acrimony and animosity causes constraints in the individual’s sovereignty to violate the common good. The play investigates through the memory and desire of the different characters, the effects of fundamentalism and cultural relativist psyche.

For example Daksha generically carries the subconscious paranoia and panic because she witnesses actual holocaust of communal resentments and humiliation. She could never sing favorite songs sung by the famous pre-partitioned Indian singer Noor Jahan to her husband Hari, because of the precipitating incidents of communal carnage happened to family’s kith and kin during the Independence of India in 1947. That same Daksha is Hardika, the grandmother, the narrator who recounts from early childhood diary page of the 1947 Communal-Partition Holocaust between India and Pakistan and relates with the historical event, the present political-turmoil to the communal riots happened at Bhavnagar. The past and present communal happenings cause impeccably prejudices in the mind of Ramnik Gandhi’s wife Aruna in the face of tensions and anxieties in the house and family. She says to her daughter Smita, “I will not have it all perish to accommodate someone else’s faith” and further she says to Ramnik about the two guys Javed and Bobby, “If they cannot respect it, they must learn to tolerate it” (FS, 2005, p. 210). She inquires from her daughter, “Does being a Hindu stifles you?” (FS, 2005, p. 211) Smita hits out at her mother’s prejudice for religion; because she cannot cope with her hidden love for Babban, the outsider (Bobby). She voices her concern to her mother, “How can you expect me to be proud of something which stifles everything else around it? It stifles me! Yes Maybe I am prejudiced because I do not belong. But not belonging makes things so clear. I can see so clearly how wrong you are. You accuse me of running away from my religion” (FS, 2005, p. 211).

The author's metaphysical concern questions about modernity, for it has facilitated human with amenities, moreover religion has slacked man's knowledge of unanimous living. The human sense of reason has inherited truth of pride in one's own religion. The author attempts to seek answers to his questions through the dialogues happening within the characters of the play—"Is life a forward journey or do we travel round in a circle, returning to our starting point. Can we shake off our prejudices or are they in our psyche like our genes/ Will we ever be free or ever locked in combat... Arabs against Jews, Whites against Blacks, Hindus against Muhammadans—Are there any Final Solutions?" (Dattani, 2005, p. ii) The author tears down the prototype characters like Javed and Bobby through interrogative and discursive dialogues with the other Hindu characters such as Ramnik, Aruna and Hardika, whose weak inner conscience compels their psyche to interpret violence as their capacity of political consciousness and whose participation "demonstrates religious affiliations, retaliation and the ugly face of this diabolic trend of communal hatred" (Sebastian, 2015). The feature of violence coerced in the psyche of youth is well argued in the dramatic narration of the scene of carnival, which Javed and Bobby narrate to Ramnik's family when they escape mob's fury and seek shelter in Gandhi's house. Javed in his cheap sentiments and political motivation comes from Bhavnager to Amargaon to be the part of terrorizing the crowd of people who collects in a procession to pull the chariot of Hindu Gods. And in that spiritual frenzy both Javed and Bobby attempt to push the crowd to get towards each other. Javed wants Bobby to stop the people from advancing further with their carnival, meanwhile Javed's own community men provide him with stones and pelters to throw at other community crowd. Javed in his religious insanity takes out knife, that all the more cause screaming and running of people, in midst of all that suddenly Javed feels himself as an abettor, his conscience wants to get him off and fear restricts him, confuses him and he gets nauseous and he says "I cried.... Why am I here? What am I doing here/ Get me off. I want to get off! I was so close to *poojari* I could... I could have... I could have.... I let go off the knife. The knife fell to the ground. The joyride of carnival was over" (FS, 2005, p. 208) because somebody else stabs *poojari* (Hindu priest) and the mob finds them convict of communal tension and killing.

The playwright uses masque device that Chorus wears to theatrically frame and signify the dissent and anger of both Hindus and Muslims to the spectators. The Chorus, instead of alienating spectators from the stage performance of characters, connects spectator and characters to dissolve the tension in art and in reality. "The chorus represent the image of the characters and to accentuate the internal conflicts and subtext of the play" (Nagpal, 1993, Hindustan Times). The Chorus in the play is an image of mob that illustrates disruption of chariot carnival of Hindu Gods by Muslims, then chorus in the masks of Hindus chase young men in accusation of raising violence. Later when Javed and Bobby as intruders are given shelter in Ramnik's house, then the mob wearing Muslim's masks represent the reason of Javed and Bobby's internal depression and antagonism in this way:

Chorus 1: What must we do? To become more acceptable? Must we lose our identity? Is that what they want? Must we tolerate more? Does our future lie in their hands? Is there anyone unsure more insecure than us? Oh what a curse it is to be less in number? (FS, 2005, p. 208)

Javed courageously exposes the ugly face of communalism. Mob is paid overtime to be sometimes Hindus in one street and to be Muslims on the other street. They camouflage the hired youth's identity with hackneyed masks or with other paraphernalia to perform such ghastly nightmarish terrors. Javed clarifies that both he and Hindus are very much similar. Both are arranged through money to market religion as the product of

destruction, disturbance and disharmony within communities of modern nation-states. It is apt to quote from Immanuel Kant's book *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* that investigates the nexus between logic, physics and ethics. According to him,

Logic denotes thought, freewill itself, physics stands for the laws of nature and physical entity and its relation, and ethics contains the laws of freedom. If all three lose their tendency to promote human nature for human welfare then "metaphysics of nature" does not correspond with the "metaphysics of morals. (Pinheiro, 2014, p. 7)

The character like Javed does not carry with himself absolute necessity of the law which defines what is legally relevant, but he extracts his rights from the perspective of external freedom, therefore circumstances and actions with historical contextualization and contemporary milieu entrust him to utilize his personal law over public law and enables to make arbitrary decision. Javed says to Ramnik relentlessly and sensitively about the socially pressing issue of provoking communalism, he appears to be psychologically exorcizing himself to evoke raw passions viz-a-viz communal angle in the dialogues that underlie the stereotypes influencing the collective sensibility one against another. Eventually Javed and Bobby are the archetypes who know actual reality, yet they do not ignore duality of their action; as one deed gives them identity, while the other deed charges them of sedition. The following excerpt from the play renders conflicting verdicts about "what is just or unjust in a given situation" (Pinheiro, 2014, p. 8).

Ramnik: (to the men)—What do they want from you!
 Javed: (hysterically)—They want to kill us, don't you understand.
 Aruna—They must have done something wrong. Bobby—Believe me, we haven't done any...
 Javed—(pleading to Ramnik) Please don't we beg of you.
 Chorus ALL—Open up! Or we'll break your door!
 Ramnik—No! The Hindu Chorus from within their own masks.
 Ramnik—What harm have they done to you?
 Chorus 1—Set an Example.
 Chorus ALL—Stop them.
 Chorus 1—Before they do harm.
 Chorus ALL—Before their passions inflame.
 Chorus ALL—Thwart them. So we live in peace.
 Ramnik—We? Chorus ALL—We, who are right. Ramnik—And they.
 Chorus ALL—They who are wrong. Since we are right. And they oppose us.
 Ramnik—If we are right.
 Chorus ALL—Do you doubt us? Your own people?
 Ramnik—I have the right to doubt which is my own! No! The light change and the chorus becomes a Mob again. I will not open the door! Go away!
 Chorus ALL—We shall break in then!
 Ramnik—I stand in front of the door. If you break the door you will kill me.
 Chorus ALL—What! You protect them? Then you are a traitor! Traitor! (FS, 2005, p. 181)

The playwright in the play *Final Solutions* wants to focus audience towards the rationale behind the postulate of public right is the idea that remaining in the state of nature is a formal violation of the concept of right. It is therefore not prudential reason which authorizes us to coerce others to enter the lawful condition (Ludwig, 2002). The play is an allegory of nation, in which its citizens can exercise freedom of choice, but it should co-exist with a rightful legal action. Secondly citizens should abide universal law of mutual compatibility i.e. to respect other's freedom from the perspective of rights and in the intention of external

compatibility of action. If internal or external unilateral coercion is implied, then it is hindering a rightful exercise of freedom.

Hence the play *Final Solutions* argues good nationalism and bad nationalism, civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism which are the outcome of exclusionary or reactionary dimensions. The distortions occur when each community's perception of the "other" community is predatory and therefore the community is in need of protection. Thus Kant's reformation of the presumption of badness is to be envisaged here in this pretext: "Everyone is presumed to be evil until it provides security for the opposite" (Hruschka, 2010, p. 193). Hence to conclude in the context of the play civic nationalism or good nationalism or to understand the true reality of human existence is:

To submit to coercive law by renouncing one's right to preventive defense (under the assumption that everyone will do the same). Then there will be mutual guarantee of security, no threat, it can dispel presumption of badness, can allow perpetual peace to enter the state of nature. (Hruschka, 2010, p. 194)

The playwright, as the primordial sociologist, tapped the nationalist passions and explicate physically the defined-entity in context of material violation of private rights. He also focuses on regulating external human relations, affirmation and interaction for the sake of expressing authorization and privileges of rights.

Manjula Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* reflects on mundane concerns and how these concerns affect their mental state. In order to satisfy their daily needs, their means are material, hence their material bodies change their life logics and ethics, and eventually they fall into misunderstanding the nature and its laws. The play *Harvest* portrays such material truths of desire and need, that it construes the human psychology to misinterpret the actual understanding of being and human being. The relation of the two in contemporary material world is rationally categorized in the form of separated identities. The play is acclaimed for its revolutionary theme of "capitalism and its peculiar conception of the individual" (Richard, 1999, p 353). The purchase and sale of human organs for materialistic gains both by powerful and the powerless respectively not only reenacts developed nations domination, but also re-ritualizes the different ways of continuing colonizing journey of the third world. The third world proletariats are victim to capitalists' attractions of monetary funding in exchange of their life and the dismemberment of their organs. Their rights on their body is snatched or sold, either by the purchasers of the world, where techno-world facilitates affluent people's life with fit organs and fine body or by the aspiring families of the third world who live on the earnings of their members who are dear to them only until they provide them with modern technical electronic gadgets which can only be procured in lieu of surgical removal of human organs and transplanting them in the bodies of the "Other" who belong to racially or politically superior class.

Manjula Padmanabham's play *Harvest* is described on the cover of magazine BLURB as "... a dark, bitter, savagely funny vision of the cannibalistic future that awaits the human race... a parable of what will happen when the rich denizens of the First World.... Begin to devour bits and pieces of Third World poor..." (Gilbert, 2006, pp. 123-124). *Harvest* poignantly illustrates the relationship between the first and third world. The capitalist world that represents a globalised society ironically consumes human body for its own survival and expansion. Jaya decides to protest and says that if she is pushed against her will, she will kill herself, as she has nothing to lose. It is evident that she cannot resist the First World Power structure through nothing except death. She says, "I have discovered a new definition for winning, winning by losing. I win if you lose" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 100). Ma and Jaya are shown waiting for Om in the opening of the play, who is about to come after

job-hunting. Apart from the usual retorting and differences between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, reader notes their concern for his getting job. Though the ever-growing use of electronic devices like computer has turned him jobless, his sixty-year-old mother seems to be addicted to another electronic domestic device-television. She appears to be less concerned about her son and daughter-in-law. It seems that she believes to escape her troubles and sense of suffocation more in the celluloid world than the real world. The mother-in-law finds herself insufficient to feed four members in the family at meager sources of income. The mother-in-law retorts her daughter-in-law Jaya when the latter asks to leave her alone. Instead Jaya has the guts to bear the pains of not only belonging to subaltern world, but also living with no source of healthy livelihood. She seems to be always gathering courage out of herself to stand. She emphatically tries to convince her mother-in-law, how her neighbours though in same crisis is still not dependent on make-shift world of T.V, rather harmoniously existing to survive and trying to meet their ends. In the battle between the machine and men, it's Jaya who wins the battle and decides to survive life with common sense. It also shows the futuristic picture of the modern times where the machines will replace and distance human beings gradually. The role of Jaya in the novel specifically suggests that the power of man and self-control, both can win the adversity that is inflicted upon them by mechanized machine world of the Industrial notions. The play warns through the character of Jaya, how one has to govern the machines instead of being governed. It poses a potent critique of the recently emerging trade in body-organs. It shows the first-world's exploitation of third-world bodies for the commodities of labour-power. Thus, the word "Harvest" itself suggests the production of food but in the play it gives an ironic meaning as the organs are used as food produced by the human body for the pleasures of aristocratic health conscious powerful imperialists. The modern world is progressing faster in every field but this progress has led to the loss of basic values and morals. The author aims at presenting the realistic problems and emerges as a sensitive writer who portrays the exploitative picture of human embodiment for the merciless, illegal body-organ trafficking for the luxury and good health of the rich. She exposes the indifference towards the sufferings of women through the ugly picture of the society. The play brings out the sensitive attitude of women towards the emerging issues that the subalterns have been going through since the advancement of technology in organ transplantation. The play vividly brings out in the following dialogue the misuse and counter use of technoscapes consuming the human body and expanding the market of health and hygiene in the globalised world for not to make developing countries people conscious of their health, but to precipitate the need of preserving the life of western societies at cheaper cost. While the subalterns who are unknown to corporal technoscapes submit their being and body for the commercial transplant program in order to fulfill their omantic, fanciful notions and to have advanced life (Singh & Mali, 2016, pp. 354-361).

The dialogue in the play project the psyche of donors and receivers very aptly:

Guard 1: Right. Donor will remain in our custody until such time as he is ready to be returned. This can be any period from two hours onwards and upto one week—

Jaya: One week! What'll be left of him!

Guard 1: —depending on the nature of the transplant required, the availability of artificial substitutes for the organs that the Donor has, of his own free will, made available to the receiver and the Donor's own speed of recovery. Any questions?

Jaya: Yes! What part of him is going to be removed!

Guard 1: I'm sorry, Madam, I am not free to discuss such details.

Jaya: And can I see him? In the hospital, the clinic, wherever?

Guard 1: Security and health regulations prohibit and contact between Donors and their families—(*Harvest*, p. 64).

This conversation between Guard and Jaya suggests how cannibalism has overridden humanity. How dismemberment of body parts is the potential feast for the other? How the technological excision of body parts has dehumanized the lucrative production of cyborgs? How the subalterns are seduced to digital, techno-world of communication behind the curtains of inhuman digitalized surgery of their organs for the profit making? How is the biosocial space of the characters under the absolute control of cyborgs, which compels people to negotiate, rather to resist 'the technological mediation of the body? (Gilbert, 2006, pp. 122-129). The play deals with the four members in a family—Om Prakash is the tense and jobless clerk. Jaya, his wife is leading the tensed life of deprivation and insecurity. His old mother is frustrated and an ill-natured woman. Amongst all these characters, Jaya is the only one who attempts to evaluate the predicament of inhuman situation. She realizes that she has lost every member of her family (Om Prakash, her husband, Ma, her mother-in-law and Jeetu, her brother-in-law) due to the power-play of the materialistic post-modern world. It is only she who realizes the seriousness of Om's decision of organ selling. She tries her best to make him realize that his decision is not right. She also tries to make Ma understand who sees the benefit only. But everything fails and she expresses her grief in heart rendering manner. The sufferings of Jaya are not given any heed by her husband. Om neither pays any concerns for his wife Jaya nor changes his decision for her. His very nature and temperament show the status of women in their own families and society. The words and desires of wives have no value for their man. It shows that a woman's concern and voice does not hold acceptability in man's thoughts. The importance of women is lost and money has become more important for men.

The Marathi playwright Vijay Tendulkar's plays express emotional feelings and heightened sensibility of playwright for Indian working class who is bereft of emotions to pursue unauthenticated means and ends. The deluges of elitist corruption and maligned power politics, besides malevolent intentions of chauvinism have swayed common middle class and lower class Indians towards "derealization of the whole surrounding world of everyday reality" (Jameson, 2009, p. 504). Both the plays *Kamala* and *Ghasiram Kotwal* deal with the inherent emotional and instinctual forces that are unmanageable for his characters and they are unable to uplift their identity in crisis, instead they pursue the path that is unacceptable as per the prevalent social norms, while the play *Sakharam Binder* deals with the characters and their wish to cope up with the change in environment or surroundings in which they live. The characters in the plays depict a critical gap between their need for ideas to solve complex problems and the actual supply of the ideas to resolve crisis. The life of proletariats comprising of women and poverty-driven sections of Indian society is full of worries, tensions and they have deviated their reason from the actual orientation of worthy life. They have become fugitives to the situations owing to their lack of courage and cognizance. What makes these proletariats to aspire for shameful passions and self-conceited notions? Who is responsible to make them compromise with their morals and conscience? Why have they stooped so low for their pleasure principle? It is the bane of capitalism that bourgeoisie is instrumental to substantiate cultural and political politics, because of the excitement of power, prestige and exhilaration of futurism. The characters like Sakharam, Laxmi in the play *Sakharam Binder*, Jai Singh Jadhav in the play *Kamala*, Nana Phadnavis, Ghasiram in the play *Ghasiram Kotwal*, Ramakant, Umakant, Manik, Hari Patel in the play *Vultures* appear as the determinants of violence, wrecks and fetishization of human body. Their life celebrates the sense of barrenness and depravity and it is a continuum of primitivism i.e. their bodies

are free to choose their paths of actions. Their bodies in that choice of action are amalgam of desires of “consumption and cannibalism of the other, that not only displaces the Other, but also denies the significance of that ‘Other’s’ history through a process of decontextualization” (Hooks, 1992, p. 373).

The play *Kamala* is a satire on the trading of human as bodies in a democratic country like India. Tendulkar touches the varied problems of life faced by the people in general. He concentrates on the sufferings of the Indian common mass and their endurance to the prevailing troubles at different stages. It is a two-act play in which Jaisingh, the protagonist, is a well-known young journalist. He owns a well-educated modern wife, named Sarita, with docile nature who transforms into a mature woman at the end of the play. She is being treated as a mere slave. She blindly follows all the commands and orders of her husband Jaisingh Jadhav. She is supposed to receive all the phone calls of her husband and her failure to perform her duty well turns in Jaisingh’s displeasure. She tells Kakasaheb, her uncle, “I have to write down each phone call. That’s the way you see it. My husband sees it differently. If I say they didn’t tell me their names he gets angry with me for not asking” (*KL*, Act 1, Scene 3). She even makes arrangements for her husband’s warm welcome when she comes to know of his arrival to Delhi. She attends to her husband’s need with great care that makes us wonder that how a modern educated wife acts like a slave to her husband (Mali, 2016, p. 133). To illustrate this situation of man-woman relationship in general, Virginia Woolf theorizes the slave-like tendency of women towards their husband as:

Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger... in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband. (Woolf, 1929, p. 66)

Jaisingh not only treats her wife as a slave, but also exploits Kamala whom he purchases from an auction place. He does it to present her at a press conference and achieves the desired growth and promotion in his profession. His aim is to present the conditions of slum areas and its people before public, but ironically his cunning desires lurk out of his behavior towards Kamala. Both Sarita and Kamala are treated as pawns in Jaisingh’s game of chess. The conversation with Kakasaheb reveals the cold storm in Sarita’s inner self in these words:

I’ll go on feeling it. But at present I’m going to lock all that up in a corner of my mind and forget about it. But a day will come, Kakasaheb, when I will stop being a slave. I’ll no longer be an object to be used and thrown away. I’ll do what I wish, and no one will rule over me. That day has to come. And I’ll pay whatever price I have to pay for it. (*KL*, Act-2, p. 52).

Tendulkar asserts in an interview to Gouri Ramnarayan in these words that “the modern woman finds it intolerable when she is not recognized as an individual. It reflects in each and everything the couple does together. The pretext for separation may be a trifle, but feelings have simmered long” (Madge, 2009, p. 174).

The play *Vultures* (Gidhade) deals with the degenerated family structure due to the inborn evil tendencies of selfishness, greed, wickedness and violence inherent in human nature. It depicts the vulturine nature of the members who dominates the relations of middle class Pitale family. The play features the combination of the virtue and vices vis-a-vis the three characters Ramakant, Umakant and Manik who cheat one another to extract more money whereas Rama and Rajaninath represent the aspects of goodness. Ramakant, Umakant and Manik follow the footsteps of their father, who too cheated his brother to acquire maximum property. They torture

their own father and even beat him to usurp his bank balance in order to spend it on their lavish desires and luxuries. The greedy and selfish nature of Ramakant is visible when he tells his father,

Your property! Your millions! There wasn't even bloody ten thousand cash for each of us. And this house between us three. Monthly maintenance: one hundred and twenty-five. A bloody circus elephant would've been better off! And the business ... a dead horse! The war finished it off! Even beggars and Brahmins shoved into the sand and lime business. A bloody alms-house! Tenders began to be filled at a loss of thousands. How could we make any profit? Sweating blood day and night. And still crying out for lack of profit! (*VL*, Act-1, Scene-2, p. 211)

The hatred of the sons towards their own father underlines the fundamental inherent evil in the human character. The two brother Ramakant and Umakant cross all the limits of humanity and beat their sister, Manik in anguish when they fail to get money from her lover, the Raja of Hondur. This situation is as similar as to the situation in the play *The Duchess of Malfi*, in which duchess's two brothers intrigue against her illicit relation with low-born status lover, however it is a pretext to get rid of her from their path to get all treasure of her dukedom. Amongst all the members of the Pitale family, Rama is the most innocent and humble woman. She is married to Ramakant who is the eldest son of Pitale. Rajaninath introduces her in the long song in which he narrates the history of last twenty five years of Hari Pitale's house. Everyone in the house scolds her. She gets terribly disturbed by the frequent quarrels in the house. Her husband takes her to different saints even after knowing his inability to impregnate her. Rajaninath being sympathetic to her secretly observes her sufferings that she undergoes in the house. It creates disappointment and distress and empty space in her life which is revealed in her soliloquy as follows:

Those women long ago, who used to commit sati, we're all praise for them. They used to burn themselves alive—in loyalty to their dead husbands. But only once. Once they were burnt, they escaped. But I, Bhaiya, in this living death of my wifehood—I commit sati every moment! I burn! I am consumed. (*VL*, Act-2, Scene 2, p. 242)

Tendulkar establishes Rama's identity as a typical traditional Indian Woman. He shows the mental turmoil and trauma of unfulfilled desire of Rama. He depicts the sense of isolation created by her husband's indifferent behavior in her life. All the family members fail to understand her as an individual. It destroys the peace and harmony and basically it is a thrust of psychological sufferings upon her. The untold miseries suffered by her are the examples of human who try to adjust themselves in crucial situations. Maya Pandit in her article, "Representation of Family in Modern Marathi Plays" opines,

With Gidhade, Tendulkar's vision of the family became more violent. Here he went one step ahead to demonstrate the degenerated, desiccated conditions of people living in the garb of family, simultaneously representing the ugly, dehumanized, consumerist world. The family of Ramakant, Umakant, Manik, their father and Uncle and the illegitimate son of their father represent the decomposing state of the family where even the outward façade of decency has evaporated and what remains to be seen is the naked play of desire to possess, own, gain money and destroy another human being. (Madge, 2009, p. 71)

Tendulkar exhibits the inhuman violent nature of human psyche by imploring the tactics of the conventional complicated family relationships. Such relationship lack love and trust and merely exists for fulfillment of the selfish goals. The desire for material advancement turns into cruel behaviour towards own kinship. As a result, the characters lack sense of responsibility, courage and morality. The play *Sakharam Binder* revolves round a middle-class man Sakharam, born in a Brahmin family. The maltreatment faced by him by his parents at early childhood results in his escape from his house at the eleven years of age. He starts

working in a press to earn his living. Sakharan indulges himself in anti-social path and he spends a long period of his life with around fourteen women. He is a man who does not believe in the sacred social norms and institution of marriage. Once Sakharan in a soliloquy speaks about himself,

Sakharan Binder has never been afraid of work. I've always fended for myself. See! Never called my own father, Father. And as for my mother, to her I was like the son of a wretched Mahar, a scavenger. I grew up like a cactus-out in the open. I don't scare easy. (*SB*, Act-2, Scene-7, p. 172)

Tendulkar exposes the dominant and masochist character of Sakharan who has no realization of any guilt. He is a womanizer, who for fulfilling his selfish ends uses women and later discards them. The very nature of Sakharan is visible with his indifferent attitude towards each woman he hires. He lives life according to his wishes and enjoys masculine power. He brings home women such as Laxmi and Champa. He treats both of them as mere objects. He regulates them according to his own rules and acts with extreme brutality. When it becomes unbearable for Laxmi, she utters,

You think I am afraid to tell you? How much more can a person bear? It's a year now since I entered this house. I haven't had a single day's rest. Whether I'm sick or whether it's a festal day. Nothing but work, work; work all the time. You torture me the whole day, you torture me at night. I'll drop dead one of these days and that will be the end. (*SB*, Act-1, Scene-9, p. 146)

Though Laxmi suffers the rude and arrogant behavior of Sakharan, she considers him as her husband and wears mangalsutra to make her identity recognized with his name. She secretly observes fast, but everything goes in vain and she is thrown out of the house. Sakharan is seen with Champa in act two, who is a bold woman. She is a self-respecting and independent woman; still she submits herself to her master. Sakharan hopes for a change with her arrival. Champa misbehaves with him, ignores him and overrules his rules. A critic points out the suggested sense that the playwright intends to bring out covertly in the depiction of the characters' portrayal in context of their illegitimate intimacy and perversion of their sexuality, she writes:

"Marriage is an institution in which sexual relationship for a woman is possible only if the self is forgotten in the stupor of alcohol, pleasure is possible only through inflicting pain on the others and "self-awareness" is nothing but the mute and moron like acceptance of inhuman subordination or supremacy" (Burman, 2006, p. 221).

Conclusion

To conclude, it is apt to theorize modern metaphysical mentality of the upper and middle class, lower middle class Indians. The nature of problems faced by human beings has become more complex. Their ability to implement solutions does not keep pace with moral quotient; therefore their emotional quotient gets weak and is prone to ingenuity gaps. Such gaps create critical situations in the human lives and give rise to the complications that make decision making difficult and make human vulnerable. Human gets exposed to the possibility of being harmed, either physically or emotionally due to such complications in life. Much of the complications are the outcome of forces that are unchangeable and uncontrollable. "Ingenuity gap is a metaphor for the human predicament, a metaphor that can be explored and understood in multitude of ways-analytically, empirically, emotionally and spiritually" (Dixon, 2001). The consequences of material fret and fury have engendered confusion and corruption in negotiating any relationship or business.

Human beings have become susceptible to ingenuity gaps. The contemporary man has lost sense of compassion i.e. to suffer with mental toughness the hostile situations in life. He/she has become vulnerable to

mental restlessness; his capacity to connect with the ups and downs of life has become antithesis to resilience. Humankind is engulfed in looking inside their identity, rather “to see beyond external layers of difference and identify the core oneness we share with everyone on this planet” (Hoque, 2016, p. 224). Presently a human embraces failure in the journey of life not with a self-healing and self-compassionate purpose, rather opens up his self to world of opportunities and challenges with a diminished capacity to recognize sufferings of others and he/she does not want to empathise with others with concentrated efforts. Thus the selected playwrights for the study emphatically urge that “If our society people are to manage their affairs and to improve their well-being they will need more ingenuity—that is, more ideas for solving their technical and social problems” (Dixon, 2001).

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