

**Dialectics of Being and Becoming: A Study of
the Selected Plays of Vijay Tendulkar**

**A
Thesis**

Submitted to



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**By
Sandeep Kumar Sharma
41400043**

**Supervised by
Dr. Sanjay Prasad Pandey
Associate Professor
Department of English
Lovely Professional University**

**LOVELY FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ARTS
LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY**

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Declaration

I do hereby acknowledge that:

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41400043



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I hereby affirm as under that:

- 1) The thesis presented by **Sandeep Kumar Sharma-41400043** is worthy of consideration for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.
- 2) He has pursued the prescribed course of research.
- 3) The work is original contribution of the candidate.
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Date: 30/06/2019

Place: Phagwara

Dr. Sanjay Prasad Pandey

Associate Professor

Department of English

Lovely Professional University

Mobile & Email ID:

+91-8146873377

sanjayprasad.panday@lpu.co.in

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Introduction

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god: the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. (Hamlet 48)

Hamlet, in his speech, opines that human beings are wonderful creation of God; how amazingly they live out their lives. He admires the sensitivity of humans, which is stupendous and further adds that humans possess inestimable capabilities. However, he contradicts himself by comparing man to a speck of dust and asserting that no man or woman dazzles him anymore. It is quite difficult to untangle the knots of the human mind and nature. These statements epitomize the role of dialectics, which uses contradiction to reach a conclusion. This research undertakes the aspect of being and becoming. The phenomenon of being and becoming is so vast that it covers the whole universe under its compass. Being a stone, tree, or an animal is completely different from being a human. Human life is full of convolutions, and human reactions to these complex situations are so critical that humans themselves are unable to comprehend such intricacies. Being human, people have to undergo various circumstances which play an important role in life. Life of an individual is a journey which is awash with various possibilities, unanticipated outcomes, and this research is an attempt to test the relation of this journey of life with the aspect of being and becoming. Plato discusses this aspect of being and becoming in *Timaeus*. Before Plato; Heraclitus and Parmenides have also given the theories based on being and becoming. There are

certain differences of opinion among the scholars and philosophers about this concept. Followers of Parmenides believe that everything is 'being' and 'one'. Plato, in his book *Parmenides*, discusses this aspect in the following words.

I suppose you think that each character is one for some such reason as this: when some plurality of things seems to you to be large, there perhaps seems to be some one characteristic that is the same when you look over them all, whence you believe that the large is one. (10)

Plato describes how everything is 'one' and unchanging in the view of Parmenides. However, followers of Heraclitus believe that everything is changing and there is a continuous process of becoming. This contradiction made Plato propound the concept of being and becoming.

Sometimes a notion springs to mind, if it is possible to have Utopian condition in society. Is it not in one way or the other related to being and becoming? What humans are, and what they are becoming, is a very significant attribute for society as it decides the behaviour of people in society. Behaviour is an important aspect in human life. Good behaviour spreads goodness in society, whereas bad behaviour creates a vicious circle in society. Being and becoming are affected by the behaviour of the individuals.

Existential aspect considers the relation of humans to their life in terms of their struggle and crisis. The aspect of being and becoming has its implications on a cosmic scale, but this research is limited to analyse this aspect in the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar. Vijay Tendulkar is among one of the most prominent writers of the modern era. He began his literary career as a dramatist in mid-fifties. His plays have

been translated into major Indian languages. When he died at the age of eighty, Haresh Pandya wrote in *The New York Times*:

It was a measure of Mr Tendulkar's gifts that he achieved worldwide fame despite writing in Marathi, the language of his home state, Maharashtra, in west central India. Most of his plays were translated into Hindi and English for national and international audiences. (n p)

An eminent critic N. S. Dharan in his book *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar* Observes:

The greatest quality, which Tendulkar can claim to himself as a creative writer and dramatist, is his singular ability to simultaneously involve and distance himself from his creations. This endows his work with infinite subtlety. New meanings emerge as one reads his plays in the light of one's understanding (26-27).

Vijay Tendulkar is not only creative but also a controversial writer. N.S. Dharan further says about his creative genius in the following words: "It is both fascinating and at the same time challenging experience to discuss such a gifted playwright as Vijay Tendulkar" (27).

He has highlighted the hypocrisy inherent in the double standards of society. His works show violence in two dimensions, which are physical and psychological. Critics and scholars have analysed his plays on the basis of the depiction of sex, violence, man-woman relationship, power, inner and outer world, harshness, but nobody has attempted to analyse his plays using the concept of 'being and becoming' so there is a research gap which needs to be filled.

This research is an endeavour to verify the manifestation of being and becoming in various forms in the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar. Is there any conflict between being and becoming? If yes, then what is its effect on the selected plays? What can humans achieve by being more aware of being and becoming?

The Scope of the study is following:

- i) The problems that are analyzed in the thesis are mainly about the aspect of being and becoming in the given circumstances.
- ii) The main purpose of the study is to show the transformation of the protagonist as a different being.
- iii) The analysis will be focused on the aspect of main character's ideology and the reaction of the society towards it, which will also be supported with intrinsic aspect of plays such as theme, setting, character, and plot.
- iv) The objectives of the study are following:
 - 1) To explore the aspects of being and becoming in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar.
 - 2) To analyse the spirit of Indian patriarchal society through the characters of Vijay Tendulkar's selected plays.
 - 3) To study the social conflict and the crisis of human existence prevalent in the society reflected in the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

This research will be conducted by applying the theory of Existentialism. This theory states that humans are free and responsible for their action.

The first step would be to gather material regarding the topic. Relevant material would be taken into consideration. The guidance of the supervisor will be sought at every step towards reaching the goal.

Visiting different libraries of Guru Nanak Dev University, Panjab University, Lovely Professional University. would be a regular feature.

The current study will involve qualitative analysis.

The thesis will be divided into the following chapters, and suitable analysis will be done

- i) Brief Candle
- ii) Dialectics of Being and Becoming: Issues and Perspectives
- iii) Conflict between Being and Becoming in the Selected Plays of Vijay Tendulkar
- iv) Patriarchal Norms and Role of Women: Vijay Tendulkar's Art of Characterization
- v) Struggle for Existence in the Selected Plays of Vijay Tendulkar

After the analysis conclusion will be drawn at the end. The MLA handbook for the writers of research papers 8th edition will be consulted and followed.

Chapter – I

Brief Candle

Vijay Tendulkar, one of the most prominent writers of this age, embarked on his journey as a dramatist in his mid-fifties. He was born on January 6, 1928, in a Saraswat Brahmin family in Kolhapur Maharashtra. The plays of Vijay Tendulkar have made a significant impact on the readers of India and abroad. He has written screenplays and dialogues for movies. He has done script writing for television as well. He is a political journalist and essayist who penned thirty plays in Marathi language. His prominent plays have been translated into English, which include *Kamala*, *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Sakharam Binder*, *The Vultures*, *Encounter in Umbugland*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*, *Friend's Story*, *Kanyadaan*, *His Fifth Woman*, and *The Cyclist*.

During his childhood, he found himself in the lap of books as his father used to work as a head clerk in a publication house. His father motivated him to read, and he efficaciously wrote a story at the tender age of six. He remarks in of his lectures in Sri Ram Memorial Lecture *The Play is the Thing*:

I remember that at a very early age of six or seven, I used to take a piece of paper, a pen. I used to write stories which were not part of my school work. Also I indulged in fantasizing real-life situations in which I took a role which was not me, but someone I would perhaps like to be (xii).

When he was 13 years old, his family relocated to Pune during the time of Quit India Movement. His interest in politics is manifested in his literary works as well. He has also been an active member of communist party for some time. He started his first job in a press in 1944. He worked as sub-editor in Marathi newspaper *Navbharat* in 1948.

His first play (*Who will Love Us*) *Amchyar Kon Prem Karnar?* was published in 1949.

In the beginning, he started writing for a newspaper and in this journey; he penned two plays by the age of twenty named *Amchyar Kon Prem Karnar* and *Grahastha*. These plays were not much appreciated and Tendulkar decided not to write again. In the year 1956, he came with a play named *Shrimant*. This is the story of a girl who wants to keep an unborn child but the rich father is apprehensive about his social reputation and he tries to find a husband for her daughter.

He also worked as executive editor of magazines *Vasudha* and *Deepawali*. He had become the vice chairman of the theatre group *Rangayan* in 1959. In the year 1961, he worked as a sub-editor P.K Atre's newspaper *Maratha*. In the year 1967, he had written columns for *Manus* and *Maharashtra Times*. The Hindi movie *Manthan* scripted by him won National Award for the best film in 1977. In the same year, he became a member of *the General Council of Musical Drama Academy*. In the year 1978, he became a member of the *General Council Sahitya Academy, New Delhi*. He won film fare award for his movie *Akrosh* for his screenplay and dialogue writing. He is a pioneer in influencing the dramatic responsiveness of post-independence age who bagged Lifetime Contribution Award and Padma Bhushan award for his literary genius. Vijay Tendulkar was the President of the *Avishkar Theatre Group* Mumbai. He was also associated with prestigious *National School of Drama*.

Tendulkar has done great work in translating some European novels into Marathi. It includes *Devachi Manse* (Men of God), *Gele Te Divas* (That days have gone), *Me Asa Zalo* (I have developed in this manner), originally written by Robert Roark. *Aage Badho* (Be ahead) original written by G. L. Latham. *Ranful* (Land

Flower) creator Shiley L. Arora, *We Will Not Loose* creator Lara Engles Winder, *Story of One Pain*, *Love Letter*, creator Henry James, and *New House* and *New Life* basic creator – Grace Jordan, these are the novels translated by him. He has also tried his hand at translating biographies, which include *Goddess of Mercy*, written by Helen Boylston, *He Taught for Us* – Catharine Woven Pear. Tendulkar has also translated short stories. *On the Way of Panther*, *Karbhavin*, *Introduction of America* and *Five Guests*, are some of the stories translated by him.

He also published his work in the form of books titled *Jahirnama* (Manifesto) and *Samajvedh* (Introspection of Society) in 1984 and 1987. *Jahirnama* (Manifesto). These books contain short stories and poems.

Tendulkar has penned short plays for children during 1960 to 1972. *Ethe Bale Miltat* (You will get babies here) –1960, *Meshpatre* (1961), *Patlachya Porich Lagin* (Marriage of Patil's Daughter), *Chimana Bandhato Ghar* (A house built by sparrow) 1966, *Rajaranila Gham Hava* (King and Queen need sweat), *Baba Harawale* (Baba has been lost), *Bobychi Gost* (Boby's Story). These are the names of prominent children's plays written by Vijay Tendulkar. Enjoyment of children is specially taken care of while writing these plays. He has a remarkable understanding of child psychology that is manifested in these plays.

Vijay Tendulkar settled in Mumbai in 1966. He pursued his journalistic career but kept on writing full length as well as one-act plays. His collection of one-act plays named *Ajagar Ani Gandharva* bagged prestigious Maharashtra state government award in 1966. He was awarded nine times by Maharashtra state government for his literary genius. He had to face a lot of criticism due to the bold themes of his plays, but he remained as solid as rock and kept on doing his work. His family also suffered due to this, but Vijay Tendulkar did not compromise with his creativity.

His works include genres like one-act plays and professional drama. He tried his literary genius in writing experimental drama as well in his early plays like *I Won I Lost*, but he did not get much success. Writing a play is as natural for him as swimming is for fish and flying for a bird. He has not moulded his literary career to do a particular type of playwriting, which shows his versatility in this field. He also did editing for magazines and tried his hand at translations, but he earned recognition and eminence for his dramatic works.

He started his career as a journalist, but he also worked as a freelancer and a column writer. He tried his hand at writing short stories also. He noticed an element of dialogue in his short stories, so he shifted his focus to writing full-length plays. His plays have a variety of themes, which include alienation, contemporary politics, and social issues, intricacies of life, man-woman relationship, and historical subjects. He is deft at presenting the real picture of Indian women in the male-dominated society. His themes lay bare the inherent hypocrisy, violence, lust in a male-dominated society. He has shown how Indian women have to undergo an agony of body and soul in the hypocritical environment. He has always championed the cause of the lower strata of the society in his writings. He has articulately presented the plight of Dalit in a caste-ridden society of India. His literary genius encompasses the declining values in journalism and politics, which are debilitating the interest of the country and the citizens.

In his childhood, he used to watch plays because his father would take him to see the rehearsals. That was a time when the theatre was not held in high esteem by the people. Female characters were often played by the males. During the rehearsals, he saw men with moustaches behaving like females, speaking their dialogues in a feminist tone. At the time of the performance on the stage, the same men were dressed

up in female clothes. During that age of childhood, he started analysing the characters. He used to laugh at the performance of the male characters that were in the guise of a female. Sometimes he laughed at the serious scenes, and he was snubbed by the people watching the play. These types of incidents played a prominent role in shaping the dramatist inherent in Vijay Tendulkar.

A writer develops with the lapse of time as it is a well-known fact that experience is the child of time. Vijay Tendulkar has given his best at the later stage after getting more mature in playwriting. Vijay Tendulkar is also aware of this fact as he himself states about his writing and characterization:

Initially, in my first plays, I would often get lost playing the characters and lose my way somewhere in the last stretch of the play. The characters at times misled me and as the playwright, I used to be in a soup. How do I finish my play? It was a dead end. Then gradually as a writer, I grew up as I became more aware also as a human being and developed the confidence in what I had to say in the play, this problem of my characters taking total control of me diminished. I maintained a subtle control over them and allowed them to behave separately and freely through me as the actor who acted them out in my mind while the play progressed on the paper (Collected Plays in Translation xi).

A painter who knows how to play with brush and colours can create lifelike pictures. If he mixes and matches the colours in an unorganized way, the picture will not attract anybody. In the same manner, a writer must know how to play with the words to create appealing literary works. Tendulkar uses the words wisely. His dramas cannot be blamed for verbosity, which is prevalent in other Marathi plays

where the focus is more on story and less on dialogues. It is Tendulkar's literary genius, which enables him to convey more in fewer words.

Vijay Tendulkar has raised very complex and serious issues in his dramas and some of these themes are still considered as taboo in society. Vijay Tendulkar is aware that things like lesbianism, womanizing, are prevalent in society, and it is the duty of a writer to enlighten the people by raising these issues. His dramatic works have an aesthetic value as well as true representation of the evils existent in the society. Vijay Tendulkar never writes to please or hurt anybody, as he prefers to present the reality in its actual form without distorting the facts with the help of his creative genius

Plays of Vijay Tendulkar shatter the composure of the reader by presenting the life and its problems realistically. Some dramatists are impugned to present only the problems and not the solution Vijay Tendulkar cannot be categorised among these because his plays make people more aware of the complexities of life. They are helpful in defining and refining thoughts about the evils prevailing in the society. His plays are not only didactic, but they also have the ingredient of entertainment. They leave the reader in a thinking mood.

Vijay Tendulkar has written mostly on topics of social concern, but he feels that a writer cannot bring a social change. His remarks about this aspect during an interview with Shukla Chatterjee are noteworthy where he is describing his limitations.

SC : Have you ever thought of your plays as a medium for social change?

VT : Not at all. I don't believe that a writer can bring about any social change.

The process which probably can bring change involve powerful forces, the media and politicians. First of all, for a writer to decide that he will bring about a social change is like a frog imagining being an elephant. I am a frog. (18)

The genesis of his prominent plays is based on an inspiration from any real-life incident which shows that he is a keen observer of human life.

He manifested violence in many ways through the characters of his plays. His artistic genius is a lens, which shows a panorama of characters involved in complex situations. Artistically designed ramifications in the well-knit structure of the play are his chief traits. He wanted to go into the minute details so that he may be able to pen real life situations in his dramas. He himself observes:

The one characteristics of my plays which I can legitimately boast of, is characterization characters are not cardboard characters; they do not speak my language; rather I do not speak my language through them; they are not my mouthpieces, but each of them has his or her own separate existence and expression. (X)

In his plays, Tendulkar exposes various institutions through the powerful use of satire in his dramas. He shows the real face of Judiciary and patriarchy in *Silence! The Court is in Session*; Misuse of power is presented in *Ghashiram Kotwal* hypocritical aspect of politics in; *Encounter in Umbugland*; caste-based system and morality of the society have been dealt dexterously in *Kanyadaan*. The theme of sex, morality and double standards has been taken up artistically in plays like *Sakharam Binder* and *A Friend's Story*.

In one of his letters to Samik Bandhopadhyay, Tendulkar gives his views about his playwriting:

It begins with the germ or an idea...Sometimes just an incident someone has narrated, a person who has met me maybe for a brief time but has left me guessing as to what kind of character he or she can be, or even a news item which I read in the morning paper....can even be some other place. (xlii)

His treatment of women in all his plays is not the same. He sometimes shows women as a victim, and another time he shows her provoking men. He has to face the criticism by various scholars; critics blame him of taking ideas from the western movies and plays and giving them an Indian tinge. Tendulkar does not hide the fact that in his early days he was influenced by the Western or Hollywood movies. He has been under the influence of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams etc. However, he is mostly influenced by the surroundings and the events taking place around him. His stories present real-life situations, which are the product of his tryst with the events witnessed through media or any other way. Any small incident or event can reach his mind and take the shape of a play or a character; that is the magic of Vijay Tendulkar.

His play *Silence! The Court is in Session* paved the way for giving him a place with the prominent Indian dramatists. *Ghashiram Kotwal* has been appreciated not only in India but also in other countries. Tendulkar depicts life in its real form; so the reader does not feel like present in the dream world while reading his plays. The humans in his plays are suffering from complexities of life with no intervention from any god or goddess. Tendulkar was given the epithet of *Angry Young Man* with the production of plays like *Silence! The Court is in Session*. He comes out as a rebel against the orthodox system of hypocritical society.

Gidhade (The Vultures) which came after (*Muqabla*) has also been very controversial play. Tendulkar was blamed for showing excessive sex and violence in the plays. It started a tussle with the Censor Board. His play was criticized by a certain section of the society because of its bold theme. He was accused on the grounds of showing a supernumerary depiction of obscenity in the form of sex and violence. However, the play is a bitter satire on what is happening in the modern society. Hatred, violence, and greed are still prevalent in many families. This is the real picture of the contemporary society, which, he mirrors conspicuously in his play. Symbolically he shows the evil which is eclipsed in the human character through this play.

Creating wonderful characters is imperative for a playwright so as to enhance the aesthetic aspect of the play. It is one of the most important skills. Vijay Tendulkar is also aware of this fact. He is of the opinion that characterization and structure are two prominent skills required for a playwright. He gives his views in this regard which exhibit his interpretation about his characterization:

A Playwright must possess two skills. One: the skill of characterization the other one: the sense of structure. The first one really speaking is a literary skill. You need it when you write fiction. Without characters, no fiction exists. But the skill of characterization in fiction is not exactly the same as the skill required in playwriting. In fiction, you narrate a character. You describe it in words at length. Even what happens in its mind from time to time. In a play, which is to be performed, this kind of description will not work. The character must come to life at the most in a minute after it enters the stage. (xxvii)

His plays depict the stark realities of life. so there is no intervention of gods and goddesses in the lives of humans. In the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, the characters are not puppets in the hand of fate they take their decisions and bear the fruit of their deeds. Arundhati Banerjee describes his genius in the following words:

Vijay Tendulkar's multifaceted creative genius continuous to experiment and explore the potential of the dramatic genre- His primary area of creation Theatre-lovers all over the country continue to look forward to the harvests that his fertile pen will bring forth in the years to come. (584)

One of the main concerns in Vijay Tendulkar's plays is the misuse of power by the characters. He creates an intricate state of affairs to show various shades of power. *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Encounter in Umbugland* can be compared in this context. In both plays, power is one of the central themes. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the protagonist does not think of repercussions while offering his daughter to Nana. He does gross misuse of the power and at the end meets his nemesis. However, in case of *Encounter in Umbugland* the protagonist, Vijaya understands the usage of power, and she succeeds in achieving her target by using the power appropriately in her favour. Power does not tell its own use; it is the humans who have to decide its usage.

He did not do novel writing in his early phase of writing. He was of the view that writing novels was a very difficult job. Writing plays for him was very natural as he felt more comfortable in writing dialogues than writing fiction in a novel. However, his first novel, *Novel-1* came in 1996. The story revolves around Prabhakar Surve, a middle-class man. The novelist presents pressure, anxieties arising in a family. The characters though belong to one family yet they are found behaving like strangers. The frustration of modern man is rightly painted in word pictures by the

novelist. Nevertheless, his skill in novel writing could not match his art of writing memorable plays. His novel, *Novel-2* came in 2004. It is based on contemporary politics and its degradation. The hypocritical face of corrupt politicians is publicized in this novel.

He understands the minutiae of the theatrical world, which is evident from his dialogues. Dialogue is important in the play, but the importance of silence cannot be ignored. He is deft at using pauses and silence in his plays. One important element in theatre is the visual effect and lighting. He takes great care while writing his scenes for the stage performance. This adds to the more effective representation of the theme and the characters depicted in the play. The example from his play *Silence! The Court is in Session* is noteworthy in this regard. "The lights go up on a completely empty hall. It has two doors. Want to enter bye, and want to go to an adjoining room. One side of the hall seems to go left words into the wings" (55).

The characters have to face a hostile universe in which they cannot expect goodness in return of showing decency and benevolence to others. The characters are engulfed with complex problems, and they endeavour to find a solution. His way of presenting life is real, and his literary lens displays the panorama of life from different angles without any ostentation. He does not glamourize the shades of life for an impact; on the contrary, he attempts to show life in its true colour. That is the reason his plays are more lifelike, and readers can identify themselves with his plays. He does not believe in over philosophizing to put forth his views.

His genius in depicting female characters is noteworthy as he has created wonderful female characters. Characters of Leela Benare, Kamala, and Vijaya are his magnificent creations. By portraying such wonderful female characters, Vijay

Tendulkar stands with William Shakespeare who is known for his wonderful female characters.

He was awarded with ‘Saraswati Samman’ for his play *Kanyadaan*. On the other hand he was criticised for the same play, Vijay Tendulkar himself says in this regard, “You are honouring me with the Saraswati Samman today for a play for which I once had a slipper hurled at me. Perhaps it is the fate of the play to have and both dishonour and that insult. As its creator, I respect both verdicts” (598).

Silence! The Court is in Session (1967) is one of the finest creations by Vijay Tendulkar. This play has originally been written in Marathi. It has been translated into English by Priya Adarkar. The author Vijay Tendulkar bagged prestigious awards for this play which include Kamla Devi Chattopadhyay award in 1970 and Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1971. Vijay Tendulkar got recognition as a playwright nationally as well as internationally after receiving these awards for this play. Like his many other plays, this play is also created out of a real incident when he meets a group of artists going to perform a mock trial. When this play was performed, it was rejected because judges did not accept it as a play. However, this play was awarded Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya award at the later stage. The mock trial in the play that is ‘play-within-the-play’ shares similar technique as used by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*. In that mock trial, the actors expose Benare’s illicit relation with Professor Damle. Miss Benare is in a family way carrying the child of Professor Damle. In the words of Arundhati Banerjee:

Professor Damle is significantly absent at the trial, denoting his total withdrawal of responsibility, either social or moral, for the whole situation

into which he has landed Miss Benare. During the trial, he is summoned nearly as a witness while Benare remains the prime accused as the unwed mother of his illegitimate child. (571)

Vijay Tendulkar mocks at the judiciary for not doing justice. In the modern context, it is very relevant as many times such judgments are given by the court that people are taken aback. In the poem "Rape of the Lock" Alexander Pope also mentions insincere judgments given by jurymen:

The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine. (47)

These lines of a poem written in the 18th century are still pertinent in the twentieth century because the court gives the verdict to abolish the child in the womb, as it is illegal to have a child without nuptials. Lack of seriousness in judgement is the common factor in Alexander Pope's poem and Vijay Tendulkar's play. Ms Benare becomes mother of Professor Damle's child who uses her for the fulfilment of his lust and makes her an unmarried mother.

The Vultures is also one of the masterpieces by Vijay Tendulkar. This play, which is based on the hidden vulture in human beings, is an example of the growing impact of acquisitiveness on the citified society. The characters of the same family are bent upon killing one another to fulfil their material pursuits. A. P. Dani in his book *Vijay Tendulkar's Plays* observes in this context:

He attempted to explore the meaning of man's life victimised by selfishness, hatred, jealousy, and cupidity. Such a victim of unfettered passion suffers incessantly from solitude and ennui. The vulturine nature dominating the

relations of such middle class family is the leitmotif of the play. The violent melodramatic with the abusive and obscene expressions of the schizophrenic characters outwitting and torturing one another permeates the lurid atmosphere of the play. (114)

Sakharam Binder is the story of a man named Sakharam who gives shelter to homeless women. He presents himself as the God of that house and everything inside the house is under his command. No one can violate his orders, but he is at liberty to do and say anything. An eminent critic V.M Madge in his book *Vijay Tendulkar's Plays* observes:

As the title suggests, the play revolves around Sakharam and his curious lifestyle. A disbeliever in the Institution of marriage, he is on the lookout for the cast-of women, whom he brings home, gives them food and shelter. In exchange they are expected to appease his itch. (120)

Ghashiram Kotwal is the story of the protagonist who is a commoner, but he becomes the Kotwal of the city. The story deals with a sudden rise in his stature and his tragic death. Ghashiram is bent upon taking revenge; this uncontrollable instinct or urge leads him towards his doom. In spite of these tragic elements, this play is known for its musical and historical set up which depicts the era of the late eighteenth century.

Encounter in Umbugland revolves around the issue of the successor of the king Vichitravirya after his death. His daughter becomes the choice of the cabinet who wants to use her as a puppet queen. It is a scathing attack on the current political system which motivates opportunistic alliances by the hypocritical politicians. They exploit the commoners and rule over them. Queen Vijaya, in the beginning, is shown

as a novice but with the passage of time, she learns the artifices of diplomacy and routs the cabinet ministers who want to use her as a puppet queen.

The selected plays *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *The Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Encounter in Umbugland*, *Ghashiram Kotwal* will be tested on the issues related to dialectics of being and becoming. Dialectics is a sort of Hegelian process in which two opposing ideas are amalgamated to reach synthesis. It is a Socratic method of dialogues to reveal the truth. Marxists are of the opinion that dialectics is a structure in which contradiction plays an imperative part. According to Encarta English Dictionary, 'Being' means a state of existence. Aristotle relates 'being to substance. Plato describes being as a changeless world. The world of being is immutable and the world of becoming is always changing.

The theory of existentialism will be applied on the selected plays. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 'Existentialism' signifies that humans are free and responsible for their own actions in a world without meaning. Existentialism is opposite to any form of solipsism, which means self-absorption, an obliviousness of the opinions and desires of others. Existentialism serves as a tool to deal with the problem of nothingness. Existentialists do not see any orderliness in the universe, so it is a reaction against the philosophies like rationalism, empiricism, positivism, that attempt to discern orderliness and meaning in the metaphysical doctrines or in the framework of the experiential world.

B. Lakhmaiah observes Tendulkar has wonderful insight to depict man-woman relationship. Pratibha Sharma and Sanjit Mishra in their research article "Social Concerns in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar" take various aspects that are related to social life. They find the plays of Vijay Tendulkar a mirror reflecting the

inner and outer world. Vijay Tendulkar raises question rather than providing answer. According to them, his plays are a study in exploration of sexual lust and evil.

Dr. Medikonda Sambaiah, Mrs. Katumala Sandhya in their research article “Vijay Tendulkar’s *Silence! the Court is in Session: A Mockery against Existing Judicial System*” share their idea about Vijay Tendulkar’s satirical views about the judiciary. They see it in two ways; courts have failed in providing liberty, equality to women of India and secondly, they see it in the light of elite-court relationship, which is highly unsatisfactory hence, much is to be done to reform the judicial system of the country.

Janardhanreddy. K & Dr. P. Satyanarayana in their article Vijay Tendulkar: “A Playwright of Power and Violence” (2013) consider the aspect of power and violence in his plays. They find it in the plays *Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakharam Binder, The Vultures, Encounter in Umbugland, Friend’s Story, Kanyadaan, and Ghashiram Kotwaal*. They observe that Vijay Tendulkar presents usage of power as oppression or cruelty. Vijay Tendulkar’s plays revolutionized the regional theatre and paved the way for experimentation in Indian English Drama through the translated versions.

Ratan Chandra Das in his research article “Gender Discrimination, Sexism and Violence: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar’s Selected Plays” discusses the aspect of violence and sexism in his plays.

Raj Kumar, and Dr. R. Mummatchi in their article “Harshness, Aggression and Sensuality in Vijay Tendulkar’s Works” find that all his plays revolve around these three aspects that are, harshness aggression and sensuality. Be it *Ghashiram*

Kotwaal, Kamala, Kanyadaan, Silence! The Court is in Session. These aspects become significant components to press home the idea.

N. S. Dharan in his book *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar* observes that harshness is noticed everywhere in Tendulkar's plays - in the cruel, cunning game in the form of a mock trial in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, sexual lust of the protagonist in *Sakharam Binder* in the rude, brutal interactions of the members of the family in *The Vultures*. Therefore, all these plays are, in fact, spectacles of harshness, overt or covert. (107)

Various Scholars have appositely expounded different shades of Vijay Tendulkar's creativity. Some of them have been mentioned above. However, no one has attempted to study his plays in the light of being and becoming so there is a research gap which needs to be filled. The theory of existentialism will be applied and the concept of being and becoming will be tested on the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

In Chapter II "Dialectics of Being and Becoming: Issues and Perspectives" the theories that are related to being and becoming will be discussed. To analyse a literary piece of work requires an angle or perspective, which serves as a touchstone to test and validate the authenticity of the results. Keeping this view in mind, the theories will be discussed. Various scholars who have a contribution to propounding theories related to being and becoming will be discussed. The initiation of the chapter will be done by giving a fair idea about dialectics followed by the concept of being and becoming. The parameters of being and how they lead to becoming will be described in this chapter. It will also discuss the theory of existentialism, which is to be applied to the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

In Chapter III “Conflict between Being and Becoming in the Selected Plays of Vijay Tendulkar” the element of conflict has been undertaken for research. Conflict is an essential component of literary work. As the title of the chapter includes a conflict between being and becoming in various dimensions of the play like themes, characters, symbolism so, the perspective of the conflict will be analysed.

In Chapter IV, “Patriarchal Norms and Role of Women: Vijay Tendulkar’s Art of Characterization” the aspect of characterization will be studied. The characters will also be analysed on the basis of the patriarchal system and the response and role of a woman in such a society. A play without character is like a human being without a soul. The shaping influence of Vijay Tendulkar cannot be scrutinized by avoiding his art of portraying characters. This chapter will focus on this all-important aspect of characterization.

In Chapter V “Struggle for Existence in the Selected Plays of Vijay Tendulkar” the aspect of the existential struggle is the chief component for analysis. This research will use theory existentialism to the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar to analyse and interpret their struggle in existential terms.

A conclusion will be provided on the basis of the outcomes of the research work. The conclusion will be in sync with the objectives of the research work.

Chapter – II

Dialectics of Being and Becoming: Issues and Perspectives

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 'dialectic' or 'dialectics' is a method of discovering the truth of ideas by discussion and logical argument and by considering ideas that are opposed to each other. Dialectic is used to resolve the tension between two opposing ideas. It is a method of reaching the truth through conversation. It takes into consideration those ideas that are opposite to each other. It is a system, which includes a statement and then refutes that statement with logic. 'Dialectics' helps to discover veracity with the help of questions and answers. According to Plato, "Dialectics is the only method that advances this way-by demolishing assumption up to the source itself to secure confirmation" (*Republic* 193). Plato considers dialectics a superior thought, it includes assumptions, deliberations, and it aims at achieving a more effective result. It is not always rational to use the concepts without examining them. Gendlin observes: "Dialectics is an activity of concept-formation. As concepts are being formed, new ones discarding old ones, it is not strange that our concepts do not stand still" (n p). Plato in *Republic* describes the use of dialectics as following:

Anyone who uses dialectics alone without any of the senses and attempt to storm each thing itself that is with rational discourse and does not stop until he seizes the good itself, that is with the intellect itself; he arrives at the end of the intelligible world. (192)

People used to believe that the sun revolves around the earth, but later discoveries prove that the earth revolves around the sun. The concepts are examined, redefined and improved. Without change, there can be no development. Dialectics has in its

ambit the experience of the past and the present, which plays a vital role in the culmination of new concepts and ideas. “The dialectic is the process of discovering the self-definitions of pure reason. The reason is the absolute first Principle, called the Good by Plato” (Harris 115). It aims at promoting logical argumentation to come to any conclusion rather than using the discussion method to find out the truth. Dialectics is a mode of perception, which contains a contradiction as its chief tenet and starting point.

While discussing dialectics Socrates cannot be ignored. He is famous for his ‘Socratic Method’ or ‘Socratic Dialogue’. According to Collins English Dictionary, it is the method of instructions by questions and answers used by Socrates in order to elicit from his pupil truths he considered to be implicitly known by all rational beings. Socrates uses the method of cross-examination to check the claims of a person involved in the conversation. Using this method the inconsistency is found in the argument, and the person involved in the conversation is enlightened.

Here it is noteworthy to discuss Aristotelian view of dialectics. D.W. Hamlyn observes the following in this regard:

What, to sum up, is dialectic for Aristotle? The answer is that, as with Socrates, it is a form of argument starting from whatever agreement is available and seeking to produce some insight (nous, intuition) as to the truths from which demonstration can possibly start, so-called first principles, thereby furnishing an understanding of why things are necessarily as they are. (476)

The term dialectics is not synonymous with the term debate, as debates are won by persuading one's argument correct and proving opponents argument incorrect. It does not necessarily require a clear winner or loser but quite often it is judged by

jury or group consensus. Dialectic is also not synonymous with the term rhetoric which aims at persuading the audience by emotional, rational and ethical appeals. Socrates says that truth has the highest value which can be discovered through reason and logical discussion that is dialectics and its purpose is rationality appealing to logic and not to emotions.

According to Hegel, in the beginning, there is an idea or theory, which he calls 'thesis.' Then there is another idea to oppose this thesis, as it has its own limitations. The opposing idea of this 'thesis' is termed as 'antithesis'. The next step is research to reach a fact or conclusion by considering both the views to which he gives the name 'synthesis'. In this way, dialectic helps in authenticating the thought. .

Hegel says that, "Dialectic has often been regarded as an art as if it rested on a subjective talent and did not belong to the objectivity of the concept" (741). This method is often used in a debate where two contrary thoughts are taken to reach a conclusion while dialectics can take more than two thoughts for reaching a solution. Hegel's chief purpose in his dialectic is to set up a rational correlation between different categories. Plato represents contrasting sides as people (Socrates and his interlocutors), however, Hegel gives importance to the subject under consideration. Hegel's newness in his interpretation of dialectics is because of his inclusion of logic into it. It has two dimensions of argument: the first one shows that a given category is vital; the second one takes to a reality, which is contradictory. It can be safely maintained that Hegel's dialectic is more akin to Socratic dialogue.

Hegel's assumption is that the humankind is purely a chain of constant truth-seeking conflicts. He is of the opinion that the highest state of humankind is possible only through the medium of conflict and resolution of the conflict. Hegel's dialectic

considers conflict as the chief trait that takes a man from the lower level to higher level or to the next level. He propounds that true reality is full of disagreements. Contradiction serves as a force behind the philosophical thinking. Contradictions are not to be uprooted they must be abolished. In this context, he uses the term *aufheben*, which is a German word and it is translated as 'sublate. This sublation is called negation. The contradiction must be rejected in such a way that it serves as a creative force to reach a better understanding of the concept by overcoming the contradictions. However, there is another aspect, which is noteworthy; the premise has a great role in Hegelian dialectics. If interpretations and understandings are all erroneous, a logical conclusion cannot be deduced from these wrong premises. It signifies that even if Hegel's formula is applied, it will not work in case of a false premise. False premise cannot give a true result. A sound premise is imperative to reach a plausible conclusion.

The ancient philosophers developed a method of bringing out the consequences of opposed hypotheses, though to be sure, as Aristotle puts it, they did this without knowledge of the essence or "what" of the things they were dealing with. It is well known that in the eighteenth century Kant's transcendental dialectic of pure reason demonstrated anew the worth of this dialectical method of the ancients. Like them, Kant saw that reason necessarily involves itself in contradictions. His followers, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher (and Hegel as well), accepted Kant's demonstration of reason's necessary self-contradictoriness in their own thought.

Dialectics, according to Kant, is logic of illusions as mentioned in *Critique of Pure Reason* by Kant:

The dialectical illusion is a rational psychology rests on the confusion of the idea of reason (of a pure intelligence) with the concept, in every way indeterminate of a thinking being in general. I think of myself, in behalf of a possible experience by abstracting from all actual experience and from this conclude that I could become conscious of existence outside experience of its empirical conditions. (455)

It means that dialectic for Kant is just a baseless or false idea. Kant's main aim is to find out the limitations and extent of pure reason. He wants to comprehend the power of reason alone in finding facts without taking any assistance of senses or any other abilities. Followers of metaphysics claim about the discovery of reality based on pure reason, however, these claims many time contradict with one another.

Kant is of the opinion that mind is not only a recipient of information, but it also gives form to that information. Knowledge is generated by mind by refining sensations through different mental abilities. Knowledge cannot be poured into mind as water is poured into a glass. In his preface of *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant says:

Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its cognition that it is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss , since they are given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason. (99)

Marx does not consider nature as an unplanned jumbled mass but a connected and important part in which phenomena and things depend upon and determined by each other. It means that no phenomena can be understood if it is seen in isolation. Surroundings, conditions, environment play an important role in Marxian dialectics. Marx claims that dialectics is in its essence critical and revolutionary. Bertell Ollman says in this regard:

It is revolutionary because it helps us to see the present as a moment through which our society is passing, because it forces us to examine where it has come from and where it is heading as part of learning what it is, and because it enables us to grasp that as agents as well as victims in this process, in which everyone and everything are connected, we have the power to affect it. (20)

Opposite to metaphysics, dialectics considers that nature is not at a state of rest but, it is changing continuously. Hence, arising and developing of the things constitute an important part in dialectics. Unlike metaphysics, dialectics maintains that internal contradictions are believed to be present in everything and phenomena. Robert Mayer in his work *Lenin and the Practice of Dialectical Thinking*, describes Lenin's idea of dialectic in the latter's own words:

Genuine dialectics does not justify the errors of individuals, but studies the inevitable turns, proving that they were inevitable by a detailed study of the process of development in all its concreteness. One of the basic principles of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete. (44)

The role of dialectics is crucial not only in literary aspects but in legal aspects too. A lawyer has to take the help of dialectics in the form of arguments to prove a certain point. A judge has to pronounce the verdict based on dialectics so that he or she may authenticate or validate his view with an argument. J.B.S. Haldane says in Preface to the *Dialectics of Nature*:

Dialectical materialism...is not merely a philosophy of history, but a philosophy which illuminates all events whatever, from the falling of stone to

a poet's imaginings. And it lays particular emphasis on the inter-connection of all processes, and the artificial distinctions which men have drawn, not merely between vertebrates and invertebrates or liquids and gasses, but between the different fields of human knowledge such as economics, history and natural science. (n p)

Dialectics is a method of reaching truth by removing the incongruities with the help of logic.

The element of being and becoming has been discussed by many scholars earlier as well as contemporary scholars. They have given their own perspective in this context. Plato's design presents two worlds for us. First is a changeless world, which can be categorized as world of being a world of ideal forms, which is a changeless world. Second is a "world of becoming" which is an ever-changing material world of sagacious objects. For e.g. Man is an ideal form and belongs to the category of being. However, John, Peter, Rahim are different men which represent ever changing 'becoming'. Plato in *Timaeus and Critias* observes:

What is it that always is, but never comes to be, what is it that comes to be but never is, now anything created is necessarily created by some cause because nothing can possibly come to be there without being something responsible for coming to be. (16)

Timaeus states his discourse by sharing a difference that affects the nature of his whole discourse. He reveals the distinction between being and becoming. In his view, some things are 'always are' he calls them 'forms' and they are never changing while the others undergo a change. Everything in this universe which comes into being has a cause behind it. In this way, Plato had given the concept of a two-

dimensional way of a reality that is the world of becoming and the world of being. The world of becoming is what is seen and felt with the help of senses. The world of being is the world of form or the world of ideas. It does not change, but it is responsible for the nature of things people experience in the world of becoming.

Aristotle talks about being qua being or the study of attributes that belong to things merely in so far as they exist for e.g. existence, unity sameness and difference. He lays stress on understanding substance to understand being. Being is, on the whole, a modification of a substance. For him, being is whatever anything whatever. According to him, every being is an alteration of a substance. For him, the study of substance is imperative to understand the nature of being because the substance is the main category of being. Instead of taking into consideration what a being is, the analysis should be focussed on what a substance is. He states that substances are species. Substance does not presuppose the presence of anything. A person with a flat nose is called a snub. A snub cannot be considered as a substance; because to consider snub, the existence of nose is presupposed. It means that the part of anything cannot be understood without understanding its whole. The parts of a triangle cannot be understood without understanding the concept of a triangle. Aristotle argues that the whole precedes the parts which constitute a substance. He differentiates between those cases where the parts of an object are preceding to the whole and those where the whole is prior to the parts. It is not possible to comprehend the whole of a syllable without understanding the letters that constitute its parts.

He goes to the extent of saying that even a matter does not have its sense without considering its form. Physical objects are combinations of form and matter, and Aristotle identifies substance with form. The matter of an object is the material that makes it up, whereas the form is the shape that material takes. For example, the

matter in a golden bangle is gold itself, and the form is the shape of a sphere it takes. Aristotle maintains that form is primary because form gives each thing its individual nature.

Aristotle differentiates ten essential kinds of being: substance, quantity, quality, relation, location, time, position, possession, doing, and undergoing. The result of this division is that there is no primary concept of being that applies to all things. Animals have an unconditionally different kind of being than colours. However, both exist; there lies a difference in their existence. As Aristotle has specified that the *Metaphysics* studies being qua being, that is, that it takes into consideration something exists at all, this classification of being into ten categories would give the impression of complicating matters a bit. However, Aristotle argues the study of being is the study of substance. The tricky part, it turns out, is sorting out what sorts of things qualify as substances. If substance is considered as species, it is considered as a wonderful compromise between particular and general. It becomes confusing when a substance has an individual trait. These individual traits can be categorized as non-essential properties. Take the example of a person whose name is Johny. It can be assumed that Johny is a clean-shaven boy. In case Johny grows a beard he still remains Johny and, there is no need to mention that he has a beard or not. In other situation suppose he has a cousin who resembles closely to Johny, but he has a beard, in that case, it may be described that Johny's cousin has a beard. In this way, Johny or his cousin cannot be considered as substance because having a beard or not is a non-essential trait.

Heidegger wants to understand the meaning of being or *Dasein*. That's the dominant question in his philosophical career. However, he does not jump to that question straight away. He opines to interrogate one kind of entity and ask about its

mode of existence. He wants to pick those entities for discussion which have the understanding of being. Instead of asking about the mode of being of a rock, or a tree or a cat, it is advisable to take those entities, which can ask questions about being, that are a human being. Heidegger was clear that it was the starting point of enquiry. He was genuinely interested in the meaning of being, so he wanted to use the analysis of human beings that is human existence at the initial stages. However, later on, he was willing not to use this ladder. The results of this analysis were surprising. He was able to produce a new kind of phenomenology of appearances as they present themselves in experience. That phenomenology was poles apart from the phenomenological concepts given by Aristotle, Cartesian, Husserl, and Kant. He doesn't represent a human being as an ego or a mental substance; he doesn't consider the human being as a mind in the material world. His theory was devoid of these concepts given by earlier scholars. The way of being human is altogether different, and it cannot be compared with the existence of the animals. He considers human beings as unique in their existence. The being in view of Heidegger is bodily active and finite. The modes of being are of two types: authentic and inauthentic. Authentic existence includes the course of action determined by a being or Dasein and inauthentic existence contains the course of action determined by external forces such as society, friends, family etc. Being is thrown into the world which is full of various possibilities. Dasein or 'being' undergoes these experiences of angst and finiteness. Angst is the response of the being to the open world where being takes ownership of choosing its way of life. Knowing this world is the way of being-in-the-world. This way he refutes the element of transcendence as given by other scholars who support the cause of speaking to outside rather than inside. Mood plays an important role in this context as it determines actions or choices of the being. Bolton observes:

The distinction between being and becoming is common in Plato's middle dialogues. There a sharp line is drawn between "that which always is and has no becoming" and "that which is always becoming and never is. The realm of being is made up of things which never change in any way, but the realm of becoming consists of things which constantly change while they exist in many ways. (67)

Heraclitus and his followers are of the view that all things are becoming. "It is impossible to step twice into the same river" (310) is mentioned by Plato in his famous work *Parmenides*. It is rightly said that change is the law of nature. Therefore, change is a constant phenomenon; Heraclitus and his followers lay emphasis on this aspect. Plausibly it is possible to categorize things and circumstances as existing and not existing. Being is an answer to what exists. Becoming deals with the realm of the material world, which humans experience through their senses and that the world is always changing. Being is a completely independent entity but it paves the way for becoming that is the causal effect on anything which is experiencing it and giving its reaction to it.

Heraclitus propounds that the ultimate reality keeps on changing but, Parmenides and Eleatics are of the view that reality is unchanging and cohesive. He opines that becoming could not be being so he categorised it as non-being which leads to the idea that the world of becoming is illusive. Plato tried to resolve this paradox by offering a solution. He gave the concept that the real world of unchanging being is very extreme and always changing the world of emergence is lesser being. In this way, this concept made Plato speak about being and becoming.

Plato talks about the pre-existence of the soul. The soul of an individual exists without a body. It has its existence in the realm of being. The individuals remain stuck in a world of sensation. He considers philosopher as the only individual who is able to free his soul (intellect) to acquire true knowledge which is the knowledge of ideal forms. Death emancipates the soul from the body and soul reaches the world of being. This view of Plato is contrary to the view of Christianity in which death is seen in a negative light.

Everything, which belongs to the realm of being, remains forever. For example, if all the chairs in this universe are destroyed, even then the idea or form of a chair will have its existence. It does not mean that all abstract entities remain in the form of being. There are certain abstract entities like 'time', always keep on changing. Becoming is an existing whole of which the finite beings experience but a single phase given by the present point.

Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* states that the emergence of phenomena is pure and absolute he rejects the very concept of noumena, which is given by Kant. Kant talks about phenomena, which is based on viewpoint about the things, or how the things appear to humans. Then he discusses noumena which includes the things in themselves. Kant observes that there is no direct method to recognize the external world and people have to remain confined to their own ideas only. Sartre propounds that noumena are not unreachable. Moreover, they have no existence. For Sartre what appears to the senses is a reality. Later part of his work 'Being and Nothingness' is dedicated to two aspects; first is being in itself and the second is being for itself. Being-in-itself is unconscious, and it does not have the ability to change. Being-for-itself is conscious, but it is also not complete in itself. Nothingness becomes the essential trait of the-for-itself. The-for-itself is aware of what it is not, that is a sort of

nothingness and being free in this world. A tree does not have the power to change its being. However, a man changes its being by undergoing various circumstances and facing different challenges.

A human is born as an infant who is a pure being. When the individual is exposed to the conflicts of the society, the being undergoes a change. It starts the process of becoming, according to his reactions to the conditions and circumstances. An individual's response to the happenings decides the becoming factor.

The factors of inferiority and superiority play a vital role in the aspect of being and becoming. People strive for their goal to show their superiority over others so that they may get rid of their inferiority. This tendency develops at the period of infancy when an infant has that inferiority complex which forms the basis of the goal to achieve superiority. The problem of being and becoming starts during infancy and continues until a person breathes his or her last.

Dr Faustus in the play *The Tragical History of Dr Faustus* wants to become the master of the universe. He studies necromancy in order to have godlike powers. As he says in the said play, "All things that move between the quiet poles/ shall be at my command" (52). He further says that "A sound magician is a mighty god" (52). Faustus himself chooses the way that takes him towards his doom. There is no role of a chance or fate. Faustus listens to the voice of his choice and sells his soul to the devil who after twenty-three years takes him to hell for eternal damnation. It is Faustus, who chooses the way and gets the result of his choice. Being a scholar he should guide the people, but he does not choose the right path and becomes a practitioner of black magic and necromancy.

Macbeth in Shakespeare's one of the famous tragedies *Macbeth* falls into the trap of witches by believing in their forecast. He decides to be the King by killing Duncan. His wife Lady Macbeth insists him to be cruel to kill anybody who comes in the way of ambition. However, in the end, he has to face the death of Lady Macbeth. Now he understands the repercussions of his decisions, and he finds life as meaningless. Following lines from *Macbeth* bear testimony to that and show Macbeth who chooses to become a traitor and murderer, repenting over the death of his wife. Life has no meaning for him now.

Out, out, brief candle

Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player

That Struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And, then is heard no more. It is a tale,

Told by an idiot, full of sound and Fury

Signifying nothing. (229)

Tess's life is an example where she is hanged to death for no fault. She is molested and at the end she gets punishment. This aspect of life points towards the universe that is cruel towards weak and innocent. This hostility of the universe is meaningless. In the play *The Outsider* the protagonist is considered guilty because he does not weep at the death of his mother. He is internally shattered, but he is not able to express and convince the jury why he did not weep at the sad demise of his mother. The characters like Tess, Meursault, Faustus, and Macbeth seem to be dwelling in a universe which is irrational and meaningless. Absurdity and meaninglessness of the life is conspicuous in their lives. They present an image of life where humans cannot escape from their responsibilities in this meaningless universe.

In the old Greek tragedies, fate decides what a person becomes in response to the given circumstances "As fate has willed / So shall they be fulfilled (Agamemnon 40). Everything which is written in fate is bound to happen. Human beings have no choice; they are puppets in the hands of gods and goddesses. According to Oedipus's fate, he will kill his father and marry his mother. It happens as well. So there is no choice left for Oedipus to change his fate. His being undergoes the process of becoming what fate has destined for him. Thomas Hardy, a famous novelist, also shows all powerful fate conspiring against humans. Whenever any individual gets happy, a blow from God comes and the person gets sad again. That's why Hardy says "Happiness was but an occasional episode in general drama of pain" (335).

As the theory of existentialism is to be applied to the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar, it is relevant to discuss the concept of existentialism. It is a philosophical movement which started in the 19th century. The existentialists believe that this universe has no meaning and purpose at all. People have to take the onus of their actions and shape their own fate. The basic problem that it takes into consideration is the phenomena of being human in the world, and the characteristics of human freedom. The philosophers of this school of thought do not consider the human being as an idea. They give due importance to the subjectivity of the individual. Existence of a human and human experience are of chief significance for them. Some of the famous existentialist writers are Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sartre, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Martin Heidegger, Franz Kafka. Action and choice are prominent traits of existentialism so, it is opposite to concepts like rationalism and positivism. It rejects the belief that human beings are predominantly rational.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) a Danish philosopher, was not known much internationally before his death. He is considered to be the first existentialist considering his works which make use of existential themes. His theory chiefly explores relationship between man and God. He opposed the explanations given by the philosophers to validate the existence of the God. The personal experiences of an individual are central in his philosophical framework. The personal choices man makes are important philosophical concern for Kierkegaard. He divides human existence in three spheres aesthetic, ethical and religious. In aesthetic spheres pleasures including bodily pleasures and intellectual pleasures are the chief objectives of an individual. In the ethical sphere moral responsibility and dutiful life are well accepted by the individual. The religious sphere demands sacrifice and devoting life to the Almighty. These spheres have their own systems and values. The advancement from one sphere to other is not natural; rather it is a matter of choice for the individual. This choice has nothing to do with meta-principles. He manifests himself and his existence “I stand like a lonely pine-tree egoistically shut off, pointing to the skies and casting no shadow and only the turtle-dove builds its nest in my branches” (Kierkegaard 55).

He believes that the idea of truth varies from person to person. He calls it a subjective truth. He does not want to believe anything without individually reaching fact and reason. He leaves it to the person to reach the truth with his or her own efforts as mentioned in his famous work *Philosophical Frameworks*:

The truth in which I rest was within me and came to light through myself, and not even Socrates good have given to me, as little as the driver can pull the load for the horses, though he may help them by applying the lash. He says that he has the truth in his possession without knowing it. (15)

For Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) freedom is more important than anything else; even happiness comes afterwards in his hierarchy. He considers suffering as an important element in the life of an individual. He believes that sufferings would help man to get rid of his sins, and it will pave the way to salvation. He does not believe in the mob; he believes in the individual. During his time the rational philosophies were dominant in literature. These philosophies portray man as a rational being, who is basically good if guided by reason, and he can create a Utopian society. Dostoyevsky with his *Notes from the Underground* presents an absolutely contradictory picture of the man who is not rational and governed more by evil than good. The decisions taken by an individual may or may not be logical, but they are the manifestation of free will. This is one of the qualities of the man that separates him from animals. The Underground Man is a nihilist. He is retired from his civil service job. His life has become stagnant. He is living a secluded life. It is his free will; he is not forced by anybody to live like this. This is a type of alienation which modern man has to face. He discusses the existential issues in which the relation of humans with God has been taken up. Ivan, in one of the famous novels *The Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoyevsky, serves as a mouthpiece of the writer when he speaks the following lines: "I don't accept this world of God's, and, although I know it exists, I don't accept it at all. It's not that I don't accept God, you must understand, it's the world created by Him I don't and cannot accept" (258).

Franz Kafka (1883-1924), like other existentialist writers, feels that this universe is without meaning. In his writings, he presents a higgledy-piggledy world. The events are arranged in such a sequence that they lead to the absurdities inherent in this meaningless universe. Kafka finds that man cannot show a commitment because

this universe is absurd. Man is expected to act morally in this absurd world where death makes everything meaningless. Man is free to exercise his choices, but he cannot predict the fallouts of his selections. This freedom of choice proves fatal and responsible for his plight because there are so many choices and possibilities, which baffle Kafka's characters. Franz Kafka's one of the most prominent works *The Trial* bears testimony to this. Joseph K has to face a trial, but his delinquency or crime has not been mentioned. He is arrested and brutally punished. He is the victim of injustice where he fails to justify his existence with no fault of his own. He is arrested on his birthday and exactly after one year he is given death on his birthday. The sequence of events presents a universe which is hostile and absurd. Man struggles for existence and at the end meets death. The existential crisis and chaos are prevalent from beginning to end. The writings of Kafka show the same traits that can be seen in Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, Camus etc. There is one difference which can be observed in the writings of Kafka that is the circumstances are arranged in such a sequence that the characters are not able to find the solution. They try to find the solution rationally but fail to do in this irrational universe. It seems to be beyond the control of human beings. His characters do not have leap into the faith which Kierkegaard provides to his characters.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in October 1844. He opines that God is dead and man is free. The world seems to be without God where there is no justice for the weaker and exploited strata of the society. He talks about superhuman whom he calls overman, who can give some values to humanity which the people can follow. His views about God and humanity in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* are noteworthy "Dead are all Gods; now we want the overman to live. Let this be our last will at the great noon!"(59). Love is on the side of the influential people. The universe is meaningless;

if humans try to find the meaning, they will get nothing but disappointment. No god will come for rescue as man is doing what he wants, and there is no power above him who can put a chain on this meaninglessness. The conflicts between mind and body spirituality and materialism, individual and society are the result of this meaninglessness and people are unable to find the solution. Nietzsche is a nihilist who opposes philosophical reasoning. He has promoted the concept that man has to create his own identity through the process of self-realisation. A man who follows Nietzsche's principles does not believe in concepts like God or soul.

The Flies by Jean Paul Sartre is an existential play where he says, “once freedom lights it's beacon in man's heart the Gods are powerless against him.” (Sartre 2.102). Freedom is one of the most important factors in existentialism. Religious values cannot have a chance to control behaviour of human beings. Moral values and sins dominate people's lives and behaviour but they prevent people from absolute freedom. “Man is nothing else but what he makes himself” (Sartre 28). He discards Kant's claim that there can be universal axioms, which can be applied as a moral choice. Sartre does not opine that choices should be generalized be it moral and non-moral choices. He lays stress on the distinctiveness of moral choices as mentioned in the following lines:

Indeed one of the most important ways in which Sartre is different from Kant is that he rejects the claim that principles of correct actions can be justified independently of your proposed application to any particular action in the world. For Sartre a principle exists only in so far as it is applied to decision to act. (Gail 73)

If an individual is a teacher then being a teacher is not in a manner that a rock is in being itself. Sartre in *Existentialism is Humanism* gives the following views:

Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees he is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. (28)

Sartre in the same text propounds that “Existence precedes essence” (28). It signifies that man is born as nothing and he creates his own worth. It rests on what an individual decides to be in his or her life. This philosophy is entirely opposite in the case of objects as they cannot decide their course of action.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), is no doubt a feminine thinker and author but she is also an existentialist in her own ways. She is known for her novels, but she has also given her idea about issues like the role of freedom in human life and the aspect of the struggle. Her outstanding book *The Second Sex* paved the wave for second wave feminism. The first wave of feminism was limited to suffrage, property rights and voting rights of the women but the second wave is more concerned with sexuality, family, workstation, and reproduction rights of a woman. In her book *The Second Sex*, she has propounded how a woman has been given a secondary place in this patriarchal society. She believes that “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (272). The woman is taught throughout her life to behave in a particular manner because she is a woman. It changes the perception of a woman’s freedom and right to choices. This difference in upbringing is discussed in ‘Nature vs. Nurture’. In ‘Production vs. Reproduction’, she opines that a woman’s reproductive ability must not hinder her in finding a place and position in society beyond the limits of home.

Albert Camus (1913-1960) is one of the prominent writers who use existential themes, though he always rejected to be considered as an existentialist. Albert Camus in his *Myth of Sisyphus* writes about the conflict between what is expected from this universe and what is achieved. People aim for meaning, orderliness, and reason, but achieve formlessness and chaos. Camus raises a philosophical question if life is meaningless, then it is worthwhile to commit suicide. He gives an option where a person can put his faith in God to acquire a meaningful life, or he should accept the meaninglessness of life itself. Camus does not opine to escape from the absurdist conditions of life. He teaches to accept what life offers to humans. Committing suicide because of meaninglessness and pain in life does not the people enjoy the bounties of life too. He has many similarities with the existentialist writers. Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy rightly mentions some facts about his style of writing.

He aims at nothing less than a thorough, candid exegesis of the human condition, and like them he exhibits not just a philosophical attraction but also a personal commitment to such values as individualism, free choice, inner strength, authenticity, personal responsibility, and self-determination. (n p)

Chapter – III

Conflict between Being and Becoming in the Selected Plays of

Vijay Tendulkar

Conflict is a situation which encompasses a difference of ideas and opinions. It contains a struggle and mismatch of beliefs, aims and desires. Conflict is an unavoidable element in a human life. Humans have to retort according to the variation in the circumstances. Sometimes they respond exactly opposite to what is expected from them leading to a conflict between being and becoming. Though man is a social animal yet he cannot expect a Utopian status quo in this acquisitive world. This aspect many times becomes the reason for a conflict between being and becoming.

People go through various experiences in their life, but many times they do not ponder over the circumstances that shape them and constitute their character. In the case of emotional experiences that are the situations in which a person's feelings are ignored, rejected, quashed, degraded, humiliated, punished, and so on have predominantly important consequences for the progress of the character. It leads to a conflict, which decides an individual's further course of action.

The play *Silence! The Court is in Session* is not different in this regard, It contains various elements of conflict. The origin of the play is based on a real-life incident, which the author overheard from a group of theatre artists whom he was guiding to their destination that is Vile Parle. This is situated in the suburb of Mumbai where he used to live. The group had to perform a mock trial for the play. The play is divided into three acts.

The play shows the afflictions of a single woman in the male-dominated society. Benare is depicted as female in the struggle, against the discrimination shown by the males towards the females. Parameters of morality for female are harder than male, and this aspect converts the life of many unfortunate women into an ordeal. A woman becomes the victim, while the follies and foibles in the male are unheeded considering him as a superior being. This play has one parallel with Shakespeare's masterpiece *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet arranges play within a play to sound out the facial expressions of King Claudius to unearth the verity of his father's death

In the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Benare is portrayed as an independent girl who is in relation with various males but people are more concerned about her wrongdoings, and they do not bother about male counterparts like Mr Damle. The conflict between being and becoming is prevalent in the characters as well. Discrimination in the society is conspicuous with the depiction of male characters of the play. There are people like Damle, who enjoys being a male in the society but they do not behave like a gentleman. It may be asked if it is the female only who is responsible for any wrong doing or immoral activities. If not then a man should also be held equally responsible. But men like Damle shirk from taking responsibilities of their deeds by taking advantage of their gender. This state of affairs creates obstacles for the women who want to live their life freely and peacefully. The following conversation in *Silence! The Court is in Session* shows how Benare is criticised for not following a particular conduct because she is a woman:

SUKHATME. [aloud] Mr Ponkshe how would you describe your view of the moral conduct of the accused? On the whole like that of a normal unmarried woman? You at least should take this trial seriously.

BENARE. But how should he know what the moral conduct of a normal on married woman is like?

PONKSHE [paying no attention to her] it's different

SUKHATME. For example?

PONKSHE. The accused is a bit too much

SUKHATME. It's too much-- what does that mean?

PONKSHE. It means-- it means that, on the whole, she runs after men too much.

BENARE. Tut!Tut!Tut! Poor man!

SUKHATME: Miss Benare, you are committing contempt of court

BENARE: The court has gone into that room. So how can contempt of it be committed in this one? There's not much. In that remark, Sukhatme.

(Tendulkar 81)

Benare is treated unethically, solely on the basis of gender. There is no discussion about the male counterpart, and only Benare is targeted. Being a woman, she has to suffer, and she becomes a victim due to the discriminatory attitude of the society with a female. Being a woman becoming a victim signifies a conflict between being and becoming. If she raises a valid question, it is considered as a contempt of court. The limitations for a married woman and unmarried woman are different, but in both cases, she has to conduct herself according to the norms set by a hypocritical society. She has a responsibility to conduct herself in a particular manner which suits the discriminatory attitude of society. People like Ponkshe and Sukhatme are deciding what the code of conduct for an unmarried woman should be. They are not concerned

about Damle who is responsible for Leela Benare's plight. They blame her for being too much after men. In their opinion, restraint on senses is only meant for women and not for men.

The discussions are focused on relationships of Benare, whether it is with a married man or unmarried man. If a man is involved in adultery, the question of morality and immorality does not arise. The issue of morality is related only to women. Such is the attitude of the antagonistic court where Benare is trapped as a victim. She is blamed, but her anger is considered as her fault. The play is a journey of Benare's suffering from being a woman to becoming a victim.

Mrs Kashikar in the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a female, and it is expected that she will comprehend the situation of Miss Benare. It looks as if she has no emotions. She is also enjoying pestering a woman like Benare. In the following conversation, Benare blames her for supporting those people who are assassinating her character publically:

MRS KASHIKAR. But my dear Benare, as your conscience is clear, why are you playing into such a violent rage?

BENARE. You've all deliberately ganged up on me! You've plotted against me. (Tendulkar 93)

Mrs Kashikar is adding fuel to the fire and deteriorating the plight of the protagonist. She contravenes when Benare unmasks her anger with these prejudiced proceedings. Being a woman, she shows no concern towards Miss Benare. This manner and attitude present her as a sadist. So, the conflict between being and becoming prevalent in her nature is noteworthy. Being a woman, she is becoming sadistic and prejudiced for other woman which is the reason of conflict between being and becoming.

A devil can cite scriptures for his purpose. The following dialogues of Sukhatme present his hypocritical attitude and double standard:

SUKHATME--- Mr Samant, Mrs Kashikar, Ponkshe, Karnik seat yourselves there exactly as you should [*He straightens up, closes his eyes, and meditates for a while. Then slapping himself piously on the face, he raises his hands to his forehead in prayer twice or thrice*] My father taught me the habit, Kashikar, of praying to our family God at the beginning of any new Enterprise. How pure it makes one feel! The mind takes on new strength. (Tendulkar 97)

Sukhatme is gearing up to victimize Benare for no fault except she wants to live her life but, she has to struggle in finding a male companion who remains with her through thick and thin.

Thomas Hardy's famous character Tess and Vijay Tendulkar's Leela Benare have to face adverse circumstances for no other reason but for being a woman. Tess has to suffer without any fault of her own; she is hanged and Hardy says "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess" (420). In the same manner, Benare has to suffer, and Justice is done when the judge orders to abort the child so as to save the society from declining moral values. Women like Tess and Benare become a victim of hypocritical society.

Misuse of law by the lawyers and judges shows a conflict between being and becoming. The court of law seems to be diverted from its objective which is to save the rights of the weak. In this play, the law is misused when the verdict comes to abort Benare's child. Being a judge, it is required to safeguard the cause of weak, but here the judges and lawyers are becoming the murderers of the innocent human embryo. In light of this aspect, the play is a satire on the legal system as well as on social justice.

The conflict between being and becoming is prevalent in the corruption of court. Sukhatme, being a lawyer needs to support the cause of truth, but he does not put his efforts to amplify the voice of truth. His sincere efforts are seen in silencing the voice of a needy woman. He behaves more like a sophist than a lawyer does, which is evident from these dialogues in *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

SUKHATME. [*with peculiar care*] Mr. Rokde, You went to Professor Damle's house, as night was falling. What did you see there? [*in a deep, cruel voice*] What did you see?

KASHIKAR. [*although he is enjoying it all greatly*], Sukhatme, I feel this is getting onto too personal a level

SUKHATME. No, no, no, not at all, milord. It's just for the trial; so Mr Rokde--

BENARE. I don't agree. I am telling you! What's all this got to do with the trial?

MRS KASHIKAR. But why are you getting into such a state, Benare? [to Kashikar] Go on

BENARE. There is no need at all to drag my private life into this. I can visit, whom I like Damle wasn't eating me up.

SUKHATME. What did you see there Rokde? Yes, tell us. Tell us! Miss Benare, listen to me. Don't spoil the mood of the trial. This game is a great fun. Just be patient. Now, Rokde don't be shy-- tell everything you saw. (Tendulkar 94)

The Conflict between being and becoming is observed in the treatment of women as a toy in the hands of a man. A man uses her to fulfil her desires and afterwards leaves her in the lurch as if she is a robot or a toy sans emotions. The play *Silence! The court is in Session* is an example in this context. Leela Benare is pregnant without marriage, but in this way she breaks the custom of society in which female sexuality is considered as a taboo. When something is treated as immoral for female the same should not be ignored for male. The mock trial becomes the mockery of the law itself. The verdict is not less than a heinous murder of an unborn child.

If somebody has a unique trait in personality, then quite often it becomes the cause of suffering. This aspect is observed in the novel *The Outsider* written by Albert Camus. In this novel, the protagonist has to suffer because he does not wail and weep at the death of his mother. He is pronounced guilty by the court of law because of this characteristic trait of his personality. However, internally he is pained and grieved at the death of his mother. Benare is not willing to accept moralising from anybody on the basis of gender. She wants to take decisions of her life as freely as male. Men enjoy their life freely but, in the case of a woman she is considered as immoral and stigma is attached to her.

It is the duty of the lawyer to support truth and Justice, but Sukhatme is totally different in his attitude. Being a lawyer, he takes advantage of his position. He plays with the loopholes of law to uphold the hypocritical double standards of the society. Being a lawyer, he should not become an executioner of truth, but in doing the same, he becomes more a butcher than a lawyer. He shatters the soul of the so-called accused Benare and makes her heart bleed. He presents right in the wrong way and vice versa. The conflict of being and becoming is very much prevalent in his character

too. Nobody forces him to do this. It is his choice to misuse the law and torment people like Benare. He treats her as a predator treats the prey.

However, Tendulkar depicts Benare as “a modern woman” who is capable of protecting herself and her body in adverse circumstances. He does not let Benare kill herself or feel shy about the whole episode of mock trial, but makes her fight until the end.

Mr. Kashikar is a self-opinionated person, who is very dominating in nature. He is introduced to all as the chairman of the group by none other than Benare. He considers himself as a very important person. He dominates and bullies his wife. In this way, he makes her childless married life even worse. Their failure in having a baby after marriage is a factor that leads him to become sadistic. Becoming dominant, arrogant, self-opinionated is his reaction towards his failure. It enables him to get rid of the complex of being childless after many years of marriage. The aspect of being and becoming is visible in this way.

The analysis of *Silence! The Court is in Session* reveals an element of bigotry. The male characters show no respect for women. They do not value the emotions of the fair sex. Mr Damle is a married man so he should not indulge in an illicit relationship with other women. However, he is engrossed in physical love with Benare without any interest in her sentiments and desires. Being a male, he safely manages to be away from questions. Benare cannot escape from the questions of so-called moralists of society; she answers these questions in the court. Damle's gender is a license for him to become a trouble creator for Benare. The aspect of being and becoming can be noticed in the characterization of the play when Benare says "He did not want my mind, or my devotion- He didn't care about them! He wasn't a God. He

was a man, for whom everything was of the body, for the body! That's all!" (Tendulkar 118). In these lines, it is conspicuous how Damle being a male has become trouble creator for Benare.

Arundhati Banerjee observes:

Benare's monologue is reminiscent of Nora's declaration of independence but lacks the note of protest that characterizes the speech of Ibsen's heroine. It is more a self-justification than an attack of society's hypocrisies. It is poignant, sensitive and highlights the vulnerabilities of women in our society. (572)

Ponkshe is an Inter failed clerk working in 'Central Telegraph Office.' Although he wanted to be a scientist, yet he could not excel in the field of science. Being a failure in Science, he becomes a pretender, who professes to have a great knowledge of science. Being a male in a male-dominated society, it seems, gives him a licence to blame and question female. He is not at all willing to accept Benare as his wife because she is an unmarried girl who has become a mother. In his opinion, the fault solely lies on the part of a girl and male counterparts need not be questioned. The following lines will exemplify the same in *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

SUKHATME- What was your answer Mr .Ponkshe? Were you prepared to take a broad view of things for the sake of humanity, and accept the child along with the mother?

PONKSHE. The answer is quite clear.

SUKHATME. You were not prepared, of course.

PONKSHE. No I wasn't. (Tendulkar 84)

Rokde is brought up by a childless couple Mr and Mrs Kashikar. His dependence on them has made him devoid of individual thinking. He takes orders from them and tries to accomplish the tasks. He is not in a position to take the decision whether he can marry Benare or not. His decision needs to be authenticated by the permission of Mrs Kashikar. The aspect of favours done to him by the Kashikar couple overshadows his being or identity. Being obliged by the favours, he becomes a submissive personality. His character manifests the trait of being and becoming.

The hypocritical response of society presents a system which dominates weak and innocent. Right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right. William Shakespeare rightly said in one of his great tragedies *Macbeth*:

ALL. Fair is foul and foul is fair

Hover through the fog and filthy air. (103)

In the play, *The Birthday Party*, protagonist Stanley Weber has been asked harrowing questions which disturb his mental balance. He loses control over his senses. He is upset at the end of the question-answer session conducted by Goldberg and McCann. Same happens with Leela Benare and she gets upset because of the absurdity in the question. The questions are targeting her only because she is a woman. Being a woman, Benare has to take the responsibility of the wrongdoing of the male counterpart. Being a woman makes her victim like Stanley Weber becomes a victim being an artist. Society wants to take him back by hook or by crook. However, Stanley Weber wants to lead a secluded life away from the humdrum of the mundane world. The representatives of society pester him mentally as well as physically. He struggles for his existence from beginning to the end of the play. Benare's fault is to

an extent same; she wants to adopt the lifestyle of her own which does no harm to others. However, she does not get permission for that. The representatives of society mentally torture her for being different from others. Her way of thinking is her fault in the eyes of society. She wants to live a peaceful life but gets mental torture in reward due to the discrimination towards women.

Effects of being and becoming are prevalent in society as well. Change is the law of nature. Once there was a time when people used to force women to be Sati (sit on the fire after the death of her husband). Considering this aspect the plight of women like Benare is much better, she seems to enjoy more freedom. She can endeavour to shape her future by her own decisions. In this freedom, she is seen succumbing to the temptations and becoming a beloved of her maternal uncle. In this freedom, she is unable to resist the temptations and becomes the beloved of her maternal uncle. Such an act is taboo in any society. She does so, as society is always changing with the lapse of time. Change is a continuous process whose journey starts from being and continue on the never-ending road of becoming.

The world in *Silence! The court is in Session* is more towards the side of the evil. In a way, it is comparable with the play *King Lear*. Lear distributes the kingdom between two sisters, but nobody is interested in taking care of the old king. King Lear suffers due to the filial ingratitude of his daughters. On similar grounds, society pays no heed to the emotions of a lonely woman who does some endeavours to get married to a person of her choice. However, in this journey, she finds people like Damle. She is carrying a child of Damle in her womb. The society has no mercy towards the unborn baby rather they have hatred towards a woman who has committed this sin. Society considers her a misfit in its system. Now she is standing as an accused in the court, a court which has become no less than a Kangaroo court.

In this hypocritical society if an individual is not two-faced or straight forward in approach, then chances of falling in the trap of so-called moralists are more. Leela Benare is not hypocritical; she does not hide her true feelings and becomes the victim because she has loved to share her heart. She has been asked to take care of her conduct as she is an unmarried woman. The following conversation from *Silence! The Court is in Session*, is noteworthy in this context:

MRS KASHIKAR. All this is alright for now, you know. It won't be like this at night. That'll have to be done properly

SUKHATME. [to himself] The wrong things always seem to happen to Mr Kashikar at the wrong time...[aloud] Mr Ponkshe, how would you describe your view of the moral conduct of the accused? On the whole like that of a normal unmarried woman? You at least should take this trial seriously.

BENARE. But how should he know what the moral conduct of a normal unmarried woman is like?

PONKSHE.[paying no attention to her]. It is different

SUKHATME.. For example for example?

PONKSHE The accused is a bit too much.

SUKHATME.. A bit too much- what does that mean?

PONKSHE. It means- it means that, on the whole, she runs after men too much.

BENARE. [provoking him].Tut!tut!tut! Poor man!

SUKHATME.. Miss Benare, you are committing contempt of court.

(Tendulkar 81)

In the play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* a court is a place where nobody listens to the voice of the innocent people. Benare is an unmarried woman, and she has to struggle for freedom. Mrs Kashikar is a married woman, but she has to accept that she has no sense and her husband Mr Kashikar is a superior being. Ms Benare is pregnant without marriage, and it leads to a conflict with society because she wants to carry the baby. Many characters of the play are suffering from frustrations due to their failures. Their frustrations goad them to conflict. She does not want to harm anybody. The society and system are victimizing the innocents, but criminals are going scot free.

The failure of the male characters in achieving their desired goals plays a major role. Being a failure makes them becoming more sadistic to life. Leela Benare's life has so many shades she sums up her concept of life in her last speech "Life is a betrayal. Life is a fraud. Life is a drug. Life is drudgery. Life is something that's nothing or a nothing that's something" (116). Leela Benare has suffered in the hands of life. Sometimes life is something which is actually nothing. It means that it consists of nothingness. It is not less than fraud for her. Sometimes life is as deadly as poison; sometimes it is not less than a drug or medicine. Life in itself has become a danger. Life must be hanged to death. Benare is of the opinion that life has no worth at all. Moreover, it has become a lifeless thing. These aspects point out the conflict of being and becoming which is constantly highlighted in one way or the other by the author.

Being a woman, she has merely become the object of physical pleasure. Her life has become a living death. The play is the journey of Benare who is innocent but becomes a victim of society. It is conspicuous in the last scene of the play in the following lines. "It's true, I did commit a sin I was in love with my mother's brother.

But in our strict house, in the prime of my unfolding youth, he was the one who came close to me” (Tendulkar 117).

The conflict between being and becoming in the characters is noteworthy in the analysis of the dreams and achievements of the male characters like Sukhatme, Ponshe, and Karnik. They give vent to the frustration by disturbing women like Benare who are harmless to society. Leela Benare’s mental torture in the mock court is a glaring example of such attitude of the male characters.

The concept of marriage has become an obstacle in the lives of many women. A man may have extramarital affairs, but a spinster like Leela Benare cannot lead her life in her own way. Being a woman she needs to get married, else she is considered as a woman of slippery character. The concept of marriage has become an obstacle in the lives of many women. A man may have extramarital affairs, but a spinster like Leela Benare cannot do the same. Being a woman she needs to get married, else she is considered as a woman of slippery character. Marriage is a sacred institution which joins the two families and two souls but, marriage itself has become a hurdle in the lives of many women like Leela Benare. The conflict between being and becoming is conspicuous in one way or the other in the play. One aspect is the psyche of the urban people. The moral degradation is rampant and is increasing day by day. People are morally bankrupt as mentioned by T. S. Eliot in the Hollow Men:

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Head piece filled with straw. Alas!

Our dried voices, when

We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass. (56)

This play represents complete disharmony of relationships between Benare and the male members, who come in her life from time to time.

In Anita Desai's novel *Cry the Peacock* the protagonist Maya marries a middle-aged man who is the friend of her father. This marriage turns out to be a fiasco. Her husband is unable to fulfil her emotional needs as he is a lawyer who believes in practical and material aspects of life. The circumstances change Maya into a psychopath. Maya develops an attachment for her father which is akin to a condition of Electra complex. Her attraction for her father causes havoc in her married life. In the same manner, Benare is suffering from an emotional void and in her early childhood. She develops a relationship with her maternal uncle. Both Maya and Benare struggle for their identity, they endeavour to change the disharmony to harmony, but they do not succeed. Benare is a working woman, so she is not dependent on anybody for her basic needs. However, a woman needs more than roof, cloth and money. Being a woman, she has her emotional needs to fulfil. However, she becomes a victim of the circumstances and behaviour of society.

Being a woman, Benare is confined in the court as a caged bird who desires to be free from the clutches of the four walls of the cage. She is pining for a life full of happiness emotional fulfilment. Societal chains do not allow her to leave the cage and enjoy the bounties of life. The conflict between being and becoming cannot be ignored in this regard as Leela Benare is trapped as a prisoner where being a woman

she is becoming a punching bag for the frustrated males like Ponkshe, Sukhatme, Karnik etc.

The oath-taking scene has a symbolic significance in the play. If an individual takes an oath, he or she needs to follow it in letter and spirit. In the present play, the characters take the Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary in their hand instead of a holy book and make fun of oath taking. It shows the non-seriousness and moral bankruptcy of the characters whose only purpose is to kill the reputation of a woman. It is no more an activity which is taken seriously by a new society as shown by Vijay Tendulkar in *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

PONKSHE. Shall I take the oath again? I hereby place my hand upon the
Oxford English Dictionary, and swear that I-

KASHIKAR. It's understood. Sukhatme proceed. (104)

Taking the oath has lost its piousness. Using the Oxford dictionary to take oath has made it a fun activity. People are more concerned about assassinating the character of the protagonist. The relevance of being and becoming is conspicuous in this context too. Every pure and pious thing is becoming impure and deteriorated in modern society. It is also mentioned in the famous lines of *The Waste Land* written by T. S. Eliot:

O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water. (72)

There is deterioration of moral values in modern society. There is no Holy water for fairies to come and wash their feet. Now there are people like Mrs Potter who wash

their feet with soda water. It means modern society is morally bankrupt and it keeps on moving towards further deterioration.

The aspect of motherhood has been considered sacred since time immemorial. However, in this play the court orders to kill the child in the womb; it shows that the court of law has forgotten its responsibility. It has become a puppet in the hands of influential people who are using it for sadistic pleasure. The non-seriousness of the court is seen in this regard. Karnik feels that it has not been the normal practice in court to conduct a case while chewing pan.

KARNIK. I do not think any precedent has been established in this matter.

Moreover, this instance of judge's chewing pan is the first one, and so somewhat unprecedented

KASHIKAR. Counsel for the defence, are you able to establish before the court that it is possible to spit out pan in 10 seconds

SUKHATME. By all means[*goes outside, spit and shutting the door*].

Exactly 10 seconds. Milord

KASHIKAR. We must see for ourselves

BENARE. [*Sighing*] Is this a court of law, Karnik or a spitting contest? (77)

It is not possible to expect an appropriate verdict from such a court. Due to this reason, Benare has to suffer badly in the trial. She is asked to refrain from contempt of court. Her point of view is not given much importance. It looks like a prototype of Kangaroo court where lawlessness prevails as the lawyers and judges are making fun of judicial proceedings. Samant rightly asks this "Sir, does a real court truly work like this? It's very interesting" (77).

The man-woman relationship has been the concern of many writers. This play deals with the psychological aspect of human relations. Relationships have undergone a sea change as loyalty in a relationship is on the verge of reducing with the lapse of time. Male-dominated society wants to tame a woman that cannot be accepted by a woman like Benare. Sukhatme gives her a lecture on the topic of being a mother, but at the end of the play, the court pronounces the verdict to kill the child in the womb as mentioned in the following lines from the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

Neither you nor anyone else should ever do anything like this again. No memento of your sin should remain for future generations. Therefore this court hereby sentences that you shall live. But the child in your womb shall be destroyed. (119)

The discrimination with the woman is crystal clear in this speech. How can this decision safeguard the cause of motherhood by killing the child in the womb? This mock court has no value for human feelings, and it is cynical towards the emotions of women. Benare cries that she wants to be the mother of the child. She wants her body for her child. She ironically calls Damle an intellectual God on whose altar she has offered her body. He takes bodily pleasure and leaves her in the lurch. Being an unmarried woman Benare is not allowed to become a mother as it will shatter the morality of societal customs. It shows a conflict between being and becoming because people like Damle have made the woman a pleasure-seeking object. Motherly instincts of a woman have lost their relevance for such males. Arundhati Banerjee observes:

On the surface Tendulkar seems to have adapted the model of naturalistic drama. But the integration of play within play creates an additional dimension where the demarcating line between reality and illusion is often blurred. (572)

It shows the reality of Ms Leela Benare's life in the form of a play within a play. This aspect adds a newer perspective to the play that demarcates a boundary between reality and illusion.

Vijay Tendulkar's play *Encounter in Umbugland* (1974) is a fictional story that lays bare the intricate subtleties of politics and power. Politicians do immoral alliances for power. The play was first produced in 1968. *Encounter in Umbugland* revolves around the political scenario of the sixties in India. The King wants a successor of his throne as he is too old to rule his state. He wants to become a hermit after giving his crown to a suitable person. He is not physically fit due to old age so he dies. Now there is no consensus among the five ministers about the most deserving successor to the throne. They want to rule the country indirectly. They decide to make Princess Vijaya the queen of the state. They consider that she is weak, innocent and delicate person who does not know the ways of the world. She takes a decision to make Prannarayan her chief advisor who is a eunuch. He guides her in dealing with the shrewd cabinet ministers. She interacts with the people of the state; she does not act as a puppet in the hands of her ministers. The ministers do not expect this from her as they consider her naive and childlike. They confront her on the issue of bringing Kadambas in the mainstream. They raise their doubts that there will be a lot of bloodshed in the state. However, princess Vijaya knocks the door of diplomacy to tackle the situation and does it successfully. Arundhati Banerjee rightly remarks about Tendulkar's creations which are not so simplistic: "like his genius, they too have the same prismatic quality of giving forth new meanings as one turns them around in the light of one's understanding" (xix).

It is a scathing criticism of the current political scenario. The characters in the play are the allegorical presentation of the political leaders. Vichitravirya is the king

of Ubugland who wants to rule until eternity that signifies the lust of politicians to be in power forever. The following lines from the play *Encounter in Ubugland*, which Vichitravirya speaks at his 60th anniversary of the coronation show his lust for power:

VICHITRAVIRYA. No, to tell the truth, it is not our desire to become immortal. The time will certainly come to hand the reins of these island's government to you people and retire. But we must consider the future of the island. And, the schemes of general development. We have in the past sixty years only laid their Foundation. The island badly needs our leadership for at least another fifty years. (Tendulkar 277)

Here, the king Vichitravirya very diplomatically shows his interest to be in power for another fifty years. In his opinion, it is imperative for the country that he should remain king so that he may serve the country and the countrymen. This play is symbolically a literary representation of the political condition of India in the late sixties and early seventies.

In the modern world, people value money and power more than human relations. Being humans, they need to give prominence to humanity, but they are becoming materialistic. In this play, the five ministers are not devoted to the cause of people, which is their moral duty; they want to obtain power by hook or by crook.

Being in politics makes people so much engrossed in pleasures of power. They are cut off with the needs and desires of the commoners. King Vichitravirya does not pay any attention to the concerns of people. He gives boring speeches which his ministers have to listen and appreciate. Being a king, he should serve the people,

but he has become a burden on the people who pay tax to the government but get nothing. He hasn't faced adverse circumstances in his life. Had he suffered from poverty he would have understood the troubles of commoners. When Lear meets adversity only then he comes to know the reality of poverty and he speaks the following lines from the play *King Lear*:

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! (3.4.1830-1835)

It shows the concern of King Lear towards the poor people after undergoing the suffering which is a part of the life of poor people.

Politics has been a very complex topic for commoners to understand. Hypocritical behaviour of politicians increases its complexity which baffles the innocent people. The purpose of politics is to serve the people, but it is becoming a tool in the hands of politicians to enjoy power and wealth. The aspect of the complexity of politics is elegantly narrated by Prannarayan in the opening speech of *Encounter in Umbugland*:

PRANNARAYAN [to the audience]. On behalf of the kingdom of Umbugland, I welcome you all. It is our good fortune that you have shown respect for our invitation, have come to our small and not very well-known island, have shaken the dust off your feet upon this little isle. [Pausing] All that I said just now was, of course, conventional and

diplomatic. But much of it was the truth. I mean, we too have three kinds of truth: conventional truth, diplomatic truth, and the real truth. The truth I spoke just now was of all three kinds. Conventional it certainly was. For to play the host and welcome you who have come here as our guest may be a convention accepted with pleasure. But it is, never the less, a convention. Similarly, this truth is diplomatic. For we in Umbugland behave most submissively and diplomatically towards all powerful countries. But the fact is as well as these two, it is also the real truth, that should not be forgotten. It is a matter for rejoicing that you have presented yourselves here as spectators of a historic *Encounter in Umbugland*. No encounter has any meaning without an audience. With no one to watch them, fighters don't battle with vigour. I am not a fighter. Since I reached the years of discretion, I have lived in the palace of the ruler of this island, the protector of the Umbugite Nation, His Majesty King Vichitravirya. Today is the sixtieth anniversary of his coronation. (Tendulkar 269)

It is evident from the speech that politics is not less than a show business. Even the truth is not a truth in politics. Prannarayan suggested three different dimensions of truth which are the conventional truth, diplomatic truth and lastly the real truth. It means, even the truth has lost its truthfulness in politics. The character of Prannarayan has similarities with Shakespearean fools who are only called fools ironically, but they are very wise in the worldly sense. Their speeches are full of worldly wisdom. One of the fools in *King Lear* advises by sharing his philosophy of life:

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest. (1.4.646-651)

In the political world, nothing is real. Politicians show something else, think something else that is why people are unable to judge them. The aspect of what they are and what they are trying to become is noteworthy in their character. They are becoming power hungry animals, and that hunger can be satiated by capturing the throne. For those power hungry animals, the value of commoners is not more than unwanted insects.

The king Vichitravirya feels that he will be able to live longer as he is taking a rejuvenating medicine. He has no bother about the lives of his poor people but, he is so concerned about his own health. Change is the law of nature which means circumstances can take any turn at any point of the time. King Vichitravirya orders the painter to paint his portrait in which he should look younger than his actual age. He is confident that he has to live many more years as a king of Ubugland. He dies just after the completion of his portrait. Nobody will follow his orders as he has become a dead man. Longfellow rightly mentioned in his poem "Dost thou art and to dust thou returnest" (Psalm of Life 8). Human beings are made of dust, and they will become dust at the end of the day. The aspect of being and becoming is prevalent in this context.

After the death of the king Vichitravirya, the cabinet has no other option, and they decide to make Vijaya a puppet queen. Many men consider women as inferior to men. They expect her to execute the orders given to her by the male. They are of the notion that Vijaya will follow their command. They had eyes on the throne even before the death of the king. Human beings are always eager to have more power to make their existence more powerful and meaningful.

The play, *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) is very serious but the presentation is very musical. This play is among his highly successful plays. It was performed for the first time in on 16 December 1972 at Bharat Natya Mandir, Pune. This play has many awards to its credit. However, after the nineteenth presentation, the authorities of the Progressive Democratic Association decided to ban the play. The reason for such a step was that the play had presented Brahmins in a bad light. Secondly, there were objections against the characterization of Nana Phadnavis which according to them had been a misrepresentation of historical facts. They thought that more performances of the play might incite anger among the public. Many actors resigned, and they formed a theatre Academy on 27th March 1973. The performances restarted from 11th January 1974. It was performed in countries like Germany, France, UK, Netherland. Tendulkar does not accept it as a historical play. He himself states in this context:

This is not a historical play. It is a story, in prose, verse, music and dance set in a historical era. Ghashirams are creations of Socio-Political forces which know no barriers of time and place. Although based on our historical legend, I have no intention of commentary on the morals, or lack of them, of the Peshwa, Nana Phadnavis or Ghashiram. The moral of this story, if there is any, may be looked for elsewhere. (Tendulkar 586)

The play starts with a musical note:

All (swaying to and fro)

Ganpati dances the Ganpati dance,

Brahmans of Poona bow and prance.

Pious Brahmans,

Keep on dancing,

Holi Ganpati, Keep on dancing

Now let the drum beat!

Now let the drama heat!

Heaven, hell and earth complete!

Heaven, hell and earth complete!

Saraswati – Devi,

Goddess of wisdom.

(Saraswati enters dancing. Ganpati and Saraswati dance.)

Goodness of wisdom ,

Wife of the Great One

Shri Ganaraya,

Image of good luck,

Even the mountains

Bow to your name.

Plays, Saraswati,

Goddess of music.

Come, Laxmi-devi,

Wife of the Great one,

Bow to the good God.

Both of you dance.

(Laxmi comes in and dances with the two). (Tendulkar 361)

It is the time of Pesewas. Ghashiram who is from Kanauj reaches Poona to earn the livelihood. He is Brahmin but stays in the house of a courtesan Gulabi. Once during a dance performance of Gulabi, Nana injures his ankle. Ghashiram takes his foot in his hand which is flattering conduct, as being a Brahmin he is not expected to do this. He creates impact in the mind of Nana with his obsequious mannerism. He is rewarded for that too but he is imprisoned as he is suspected to attempt a theft. After his release from the prison, Ghashiram is appointed as the Kotwal of the city. His appointment has nothing to do with his qualities. His appointment is solely based on Nana's lust for his young and beautiful daughter Gauri. After becoming Kotwal, he starts taking revenge from Brahmins of Poona who had insulted him at the beginning of the play.

However, this type of deal with Nana presents a negative trait of his character which is not at all human. Gauri gets pregnant, and Ghashiram starts blackmailing Nana. Moreover, people of Poona who are suffering due to his cruelties decide to revolt Nana kills Gauri to avoid blackmailing from Ghashiram. Ghashiram is now not useful for Nana he orders death sentence for him too. So Ghashiram has to bear the loss of his daughter and the loss of his position. He dies a tragic death in this immoral game of power and politics. Treatment to a woman is satirized in the play. The following lines from *Ghashiram Kotwal* show Brahmins behaving contrary to their expected conduct:

SUTRADHAR: The Brahmans have lost themselves in Bavannakhani and the
 Brahman women are at home, they stay at home; oh yes they stay at
 home. The Brahmans have lost themselves in the cemetery, in kirtan;
 the Brahman women are sentenced to solitary confinement. (Tendulkar
 368)

In the play, *Ghashiram Kotwal* the author has shown a Brahmin who becomes an avenger and a blackmailer due to his lust for power and craving for revenge. His intense emotions; a paroxysm of rage is conspicuous when he says:

GHASHIRAM: (takes off his sash throws it on the ground) But I'll come back. I'll come back to Poona. I'll show my strength. It will cost you! Your good days are gone! I am a Kanauj Brahman, but I've become a Shudra, a criminal, a useless animal. There is no one to stop me now, to mock me, to make me bend, to cheat me. Now I am a devil. You have made me an animal; I'll be a devil inside. I'll come back like a boar and I'll stay as a devil. I'll make pigs of all of you. I'll make this Poona a Kingdom of pigs. Then I'll be Ghashiram again the son of Savaldas once more. (Tendulkar 376)

The aspect of conflict between being and becoming is manifested in his desire to become Shudra and criminal as mentioned in his speech. The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* belongs to the eighteenth century which was the time of Peshwa regime in Maharashtra. This play is a brutal attack on the corruption of the ruling class-the Brahmins of Pune, who consider them to be curators of the moral values. The protagonist Ghashiram was affronted by Brahmins of Pune. He has to bear a great shock and he is still in trauma which overpowers his emotional being. He wants to take revenge. It is obvious that he cannot do this by using fair means. He is not in a position to cope up with the conflict of the present situations he becomes an imp and a beast for his selfish motives. His only purpose is to grab power by all means. His conduct is opposite to the conduct of a Brahmin and it clearly presents a conflict between being and becoming.

Ghashiram Kotwal purchases power with the help of sex. He offers the body of his daughter in the altar to get the boon of power. In a way, it is his tragic flaw which becomes responsible for his doom. “No one should pity Ghashiram Kotwal because his unmarried daughter died when she was pregnant” (Tendulkar 407).

With this hired power he behaved like an animal with the people of Pune. “The way a wounded tiger becomes addicted to blood, so the Kotwal has come to love the smell” (407). In the end, he has to surrender. Ghashiram Kotwal, like a tragic hero, suffers due to his conflict with the circumstances which makes him behave like a power hungry beast who meets his destruction.

The exploitation of Gauri reveals the fact that women are used as a commodity. She is offered as a gift to Nana by her father. Nana showers favour to Ghashiram by making him Kotwal of the city. Women have been becoming the victim since time immemorial and Gauri is not an exception in this case. Nana also uses her for the fulfilment of his lust and later puts her to death when she is in a family way. Being a woman, she becomes the victim of the power game played by her father at the cost of her life. She and Benare have similarities in this context. However, Benare tries to exercise her own free will and ready to face the consequences. Gauri blindly accepts what Ghashiram asks her to do. She is very passive as compared to Benare. In the end, both of them are victims of the biased the society.

Role of other Brahmins in the play cannot be ignored here. They are expected to give education to the society, but their conduct is opposite. They go to Bavannakhani to watch the dance of concubine Gulabi. Being Brahmins, it does not suit their image. They are corrupt and womanizers but being Brahmins they should be devotees of God. This fact reveals the conflict between being and becoming.

In the novel *Animal Farm*, it is shown how power brings corruption. The same can be seen in *Ghashiram Kotwal* where being powerful means getting a license of becoming corrupt. On one side there are Brahmins, who enjoy all sorts of privileges and luxuries, and on the other side, there are commoners who are oppressed. They are not given their rights. They have to take permit for everything, and sometimes the authorities do not accept the permit issued by them.

The play *Gidhade (Vultures)* had been written 14 years before its publication. This play was translated by Priya Adarkar. It was produced in 1970 and published in 1971 after *Muqabla*. This play, because of its theme and treatment by the author, is quite different from the other plays. It shows the versatility of Vijay Tendulkar who delineated the reality without distorting. This play is enough to create a sensation among the people of society who do not want to discuss the evils prevailing in the society. Girish Karnad wrote that "the Staging of *Gidhade* could be compared to the blasting of a bomb in an otherwise complacent Marketplace." (575)

It was not easy for the Orthodox people to accept the play because of its bold theme. Tendulkar was impugned for displaying sex and violence. The censor board was not ready to pass the play in its original form. The play is not less than an x-ray of the human nature showing all the instincts of vehemence and covetousness. Self-interest is supreme for the characters in the play. There is no place of moral values which are replaced by sensual pleasures and impishness.

The Vultures reveals the happenings in the life of Pitale family. Hari Pitale deceives his brother who is his business partner. This vicious circle of evil keeps on spreading, and everyone in Hari's family is ready to do anything for his or her gain. There is a sheer display of violence among the members of the family. Brother is

violent towards his own sister. The enmity between brothers crosses the limits, and they indulge in violence. Moreover, there are instances of violence between father and son. This violence reaches such a level that Hari Pitale begins to think that his family is equivalent to vultures. There is a horrible restlessness in every character. They are living in a citified forest where any barbaric incident can come about. It is horrendous to see a brother kicking the womb of his pregnant sister. Rama is not allowed to meet Rajaninath. However, he is the only person with whom she can share her heart. The following words from *The Vultures* show that she is not responsible for the abortion:

...It is not even my fault! This womb's healthy and sound, I swear it! I was born to become a mother. This soil's rich, it is hungry. But the seed won't take root. If the seed's soaked in poison, if it is weak, feeble, lifeless, devoid of virtue- then why blame the soil? And if still, the soil should cherish , that seed should with god as its witness make efforts- beyond life itself – to guard that seed, to nourish it? (Tendulkar 241)

The play ends with Rajaninath's comments:

The tale of the five vultures

Had this end.

The story of men accursed.

Or else of vultures cursed

To live their lives as men.

Oh, show them some compassion!

Show a path to them.

Hold out to them

A merciful hand

That will bring release.

Point out to them

The burning-ground and its ghat

Where the sinful soul

Burns off its being,

Takes its first free breath. (265)

A brother kicking the womb of his pregnant sister and violence by the family members against one another is an example that they decide to be vultures rather than human beings. Tendulkar is at his best to describe the mentality of some citified materialistic characters that people come across in their daily life.

The title of the play is *The Vultures* which itself suggests a conflict between being and becoming. This play lays bare the situations where humans are becoming vultures. They do not dawdle to hurt the members of the family mentally as well as physically. Ramakant and Umakant attempt to kill their father for want of money. On the other side, father has cheated his business partner for money. Ingratitude is in the blood of his children. These are unquestionably not the deeds of ethical humans living in a civil society. Doing atrocities on a pregnant woman is not human. Brothers in the play have no feeling towards their sister. They are so much engrossed in material pursuits that they consider their sister as a means of making money. They plan to blackmail her boyfriend. However, their schemes dashed into the ground when he breathed his last due to a heart attack. They try to execute their evil designs by physically harming their pregnant, unmarried sister. It is an act of a devil or a vulture in the guise of human bodies. The aspect of the conflict between being and becoming is conspicuous through the character of both the brothers.

The girl Manik who is the sister of Ramakant and Umakant also follows the footsteps of her brothers. She plots to attempt patricide. She acts like a vulture that wants to fulfil its needs by giving death to others. Robert Browning's poem *Porphyria's Lover* shows a paranormal lover who wants to kill his girlfriend just because he wants to take possession of his girlfriend. He at least loves her however; he slays her because he is not in control of his senses due to abnormal mind. He at least loves her but, he slays her because he is not in control of his senses due to abnormal mind. In the play *The Vultures*, the characters are not paranormal. They expected to behave like human beings, but they act like vultures. Their sin is more severe than that of Porphyria's lover who is ignorant of what he is doing.

Vijay Tendulkar has successfully portrayed a picture of an urban society where human beings are becoming vultures. The beast is visible in them in the form of their behaviour towards the members of their family. Human beings feel safe in their homes but in this play. Vijay Tendulkar takes the reader to a place, which in its outer appearance looks like any other well decorated and comfortable home but the reality is poles apart. It is a place, where bloodthirsty humans live to kill one another. It is not a house. It has become a battleground, where people injure and harm one other. In the words of a critic:

In *Gidhade* it is the pack of human vultures pitched against a defenceless female character, the wife of Ramakant. In *Shantata* it is Miss Benare against a pack of middle-class vultures. In *Gidhade*, Rajaninath the bastard brother suffers for the defenceless female in the play. In *Shantata* it was the character of Samant who did it for the psychological mauled Miss Benare.
(Bandyopadhyay xlix)

As mentioned in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve had been given the Paradise. Eave had eaten the fruit of that Forbidden tree. They had to lose the paradise because of the transgression of divine will committed by them. The paradise that is, the earth is becoming a hell where human beings are turning into vultures. People believe in the philosophy of one man's loss is another man's gain. This materialistic approach sometimes takes them to the path of crime and evil. Human beings are becoming worse than beasts that are living in the jungle. Human lust and desires are insatiable, and they commit the crime to fulfil their selfish needs.

Themes of his plays are intense, although they contain some elements of humour yet they do not lack seriousness. *Sakharam Binder* is his one of the masterpieces from his mighty pen. This play was first performed on 10 March 1972. *Sakharam Binder* throws light on the duplicitous face of male dominated society. Sakharam who is a Brahmin does not believe in the concept of marriage. He gives shelter to the women who are deserted by their husbands. He allows them to stay with him. At the beginning of the play, it is made clear that Laxmi is the seventh woman. There is no information about what has happened to the other six women. This play presents a picture of a society where a woman can't survive without the support of a man, and such support like Sakharam who is a womanizer becomes her compulsion. Laxmi tries to be his wife though it is a sort of live-in relationship. She is truthful in her approach. She accepts him as her life partner, but Sakharam has a different concept of morality; he considers women are made for use and throw purpose. He gives shelter to Champa which Laxmi considers as a threat to her existence. She raises doubts in the mind of Sakharam about Champa's relationship with Dawood. Sakharam kills Champa on the basis of his self-created parameters of morality. There

is no Sylph (a supernatural character in the poem 'Rape of the Lock') to warn Champa, Laxmi and the other women in the following words:

This to disclose, is all thy guardian can

Beware of all but most beware of man. (Pope 35)

Both Laxmi and Champa are the characters of the mundane world. Laxmi who appears to be god-fearing and tender-hearted turns out to be wily and vicious when her survival is threatened by the presence of Champa. She shows ruthlessness and presence of mind in hiding Champa's murder. Arundhati Banerjee observes:

Though Laxmi finds nothing wrong about her own association with Shinde, her moral sense is outraged by Champa's affair with Dawood and she uses this opportunity to malign her rival. This brings out the latent hatred in Laxmi for Champa. (579)

Laxmi though a homeless lady takes shelter in Sakharam's house. She is an innocent lady who accepts Sakharam as her life partner. However, at the later stage, she decides to hatch a conspiracy. She instigates Sakharam to kill Champa because Champa has illicit relations with Dawood. In this way, she becomes a conspirator, and Sakharam Binder, a murderer.

Sakharam is a Brahmin, but his behaviour is contradictory as a Brahmin. He is a philanderer who considers women as a commodity, which he has the right to use to fulfil his erotic desires. Being a human he should be sympathetic towards helpless woman, but he exploits them. Being a Brahmin he should educate others to follow the way of morality, but his conduct is very different. The following conversation of *Sakharam Binder* shows the same:

LAXMI. Where do you keep cotton? I'd like some to light the oil-lamp in front of the gods.

SAKHARAM. I've no idea where the one before you kept it. I never give any thought to such things. Ask me where the *chilum* is, or the mridanga. I can tell you that. That's my sphere. If there is no cotton in the house, I'll get some tomorrow. What else? (Tendulkar 134)

Being a Brahmin he is not expected to have such attitude. His heartlessness shows that he has become a slave of his desires and he has forgotten his duties. He shows no concern for the pain of Laxmi on the contrary, he feels happy to see her in pain. The following lines from the play, when coal falls on Laxmi's foot, can be cited as an example:

SAKHARAM. Good! Hope these coals roast your feet—roast them, nice and Brown. I don't feel a bit sorry (140).

Sakharam and Dawood are concerned with the physical beauty of Champa. They have no sympathy that her husband has left her. When she arrives at Sakharam's both admire her for her bodily charms. Being humans they should think of helping her but they prefer to exploit the needy women. It shows a conflict between being and becoming as clearly mentioned in the conversation:

DAWOOD. I've never seen anything like this before. That's why

SAKHARAM. What do you mean anything like this? Like what?

DAWOOD. Now don't be embarrassed. But Sakharam...

[Winks and makes an appreciative gesture with his thumb and forefinger. He whispers in his ears.]

You are a lucky chap, aren't you? She belonged to another and she just walked into your arm. I'm off. I'll come later (156).

This conversation shows a conflict between an ideal behaviour of a human towards another human. Sakharam and Dawood have become worse than beasts; they do not understand the emotions of a helpless lady like Champa. They only want to fulfil their erotic desires; it shows that they are the slaves of their longings.

Champa is helpless, but when she gets shelter she does not show any morality. Sakharam forbade her to drink early in the morning on Dassera. She does not show respect for culture and customs and that is glaring example of a conflict between being and becoming. Being a homemaker she is not expected to conduct herself like this. As mentioned in the following lines from the play:

SAKHARAM. Drunk so early in the morning? What's wrong with you? This is not right. Champa, you should not drink on a holy day like Dassera. What did I tell you before I left for the press? You haven't even had a bath. And you have been drinking. On a holy day, the woman of the house should look all clean and tidy. What will people say? Go on inside. Go[*somehow manages to push Champa into the kitchen.*] Good-for-nothing! Doesn't care for other feasts or fasts. Damn her. Not right for a woman to behave like this. If it had been someone else, I'd have broken her jaw. (174)

Champa has sexual relations with Dawood, which Laxmi despises because of moral grounds. However, Laxmi does not mind having a relationship with Shinde. If the play is analysed in the light of being and becoming, it is observed that Laxmi becomes a conspirator of a murder. Her behaviour is noteworthy in the light of this statement.

LAXMI. That's better? Now you can't see that unfaithful face. Her soul must be burning in hell. God doesn't take long to decide.[*looking at the body, with contempt*] Sinner!

[*Holds him.*]

Get up now. Come in. Before dawn breaks, everything must be in its place again. Then no one will no. I'll tell everybody that she's gone away.

(197)

Laxmi shows her true colour and her remarks are ironic. She calls Champa unfaithful but she is also not loyal and her act of conspiracy is a heinous crime that is getting Champa murdered by Sakharam. Being a human and a Brahmin Sakharam is expected to be a moral and pious human being, but he chooses to become a murderer, which signifies a conflict between being and becoming.

Being is constant but becoming is always changing, this change is inherent in individuals and society. Morality in people has never been the same; it is always becoming and getting deteriorated with the lapse of time. This is visible in the characters of the play *The Vultures*. The characters are from the mundane world, but they are becoming mean, materialistic, and selfish. As mentioned earlier, Sartre opines that man is nothing, but what he makes himself. Being human is different from being a rock or a tree, as humans decide their course of action. The characters in this play have transformed themselves into vultures. Their senses are dead towards morality and benevolence. Only exceptions are Rajaninath and Rama who have the milk of kindness left in them. They have not become the slaves of material and money like other characters who are leading a life of human vultures. They give due importance to human feelings and believe in the language of love. Protagonists

Rajanimath and Rama find themselves helpless in front of the antagonistic forces like Ramakant, Umakant, Manik and Pappa. They feel that vultures will not change, so they do not try to change these vultures. Sakharam is also a Brahmin but he behaves like a scavenger. It is his preference to be a different being. However this preference shows a conflict between being and becoming. His behaviour is ideally not like a Brahmin but like a murderer. Champa becomes the victim due to her need to stay with Sakharam. She does not want to be in the outside world where people may use her for bodily pleasures. She prefers only one beast Sakharam to use her for fulfilment of his lust. Her inclination towards Dawood and possessive attitude of Sakharam make her victim and she has to lose her life. Characters like Punkshe, Rokde, Sukhatme, in the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* choose to become opposite to what is expected from them. Sukhatme's conduct is opposite to that of a lawyer. Punkshe, Rokde, Karnik assassinate the character of Benare. They do not have any compulsion like Leela Benare to behave in a particular manner. Rama has to suffer in claustrophobic conditions in the play *The Vultures*. She is the victim of an unsuccessful marriage. Her life is full of suffering after her marriage. She is also a victim like Leela Benare. Rama is always in fear because the members of her family are indulged in violence against one another. They are no more humans now, and in a way, they have become vultures. They are not forced to become vultures rather they preferred to become vultures for the sake of money and other material pleasures. It shows a conflict between being and becoming. Vijaya in the play *Encounter in Umbugland* chooses to change her behaviour she does not become a victim like Leela Benare and Rama. The cabinet ministers try to make her a puppet queen who follows their command. She does not accept to become a toy in the hands of cabinet ministers. She takes the guidance of Prannarayan and becomes a shrewd diplomat. Therefore, the guidance of Prannarayan is a crucial factor that plays a role here to affect her becoming. Due to

her cordial relation with Prannarayan, she accepts his guidance and becomes an efficient leader. Being a little girl, she is expected to be involved in fun and frolic but she becomes a diplomat. It is also contrary to the expectations and it shows a change from being to becoming, but this change is more positive as compared to the other changes. Ghashiram Kotwal is a Brahmin but he becomes a cruel avenger. His transformation from being a Brahmin to becoming a heartless avenger shows a conflict. Hostile attitude and partial behaviour of society convert him into a different being. He is unable to suppress the fire of revenge. In this way, he loses his daughter and both of them die a tragic death. His daughter is innocent but she becomes a victim of her father's wishes. Being a woman, she is expected to do sacrifice for her father. Her gender and her submissive character becomes the cause of her tragedy. Had she been a boy her father would not have offered her to Nana. Basic need plays an important role in transformation of characters in case of Laxmi and Champa. Lakshmi becomes a conspirator and murderer because she wants to get rid of Champa to stay in the house of Sakharam. She instigates Sakharam to murder Champa.

A contradictory notion is helpful in reaching a conclusion or a higher truth. In the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, the characters are involved in such activities, which are unexpected on ideal and moral grounds. This aspect gives a clear idea about the conflict inherent in the behaviour of the characters. Humans acquire character according to the responses they show in the given circumstances. In Vijay Tendulkar's selected plays, the response shown by the majority of the characters displays a conflict between being and becoming. The characters are becoming opposite to what they should be. The being does not change; it makes the change take place, which is precisely visible in the conflict between being and becoming in the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

Chapter – IV

Patriarchal Norms and Role of Women: Vijay Tendulkar's Art of Characterization

A patriarchal society gives more importance and power to men. Role of women becomes very challenging in a patriarchal setup. In the words of an eminent critic Catherine Thankamma, "Patriarchy is the system that traces familial descent and economic inheritance down the male line" (80). Patriarchy does not let the women use their right of freedom as freely as it should be. A patriarchal society encumbers or prevents women from comprehending their productive and creative possibilities. In a way, it is a situation that is a stumbling block for women emancipation. Vijay Tendulkar has presented the women characters of the selected plays in a patriarchal set up of society.

As a human body is dead without a soul, similarly a play cannot be a play without the characters. Great dramatists are deft at creating lifelike characters. The characters of Vijay Tendulkar's plays are from the mundane world. Readers can identify themselves while reading. The views of an eminent critic Shailja Wadekar are noteworthy in the context of Vijay Tendulkar's characterization:

The social situation depicted and the characters portrayed are beyond space and time. Such plays as *Encounter in Umbugland*, *Ghashiram Kotwal* deal with the theme of power and corruption. The former describes the victory of the individual against her rival group and the latter describes the defeat and dead end of the individual in conflict with society (5).

In the play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* the character of Leela Benare is one of the finest creations by Vijay Tendulkar. Her character is the centre of interest in the whole play. The reader is interested to know the responses of Benare in the claustrophobic court. Her character is very complex and requires an analysis. The author has shown her falling in love with her maternal uncle, which a taboo not only in Indian society but in Western society as well. She does not block the way of emotions with the societal chain of hypocritical morality. Her morality is love, which she wants to offer and expects the same from others. However, sometimes she transgresses the customs of society, which becomes the cause of her troubles.

Mr Damle is physically not present in the play, but it is not considered meaningful to call him and put him into a trial. The guns are pointing towards Benare, who has to answer the question of society in the court. Her life is full of difficulties, which she has to face as a woman in a male-dominated society. She is accused of falling in love with her maternal uncle, but society is less bothered about uncle and Benare is tagged as the culprit. She has to answer for everything as she has broken the bonds of so-called morality of civil society, which is seen behaving wildly with women like Benare in the mock Kangaroo court. It is immoral and taboo to be involved in illicit relations with maternal uncle, but only Benare is held responsible and nobody cross-questions the uncle. The atmosphere in the court is the personification of the hostile universe which conspires against the man. The court proceedings in the play are a testimony to that. It looks as if the court wants to vanish the very being of Benare on account of her giving due importance to her cravings. Since she is a woman, she is expected to follow the patriarchal values of a prejudiced society. Being a woman, she is not allowed to exercise her own free will as she is in conflict with the patriarchy. However, in the Indian system, a woman has been kept

on a higher pedestal by considering her a Goddess. In reality, she does not get the status of a Goddess; on the contrary, she is raped, molested, treated brutally by the patriarchal society.

To create a character like Leela Benare the author has to be deft at understanding the psychology of a female mind. Vijay Tendulkar has done it successfully by portraying the character of Leela Benare in the play. How a female is treated in the society if she tries to listen to the voice of her heart is exquisitely imbibed in the character of Leela Benare. She is the protagonist of the play who is trapped in the web of patriarchal values weaved by the male-dominated society. Due to those values, a female has to face more ordeals than her male counterpart. A male goes scot-free in spite of all wrongdoings only because of his gender. No sacrifice is expected from him as he is born to enjoy. It is considered to be the duty of the female to kill her desires for the sake of patriarchal values. Vijay Tendulkar has shown a mirror to the society through the character of Leela Benare. He has shown how a woman is made a scapegoat while it is the fault of both male and female. The following conversation clearly shows this aspect of the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

ROKDE. Don't keep interrupting me! I went to- to Damle's house!

[Benare tense]

PONKSHE. Our professional Damle?

KARNIK. You must have been to this room in the college hostel, you mean?

ROKDE. Yes. I went there in the evening. As night was falling.

And there- she was! Miss Benare

ROKDE.[looking at Benare]. Now laugh! Make fun of me! This lady was there. Damle and this- Miss Benare! (Tendulkar 86)

In every society, there are people like Sukhatme who follow double standards. In the above lines, Sukhatme wants to show the presence of Leela Benare in Damle's. For Sukhatme and other people who are present there, it is Benare's fault and Damle has nothing to do with it. Sukhatme, whose duty is to unveil the truth with the logic, is completely opposite in his conduct. He uses his skill of argument for attacking the truth and presenting the protagonist in a bad light. His chief purpose is to insult Benare and enjoy sadistic pleasure.

Tendulkar has exploited the method of contrast to press home his theme. The characters of Sukhatme and Samant can be considered in this context. Samant has no ill will towards the protagonist. He does not want to be the party in assassinating the character of Miss Benare. Sukhatme is shown as shrewd and vicious but, Samant is innocent and credulous. Benare makes fun of him while conversing with Samant:

SAMANT. But what's today's trial about?

BENARE. A case against president Johnson for producing atomic weapons

SAMANT. Good heavens! (60)

This is the funny side of Leela Benare. She is very jolly in nature. The mentioned lines are humorous for the use of mock epic to create laughter. Vijay Tendulkar should be given credit for such wonderful intellectual humour, which provides comic relief in the play. Such dialogues provide great insight into the characters of the play.

His style varies from character to character as per the need of the characterization and subject of the play. Tendulkar says in this context” Characterization in a play is to a

large extent through the dialogue. Therefore the protagonist must have a mouldable and not a rigid style of writing. He must change his style with every character” (XXXVI).

He presents a kaleidoscope of characters where every character has a typical dazzle which adds to the aesthetic value of the play. The character of Mrs Kashikar cannot be ignored in this discussion. Mrs Kashikar gives every right to her husband to snub her that is why her husband is always found insulting her at a certain point of times. She bears those insults patiently, and feels that she has a caring husband because he has brought a string of pearls for her. It is a token of love and romance for her. This is a sign of patriarchal dominance by overpowering a female mind to make her accept herself as an inferior being.

Benare is not a hypocrite in her approach. She never hides her feelings. She wants to enjoy all shades of life. People like Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Rokde Kashikar are those patriarchal agents of society who do not let her live in her own way. In the play, *The Birthday Party*, Goldberg and McCann ask a series of question to Stanley Weber, and as a result, he loses control over his senses as mentioned in the given lines.

GOLDBERG: Webber! Why did you change your name?

STANLEY: I forgot the other one.

GOLDBERG: What's your name now?

STANLEY: Joe Soap.

GOLDBERG: You stink of sin. (44)

These lines from the famous play *The Birthday Party* are an example of disjointed dialogues in the form of questions which create an awful situation for Stanley. Same

is done with Benare in the court. Questions are asked to disturb her very being to shatter her zeal towards life. She succumbs to the pressure in the last soliloquy which signifies the torments her soul is bearing to pay the cost of her being a woman. Like a caged bird, she wants freedom to choose her way of life as depicted in her speech in *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

BENARE. My Private life is my own business. I'll decide what to do with myself; everyone should be able to! That can't be anyone else business: Understand? Everyone has a bent, a manner, an aim in life. What's anyone else to do with these? (Tendulkar 117)

Benare is living in a biased society which uses different lenses to observe the actions of male and female. There are many examples from the mundane world where parents treat boy and girl differently in the same family. In *Fasting Feasting*, Anita Desai has shown the plight of a girl Uma. In her family, her brother is considered as a superior being. The personality of the mother is but a Pygmy before the father. She sneaks out to play the game of cards in her neighbourhood, but when the father comes, she poses that she has gone nowhere. On the other hand, the father wants everybody to see his game of tennis and to observe his skills everybody in the house has to act as an audience. Benare is also one among the many who suffer gender discrimination in the family as well as outside the family.

In a way, the character of Benare is akin to protagonists of Kafka's novel who are trapped in the web of troubles without any fault of their own. Kafka's famous work *The Trial* is an example in which Joseph K is humiliated and killed at the end without any fault. Benare is held responsible for breaking the norms of morality, which are different for male and female. She is humiliated in the court without rhyme or reason.

Benare is the victim of violence done by the so-called Agents of society whose representatives are Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Kashikar, and Rokde. However, it is not physical violence. It is the violence in the form of a psychological attack on the emotions of a woman, shattering the composure of a woman due to a biased attitude towards female. When she feels broken she asks a question if a woman cannot lead a life in her own way. Society treats women like naughty children treat butterflies. They keep them in bottles or boxes; torture them and enjoy themselves hurting the innocent butterflies.

William Shakespeare has given a similar idea in *King Lear* where he describes how the angels enjoy the sufferings of the weak and innocent in a helpless condition. "As flies to wanton boys are we to Gods, They kill us for their sport." (4.1.2289-2290)

Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* is based on the story of a girl named Saru. She wants her family to treat her as equal to her brother. After marriage, her husband considers her as an inferior being. Many women like her are victims of gender discrimination in one way or the other. Benare is also such a victim who suffers due to the biased of society towards a lonely female. Women like Benare feel they are trapped animals mocked at by the male-dominated society. Women like Saru and Benare remain lonely throughout their life and struggle for true love.

People like Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Kashikar, Rokde have trapped Benare like children catch an innocent butterfly. They enjoy a sadistic pleasure by playing with her emotions. Vijay Tendulkar has shown character like Samant in the same play, who is not interested in publicly dissecting the private life of the protagonist. Such people are very less, and they are dominated by those who enjoy character assassination. It is ironical that in countries like India a woman is considered as

Goddess, but society does not let her lead her life as a normal human being. In this play, the author has shown a condition which is not less than a mental rape. Benare's emotions are mocked at by the court, a place where the law should prevail only lawlessness, mockery, moral bankruptcy are prevailing. Sukhatme, the antagonist, with his shrewdness and sadistic attitude treat her like a punching bag to get rid of frustrations which he has in his life. Vijay Tendulkar has artistically shown this phenomenon through the mock trial. It is in the trial that the real face of the people is exposed. It is done in the name of fun and frolic, but it aims at hurting the sentiments of a single lady who is in need of a life partner. This play is a bitter satire on the hypocritical society.

In this tussle between an innocent woman and patriarchy, the woman seems to lose the battle in *Silence! The Court is in Session* when she has to bear the prejudiced behaviour of the hostile court which is given in the following speech:

SUKHATME. [*Now the Council for the prosecution*]. Milord, the nature of the charge against the accused, Miss Leela Benare, is truly dreadful. The woman who is an accused has made a heinous lot on the sacred brow of motherhood which is purer than heaven itself. For that, any punishment, however great, that the law may give her, will be too mild by far. (Tendulkar 114)

Sukhatme shows his skill here to convert right into wrong using false arguments. This throws a light on the character of Sukhatme as well as on such lawyers who are still found in contemporary society. Such people earn him a poor reputation for courts. He blames Benare in the name of motherhood and requests the court for severe punishment for her. He is a diplomatic lawyer who wants to pester

Benare in court for his sadistic pleasure. He tweaks the facts and blends emotions with them to convert wrong into right. He symbolises those patriarchal values that are hurdle in providing cordial environment for the women.

The play, *Encounter in Umbugland* unveils the desire of politicians to remain in power. The king Vichitravirya lives in fool's paradise that everybody likes him and his good-for-nothing speeches. The king belongs to the class of people who boast of their qualities which they do not possess. He is a highly self-fascinated person who thinks that youthfulness is everlasting. His desire for getting an equestrian portrait signifies his lust to stay in power till eternity. He kicks the bucket just after the consummation of the portrait, which adds to the ironical effect of the play. Power politics reveals the true self of the characters in the play. The five cabinet ministers Pishtakeshi, Aranyaketu, Vrasyom, Bhagdanta, Karkashirsha, are desperate to be in power. All of them are shrewd, and they try to excel one another in skill and diplomacy. One of them tries to show his popularity by arranging paid supporters raising slogans in support of him. Tendulkar shows the hypocrisy inherent in their character as they show that they are not power hungry, but in reality, they crave for power. The following conversation from *Encounter in Umbugland* shows their hypocritical character:

ARANYAKETU. [*not knowing quite what to make of this*]. I have no lust for power, actually, I am a social worker.

VRATYASOM. Do we take this to signify, Bhagdanta that Aranyaketu wishes to keep out of today's conference?

ARANYAKETU [*hastily*]. That wasn't what I meant.

PISHTAKESHI. I had grasped that. (Tendulkar 286)

The conversation shows the deceitful side of Aranyaketu. He pretends that he has no wish for power, as he is a social worker. Vratyasom exposes him, advising him to stay away from the conference, which is going to define the political scenario of Umbugland. Aranyaketu cannot do that and, his real self is unmasked.

The opportunistic alliances are common among the politicians to pretend that the coalitions benefit the people, but the reality is poles apart. They make Vijaya the queen of Umbugland, so that they may use her as a puppet ruler executing the policies framed by them.

The situation symbolises the times when Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India after Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was assumed that she would be a perfect Prime Minister, but she proved herself as a shrewd politician who could take independent decisions. Diplomacy, shrewdness, farsightedness are the traits that make Vijaya stand among characters like Portia in Merchant of Venice. Like Portia, Vijaya turns the tables to teach a lesson to the devious politicians.

Humour is helpful in creating interest of the people from the beginning to the end of the play. Vijay Tendulkar is well aware of the fact, so he has used the element of humour in *Encounter in Umbugland* to press from his idea. This mild and intelligent humour by Vijay Tendulkar provides a fair idea about the character of the King:

VICHITRAVIRYA. Excellent, Pishtakeshi! Excellent! You may not as yet be able to understand our governmental policies. But you can recognise our subject of discourse without fail. Yet we cannot say that the subject grew really lively. You speak without listening, and the fall into error. The subject that was liveliest was the importance of religion in our

lives. Excellent! Excellent! Quite superb! What a pleasure it was! We just did not realise how the time passed! (275)

The king is a self-opinionated person. His artificial behaviour presents vivacious and ironical humour; Vijay Tendulkar has shown that sometimes, undeserving people take charge of higher positions in governments. King, as well as his cabinet, contains incompetent people who are making a mockery of the politics and government policies. These types of people are not good for democracy. The king is not concerned with the problems of the people, and he is giving discourses on the topics, which are in no way helpful for the people. He is very diplomatic. He enjoys the power but portrays that he is doing service for the nation as a king. His hypocritical conduct can be clearly understood in one of his speeches in the play:

VICHITRAVIRYA. We have experienced it for past sixty years. Power is a crown of thorns. Power is a sword hanging over you! Power is bread you eat at the stake! Power means responsibility! Power means problems and painful decisions. There is no headache like power. We are always saying that we would not wish even our enemies to be punished with power. [*Aranyaketu yawns into his handkerchief*]. (279)

The king is explaining to the cabinet ministers that power is nothing less than a big problem. He uses various metaphors to explain his view. He compares power to bread, which one can eat at risk. He says that power is only a responsibility that a ruler needs to bear on shoulders. Power is a headache, which disturbs the peace of mind. He goes to the extent of using paradox by saying that even he does not want to punish his enemies with power. His cabinet ministers know that the king is not

speaking from his heart. They do not take it seriously, one of the cabinet ministers starts yawning, and he hides this by using his handkerchief.

Vijay Tendulkar has portrayed the characters in such a way that it does not look artificial. He presents every event like a causal necessity, which leads to understanding of the important traits of the character. He has used another method where the characters of the play are commenting on one another

VIJAYA. [taking aim at a demonic face on the wall]. Bhagdanta, who's this
one for

BHAGDANTA.[smiling] Vratyasom

VIJAYA. [throws, then] Missed!

BHAGDANTA.[Smiling], you'll hit him!

VIJAYA. Who are we Bhagdanta

BHAGDANTA. [smiling] Benefactress of Kadambas

VIJAYA. And?

BHAGDANTA. The Ever Victorious

VIJAYA.[taking him again]. Now, who's this one for?

BHAGDANTA. Karkashirsha

VIJAYA.[throwing] He's down!

BHAGDANTA. Of course he is!

VIJAYA. Bhagdanta, What is Vratyasom?

BHAGDANTA.[smiling] a breaker of homes

VIJAYA. Karkashirsha?

BHAGDANTA. A quarrel-pusher!

VIJAYA. Pishtakeshi

BHAGDANTA. Mighty fishy!

VIJAYA. Aranyaketu

BHAGDANTA.[smiling] one who'll placate you! (339)

Bereft of humour, the play would become a lecture on politics. In spite of the inclusion of comic elements, it conveys a serious message. It exposes those crafty politicians who are so unscrupulous that they can go to any extent to grab power. The five cabinet ministers unite to give practical shape to their evil designs of giving strong opposition to queen Vijaya.

Role of Prannarayan in making Vijaya behave like a seasoned politician is commendable. He converts her from a girl who loves to play like kids to the level of a mature politician who makes Kadamba plan for the uplift of the tribe. His wit and spontaneity are not less than any Shakespearean fool when he gives these remarks:

VIJAYA. Do you take me for a fool? Have I no sense?

PRANNARAYAN. Sense is a scarce commodity, which grows every moment,
yet eternally falls short. (317)

When they discuss the Kadamba plan, he warns her about the unknown facts in an articulate expression:

VIJAYA. My confidence, my mind gives me that assurance.

PRANNARAYAN. The mind is like a lizard, it sometimes chirps the wrong
note. (317)

The way he has compared mind with a lizard is a very witty remark. The plays of Shakespeare are full of such witty observations, where fools and clowns used to show such wit. The use of the simile presents the intellectual mind of Prannarayan and gives an insight into his character.

Prannarayan transforms the character of Vijaya, and in this juncture, he changes the politics of Ubugland. If Kadambas are uplifted by the queen, the credit also goes to Prannarayan who guides Vijaya. Tendulkar, in a way, shows the role of a teacher in reforming society by teaching good values to the students. The character of Prannarayan, a eunuch, wins admirations for his role as a teacher.

Vijaya is not like those statesmen who appreciate the king to curry the favour. She refuses to be part of the ceremony as she does not want to be one of those pigeons. She has the guts to find fault with the attire of the king, unlike those cabinet ministers who pretend to like every idiocy of the king. This trait of Vijaya symbolizes her character, which is so determined. By the dint of her strong character and training of Prannarayan, she defeats the experienced cabinet ministers without shedding any blood. The characters in the play *Encounter in Ubugland*, are a chief source of interest. It is interesting to observe them responding to the situations. The characters are fictitious, but they are so realistic that it is easy for the reader to connect with them. There are social workers like Aranyaketu, whose design is to seize power in the guise of social work. Bhagdanta always smiles like a villain, Vrasyom has no shame, but he always hides the same. Pishtakeshi and Karkshirsha are hypocrites who show that their politics is highly sacred but, internally, they are also interested in attaining power, through hook or by crook. Vijaya is the daughter of a self-fascinated king, who does not pay much attention to her, and she craves for emancipation.

The characters in the play *Encounter in Umbugland* are in a race of power. Such a race is observed in the past as well as in contemporary times. Even then, there are certain traits, which show the difference in their approach towards the circumstances. A leader does not necessarily follow the same path, which has been followed by his or her predecessors. A great leader always does something revolutionary to change the dynamics of the situation and the existing political scenario. Queen Vijaya surely comes in this category. She is a competent leader who shows the willpower to change and challenge the status quo. The statesmen belong to the category of those leaders who do not want to change the existing system. They cannot take a bold decision in favour of the people. They do not understand the sentiments of the people of Kadamba and keep on opposing the Kadamba plan.

A competent politician always analyses the designs of the opposition beforehand. Vijaya belongs to the category of these politicians. She plans better than the opposition, and ultimately they fall in the trap laid by her. The writer has exquisitely shown the transformation in her character. She knows that she is on the side of the poor people and she genuinely wants to do something for the downtrodden strata of her country, so she does not budge even an inch from her position. People also hold such leaders in high esteem and reject the hypocrite politicians. Queen Vijaya's sole reason for gaining the confidence of the people is her genuine interest in the welfare of the people.

Tendulkar has deftly used irony in the comic sense to show the game of power. The Statesmen who are her advisors, and who have made her the queen, find her tough to handle. They want her to sign the papers without having a look at them. They failed miserably to use her as a pawn, and at the end, they mend their ways and seek shelter in her authority.

Encounter in Umbugland is a satire on the patriarchal society, which thinks that a woman has no freedom to make decisions. Such a society expects a woman to follow the instructions given by her male counterpart. The issues between protagonist and antagonist in this play show a contradiction between gender biased and calibre. The so-called experienced cabinet ministers are not fit to rule the country. Their cunning and cowardice are exposed by Vijaya with the help of her articulate speech and a better understanding of the politics and people.

The people generally dislike the characters, like king Vichitravira, and the cabinet ministers. They do not like those politicians who do not think of the commoners. On the contrary, the people hold politicians like Vijaya in high esteem because her approach is very different as she assures the people that there will be an enquiry against the wrongdoings of the cabinet ministers..

The characters in the play have a conflict with one another because of their vested interests, which causes their struggle. Cabinet ministers dislike the king similarly the king does not rely on them. This phenomenon continues even after the death of the king. Sometimes conflict is not hidden; it takes the form of stubbornness. It happens, when Vijaya demands to cut the legs of the throne. It dumbfounds the cabinet ministers. She forces them to bow before her; it gives a deep insight into the character of the queen in conflict with cabinet ministers.

The problems and the contradictions faced by Vijaya play a vital role in shaping the character of the protagonist as a shrewd diplomat. The women characters in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar face hostile circumstances due to a patriarchal set up, and the response to the same lay bares the true self of the female characters. A novelist provides a minute detail about the thought process of the characters and

comments on the characters as well. In the case of drama, the author develops the characters through their dialogues and actions. Soliloquy is a device, which can be used for the purpose, but it does not allow the comment of the author. A dramatist cannot be a critic like a novelist. A dramatist when creates his characters is not less than a God for that piece of writing. The destiny of the characters is always in the hands of the playwright. Well-developed and round characters always create the interest of the reader. Vijay Tendulkar himself observes:

The choice of words signifies the culture of the person, his or her region, profession and in short the whole background. This speech pattern likewise helps to particularize the character and to make it an individual rather than type. (xxviii)

In the earlier Greek dramas, the use of chorus was prevalent, and the comments of the author were presented with the help of the chorus. Devices like chorus and soliloquy are not used much these days, as they do not sound natural. Soliloquy is used in other forms like the stream of consciousness in the novels to understand the thought process in the mind of a character. In the drama of the contemporary period, this is done when a character shares his or her feelings with the other characters and reader or the audience comes to know about the thought process of the character.

The character of Vijaya is more fortunate than the other female characters portrayed by Vijay Tendulkar. Vijaya succeeds in her venture, but she does not become the victim of the patriarchal values unlike other female characters which include Leela Benare, Gauri, Champa, etc. Their male counterparts use them to fulfil their dreams and desires. Vijaya is not self-fascinated like her father; she does not

follow the instructions given by the cabinet ministers. They fail miserably to make her a rubber stamp; on the other hand, she makes them follow the Kadamba plan, made for the welfare of the downtrodden strata of her state. In this conflict, the protagonist defeats the ministers and proves her worth. Being a female, she is not dependent on them for every decision. She is an inspiration for many women, because of her self-determination and allegiance towards the goal.

The play, *Sakharam Binder* does not have many characters, but the characterization lays bare the responses of humans in the face of adversity. Sakharam and Laxmi believe in the values and customs of Indian society. Laxmi worships God and asks Sakharam to do the same. Sakharam condemns Champa because she is drinking on the pious day of Dussehra. Sakharam is a symbol of the dominance of patriarchy in society. However, in the end, it is observed that he is dumb, and Laxmi takes the lead. Sakharam is out and out a debauchee who takes advantage of homeless women. Sakharam is a bookbinder who considers himself not less than a king in his home. Though he is a womanizer, yet he is not a hypocrite. He clarifies his expectations to the women in plain words:

SAKHARAM .Maybe I am a rascal, a womanizer, a pauper. Why may be? I am all that. And I drink. But I must be respected in my house. I am the master here. You agree to all this? Or have something to say? If you have, you can clear out right away. In this house, what I say goes. Understand? The others must obey, that's all. No questions to be asked. And one last thing... You'll have to be a wife to me. Anyone with a little sense will know what to make of that. (Tendulkar 126)

He is boasting of all the evil traits that he possesses. Vijay Tendulkar has not shown him as a hypocrite.

He is one of the complex characters ever portrayed by Vijay Tendulkar. At one point of time, he prays to God in the morning and takes bath daily for the sake of Laxmi. But, he does not think twice when he asks Laxmi to leave the house. Sexual pleasure and violence are important elements that describe his character. He is very right one time and another time he is flexible. He portrays to be the master in the house, but he succumbs to Champa because of his sexual urge, which he cannot resist. Sakharam does not believe in the bond of marriage, which enables him to make relation with many women. He accepts his faults, but he openly declares that he needs respect in his house. The women, who are in his refuge, have no option but to accept his demands. He exploits the helplessness and circumstances of homeless women for this purpose.

Vijay Tendulkar remarks in an interview with Shukla Chatterjee:

SC : Something about Sakharam's character? We find him at one time very honest, at other times the cruelty that we suppress within ourselves overshadows him. So have you thought about this dual feature before writing the play?

VT: Firstly as I said in the beginning, the human mind is complex and there are many contradictions in each mind. Recently I got an award for a very powerful play. There are several characters. Everything happens in 24 hours. But a police officer, you will see in one scene, virtually raping a black woman. After a number of scenes, the woman is involved in a car accident. She is caged there inside, and he in fact

brings her out - the same woman, the same police officer. Then they also show him at his residence as an old father caring for his family. So how will you describe this man? When he is involved in a rape, when he rescues the woman, when you see him at his house - put it all together - he is a single human being, not three different beings. So this is what Sakharam is. He is a mixture of a number of things and that, probably due to his upbringing about which he says a lot. (17)

Sakharam's character is the result of his sufferings during his childhood. His father used to beat him, which made him revolt against the norms of society. He starts enjoying making women as slaves. He becomes cruel and mean in his ways. The behaviour of his father converted him into a frustrated man. The seeds of frustration were sown in his childhood, and they paved the way for his merciless, egoistic, frustrated personality. Following lines from *Sakharam Binder* give an idea of his bent of mind:

SAKHARAM. There you are! Not born a Brahmin and yet you have Brahmin's ways! And me! Born in a Brahmin family, but I am a Mahar a dirty scavenger. I call that a bloody joke! I ran away from home when I was eleven. Got fed up with my father's beatings. Nothing I did ever seemed right. You'd think I was his enemy or something. The way he'd thrash me! (Tendulkar 27)

There is certainly a complexity in the character of Sakharam. He admits that he is a Brahmin by birth, but he is not less than a scavenger in his ways. He did not like his father due to the harsh treatment given to him by his father. He ran away from home at the tender age of eleven, which indicates that he is a very sensitive character.

He blamed the circumstances of his family for his character, where nobody either understood him or his state of mind. He did not receive love in his childhood, and in his adulthood; he has not loved anybody except his carnal desires. Fulfilment of the desires is the sole purpose, which makes him equivalent to a beast in the guise of a human being. His life and his personality are full of contradictions.

He belongs to a lower middle-class family. Through his character, Vijay Tendulkar has shown the attitude, psychology, and ways of middle-class urban people. In such a society, a woman like Laxmi is thrown out of the house because she cannot give birth to a child. Patriarchal society does not blame male, but female is always held responsible for childlessness. Laxmi takes shelter in Sakharam's house, where he has one rule for himself and a different rule for others. Laxmi is not allowed to talk to strangers because she is a female. She is expected to cover her face with the veil while talking to strangers.

Such behaviour exemplifies the patriarchal dominance prevalent in society and, it exposes a contradiction in approach and personality of people like Sakharam. The play is the study of man-woman relationship when they live in without marriage. Society still does not accept this type of relationship. In the words of Catherine Thankamma, "The plays of both Tendulkar and Dattani reveal that in the patriarchal set up marriage is not only a means of regulating sexual and reproductive behaviour but also a means of upholding male dominance"(82).

Sexual behaviour of the characters is an important aspect which deserves analysis. Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa have a different approach towards sex responsible for shaping their characters. In the case of Sakharam, sex is a tool to fulfil his erotic desires. For Laxmi, sex is not her basic need she wants to live in the house

of Sakharam, whom she considers her husband. Champa is beautiful, and Sakharam is desperate to have physical relations with her. However, Champa is reluctant in giving her response as her husband has sexually tortured her many times. This has caused a deep impact on the mind of Champa. She agrees to do sex with Sakharam, but she does it only in the drunkard state. She does not do it willingly as she does it with Dawood. Her relations with Dawood create such circumstances which lead to her tragic death.

There is a transformation in the character of Champa's husband. The absence of Champa makes him realise her importance. He understands the gravity of the mistakes made by him. He is on the verge of losing his senses. He is pent up with emotions and his emotional outburst in the play *Sakharam Binder* is conspicuous in his speech:

CHAMPA'S HUSBAND.[knocking at the door and speaking in a heavy drunken voice] Champa-Champa-Champa where are you, Champa? Kill me Champa, Champa, Champa, open the door. I am here. Why don't you beat me, Champa? Beat me Champa. (Tendulkar 198)

Ironically it is very tragic that Champa tries to save Laxmi when Sakharam is bent upon killing her. It throws light on the character of Champa that she still has human kindness which does not let her accept cruel treatment with Laxmi, however, on the contrary, Laxmi is seen to leave no stone unturned to get rid of Champa to stay in the house.

Materialism plays a vital role in shaping the characters. Laxmi needs shelter because she is in need of security and home. Sakharam needs her to fulfil his wish. There is an emotional vacuum which dominates due to growing materialism in

society. Material is the deciding factor in exchanging the warmth of love. Laxmi needs Sakharam, so she has no problem if he has conjugal relations with Champa. Laxmi is more concerned about basic amenities, which every human being requires. She is indirectly involved in the murder of Champa as she poisons the mind of Sakharam, which makes him kill Champa. She renders her help in hiding the dead body of Champa so that police may not come to know the reality behind Champa's murder.

Contrast is used by many writers in poetry, drama or prose to offer the reader a deeper, and clearer view in understanding the traits of the characters in a literary work. One such contrast is given in the play *Sakharam Binder*. The author has contrasted the characters of Laxmi and Champa. Laxmi is elder to Champa, and she comes to the house first. She is ready to bear the atrocities by Sakharam. She wants to stay in his house; she is ready to accept the terms and conditions that Sakharam expects from her. But Champa is not ready to follow anything or everything without knowing the fact or reason. She does not accept Sakharam's demand for getting intimate with him as his wife. When Sakharam offers her a drink only at that moment, she accepts Sakharam's invitation for sexual pleasure. The characters are selfish in their own way. The author shows Laxmi as God-fearing at one time but on the other time; she is happy at the murder of Champa. Moreover, the murder has been committed due to her instigation. She wants to get rid of the dead body as this will pave the way for her stay at Sakharam's

Laxmi and Champa represent oppressed middle-class women. Dawood and Sakharam are representatives of a male-dominated world where a woman is considered no more than a commodity. Sakharam had relationships with many women in the past, only to fulfil his sexual desires. Dawood has an eye on Champa, and he

manages to make a relation with Champa in the absence of Sakharam. Dawood, who has relations with Champa remains safe; but Champa is punished as being a female it's not expected from her that she should have relationships with a male. It brings to light the hypocrisy of society where there are different laws for men and women. People like Dawood and Sakharam exploit women, but their faults remain eclipsed in the guise of their male gender. Vijay Tendulkar exposes this male domination and gender biased of hypocritical system.

The author has developed the characters naturally in a way that they do not present themselves as the mouthpiece of the author. All the characters in the play *Sakharam Binder* are inclined more towards evil. Self is supreme and being selfish is their driving force in this materialistic world. Goodness, welfare, empathy, humanity are not only lacking but seriously missing in the people who live in this society.

The characters in the play *The Vultures* are symbolic of contemporary society suffering from spiritual and moral bankruptcy. It reminds of the poem *The Wasteland*, written by T. S. Eliot, which shows the moral bankruptcy of the urban people. Mr Hari Pitale is a rich father who has amassed wealth by dint of his hard work and cunning. He is a double-dealer, but he expects honesty from his children. He has an illegitimate son Rajaninath who lives in the garage. In the beginning, he is not interested in taking responsibility for his illegitimate child. He is worldly wise, but even then he takes a nasty decision of dividing his property among his own children. This decision proves fatal for him and initiates his sufferings. In the end, he wants to take the help of Rajaninath to attain his lost fortune with the help of law. Rajaninath refuses to accept the offer. Mr Hari Pitale is all alone paying the price of the sins committed by him in the past. Father is unable to give the moral values to the children. Manik is the daughter of Mr Hari Pitale. She is an unmarried woman who is

fond of going to parties. She is a smoker and a drunkard who gets up late in the morning. She is hysterical, and she always remains in the fear that members of her family may poison her to death. The behaviour of Rama is in total contrast to her sister-in-law Manik. She tries to kill the unborn baby of Rama with the help of black magic.

Vijay Tendulkar has shown a society in which the members of the same family want to kill one another. Their life has one purpose, and that is money. They can go to any extent for the sake of money. He has shown a daughter who wants to kill her own father. The sons want to commit the murder of their father just to take possession of his money.

There are some people who have some inherent goodness in them, which include Rama and Rajaninath. Vijay Tendulkar has exploited the technique of irony to portray his characters effectively. Hari Pitale's own children have no kindness; on the other hand, his illegitimate son has a human attitude towards his illegitimate father. Rajaninath loves Rama without any selfish motive. The characters in the play represent a society, which is under the influence of so-called modernization.

Manik gets up late in the morning with drinks in her hands. It throws light on her lifestyle, as her parents didn't inculcate good values in her. Her nagging fear of being killed by her own brothers reflects that her brothers are no less than devils. She is not off beam in thinking so because she is brutally attacked by her brothers. They want to encash her pregnancy by blackmailing the Prince of Hondour. Such degradation of moral values shocks a gentle reader. It is difficult to find a protagonist in the play as the characters are more inclined towards evil than good. Rama is innocent and victim of being married in such a family who is not less than Vultures.

However, she has an illegitimate relationship with Rajaninath. She is pregnant, but she carries the illegitimate child of Rajaninath in her womb.

Vijay Tendulkar's play, *The Vultures* exemplifies that avarice can destroy the bonding of the members of the family. Human vultures in the play have closed their eyes towards moral goodness. They value money more than anything else in this material world, but they do not value emotions and morality. Vulture is a bird often seen feeding on corpses. This means that vultures take advantage of the suffering of others. The characters in the play are not less than a butcher who slaughters animals for his benefit. The title of the play is apt as it focuses on the vice of avarice, which takes humans on the path of committing the crime. The desire for wealth shapes the course of action of people like Pappa, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik. True love is rare in such a place and society where brothers are like Ramakant and Umakant. They love bank balance more than humanity. Even the blood relations do not have any value for them.

Human beings learn many things from society in which they live. Vijay Tendulkar has shown a society where the father tries to get rid of his brother to occupy his brother's business. Children follow the same example as they want to throw the father out of the house. Children want to take money and bank balance. They enjoy when Sakharam their father's partner leaves the house. During the celebrations, they try to torture their father. This is what they learn from their father, and now they are applying it on their father.

On one side, there is violence and drunkenness of Ramakant and Umakant; on the other side, there is a delicate, insecure, love affair of Rajaninath and Rama. Grisly violence and gentle love serve as a catalyst to give rise to the conflict in the play.

Rama's character has various shades that make her a complex character. Though she is surrounded by vultures, she endeavours to change her circumstances. Rajaninath, who is a poet, describes her stay in Hari Pitale's house in a long poem in the play *The Vultures*:

So Rama went away
A statue of emotions chilled to stone
Alive, she followed after
That living death, her master,
With the dogged loyalty
Of a barren beast. (Tendulkar 203)

He further describes her agony in these words:

Then she stepped over
The bridal measure
And crossed the threshold
Of her new home
But it was no home
not a home but a hole in a tree
Where vultures lived
In the shapes of men
A Haunted burning ground
surrounded by Evil ghosts
Was that a home? (Tendulkar 204)

Rajaninath has shown the plight of Rama among the human Vultures. She is transformed into a statue without emotions. The writer has used an oxymoron 'living death' to describe her condition, and further added that she is still loyal like a dog to

those who are responsible for her predicament. She is living in a haunted house, which is the abode of the human ghosts. Rajaninath is asking a question if it is a home or a nest of vultures.

Her husband is unable to impregnate her due to excessive drinking. However, she tries to fill this emotional and physical vacuum through Rajaninath. The result of this leads to her impregnation, which her husband cannot do that for her. In the following lines, she lay bares her desire to be a mother to become a complete woman.

RAMA. It is not the fault of doctors, of learned men, of Saints and sages ! It is not even my fault! This womb's healthy and sound, I swear it! I was born to become a mother. This soil is rich, it's hungry. But the seed won't take root. If the seed is soaked in poison, if it's weak feeble, lifeless, devoid of virtue - then why blame the soil? (241)

A shallow study of her character shows her a woman who is a victim of domestic violence. Analysis of her character shows that she is a strong woman who remains firm against odds. She endeavours to adjust herself in adverse circumstances. She does not wait for the things to happen. She does not leave her life at the mercy of fate. She deserves praise for showing her strength of character, rarely expected from a woman of traditional rearing.

Vijay Tendulkar has exploited the technique of irony in the portrayal of characters. Rajaninath is the legitimate son, but he still has goodness and the milk of human kindness. He is not interested in the property of Pappa. However, on the other hand, Pappa's sons cross the limit of morality and violence when they torture their father. Protagonist forces in the play like Rajaninath and Rama believe in human love

and benevolence, but antagonistic forces firmly believe in violence and vested interest.

The play, *The Vultures* (Gidhade) deals with a collapsed family arrangement owing to the instinctive evil propensities of self-interest, ravenousness, impishness and viciousness inherent in human beings who do not hesitate to be violent like vultures for their interest. Women characters in the play *The Vultures* do not feel safe whether she is Manik or Rama. Manik's character is portrayed in a manner, which is more towards the malevolent side. Rama is a traditional Indian woman who wants to live happily after marriage. She does not appreciate the ways and activities of her in-laws, but she does not express her dissent and disagreement with them. She endures the suffering silently. Tendulkar has portrayed Rama's character, to reveal a harsh reality that even the righteous and innocent people have to suffer indescribable melancholy because of the propinquity of malicious people:

RAMA. So many years like this I have endured. So many. A lifetime. Do you know that? Without one word! [He is silent] not one tear. Not a single weakness. I didn't complain. I didn't even show displeasure. But... But how long is this to go on [she kneels by him, putting her hands on his shoulder.] How much more must I endure? How long must I carry these needles in my heart? (240)

The intensity of grief is troubling her soul. She does not weep in such a pathetic condition. However, in adverse circumstances, she does not find a ray of hope to get rid of this incessant pain, torturing her heart and soul. Vijay Tendulkar has depicted her feelings using the metaphor of carrying needles in her heart. This shows her agony, the perpetual pain she is bearing. Rama does not think of committing suicide

because of her wish to become a mother. She feels that her womb is sound and healthy.

Tendulkar unveils the insensitive and ferocious nature of human consciousness by showing the manoeuvres of the byzantine family affairs. Such relationships are devoid of love and sacrifice as they are meant for achieving selfish designs. The urge for materialistic pleasures leads to cruel attitude towards the members of the same family. Morality and benevolence cannot be expected from such people who can kill their own members of the family for money. It is rightly said that money is the root of all evils. There are many examples in the past as well as in contemporary times where blood is shed for the cause of money and material pleasure. History is replete with instances where kings killed their kith and kin for the sake of power and money.

Ramakant is depicted as a drunkard businessman, who has ruined the business due to his addiction to alcohol and imprudent deals. His failure lies in not being fair in business. He is not ready to give the pay to his gardener. He receives complaints about sending the inferior quality of goods to the parties. Such irrational ways of doing business can never ensure success to any businessperson. He is not willing to mend his ways, but he dreams of a luxurious lifestyle. His cunning is ruining him in his business and drinking is deteriorating his family life. Due to excessive drinking, he has become impotent. However, he is desperate to have a son of his own. He is harsh, cruel and mean. He wants to kill his father who has given him a well-established business.

In the play, *The Vultures* there is a tussle between evil forces like Ramakant, Umakant, Manik and moral people like Rajaninath and Rama. In this struggle

morality seems to be on the losing side. People like Ramakant, Umakant and their sister have forgotten human kindness as an imperative trait in humans. Vultures are found in *Silence! The Court is in Session* as well, but the way of doing violence is more sophisticated than the play *The Vultures*. In the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* helplessness of the protagonist is enjoyed by the hostile court.

The writer has shown a vulture dwelling in the mind of humans, and it controls the thought process of human beings. When the vulture gets laboratory conditions it starts operating and accomplishing its nefarious designs. The characters in the play are educated enough to understand the difference between right and wrong. There are various shades of violence manifested in the play. They use abusive words, and the way of speaking is horribly violent. Even the female characters like Manik do not hesitate to speak such words openly and aggressively as mentioned in Manik's speech:

MANIK. The old man's becomes senile since we divided the estate. As for Umya- that miser, that lick penny! No use asking him, the bloody ruffian!' Do you want a kick?' he asks. And Ramya, the hypocrite, he just says your name. (208)

Manik addresses her father as 'old man' that shows she has no respect for her father. She uses abusive language for her brothers. Vijay Tendulkar, through her character, has symbolically presented the harmful effects of modern culture. People think that they are following the West, but this is not the true definition of being modern. Both the brothers speak the obnoxious language. Even Pappa is in the habit of speaking offensive words:

PAPPA. I see. That Pimp is a born shirker. Puts off his work all the time. Neglects it. Sits happily smoking away...If you ask him, then it's no dirt for manure, no this, no that, no bullshit! He'll think of dozen excuses. I've been watching him for 20 years. A kick in the pants, that's what they need, to get work done, these people! (208)

Pappa's speech manifests his thinking about his son but in scurrilous expression. He does not set the right example for his children. A child learns from the family; if a family has fathers like Pappa, the children cannot inculcate decency in their habits, language and attitude. He speaks the offensive language, so does the children. If anybody is responsible for the vulgar speech of his two sons and a daughter, then Pappa himself is responsible for that. He plants a poisonous seed of deceit and selfishness, but he cries when he receives the fruit.

This play is out and out a tragedy for evil as well as the good characters. The characters in the play have a sense of frustration, which is manifested in their aggressive and violent behaviour. They are the slaves of their desires. They try to find happiness in the fulfilment of carnal desires. Rama and Rajaninath are exceptions, but they are also not happy with their circumstances. They find themselves in a bunch of crooks. Rajaninath is the narrator who shares those incidents that happened twenty-two years ago. Sakharam leaves the house after being cheated by Pappa, and it is celebrated by the family. Their dance represents the accomplishment of the evil by the sinners; allegorically it's like a dance of sins or evil inherent in human beings. It is followed by torrential rain and the sound of vultures, which adds to the additional effect of representing their real nature, which is like vultures. Shailaja B.Wadikar observes:

The study of Vijay Tendulkar's plays, to sum up, arrives at some significant inferences. The dramatist aims at bringing into light some of the most complex and vital issues of our existence, inner and Outer. One can approach his plays from various points of view, psychological, sociological, politico-cultural, determinist, existential, feminist Marxist etc. (9)

In *Ghashiram Kotwal* Vijay Tendulkar has not only endeavoured to show the character of Ghashiram Kotwal, but he has also depicted the decadence of the Brahmin class during the time of Peshwa. In the opening scene, Brahmins are shown worshipping Lord Ganesha. It is a tradition in India to start a new thing with the name of God, especially Lord Ganesha. Corruption is prevalent among the whole Brahmin class of those times. Vijay Tendulkar has depicted the political class in the same light. Nana is shown as a lascivious ruler for whom a woman is no more than a commodity. To enhance the effect of characterisation, Vijay Tendulkar has exploited the method of contrast. At the beginning of the play, Brahmins are singing hymns while praying Lord Ganesh, Laxmi and Saraswati. However, in the very next part, they are dancing with Gulabi. In the first part, the invocation of God presents them as pious Brahmins, but in the other part when they are singing and dancing with Gulabi, shows their inclination towards pleasure seeking ways. They establish an idol of Lord Ganesha, but afterwards follows de-idealisation of established institutions. Brahmins are seen equating their visit to Gulabi with going to the temple. They compare Gulabi to the holy city of Mathura.

Ghashiram comes from Kannauj to Pune in search of livelihood. In this new place, his personality undergoes a transformation. There is a significant change from being a lonely man in an alien land to becoming one of the powerful persons of the place. Initially, he is shown as a humble man who wants to fulfil the basic needs of

his family. Avarice and impatience are the roots of evils prevalent in society. Anger makes an individual half mad and decisions taken in fury are worse. Ghashiram is so revengeful that he can go to any extent to satiate fire of revenge burning in his heart. Tendulkar has given a complex character in the form of Ghashiram who becomes the Kotwal of Pune. From being apologetic to being a tyrant, Ghashiram experiences several ups and downs in life. He is sent to jail for no fault of his own. He creates an upheaval in Pune. The following lines from the play show the lawlessness implemented by Ghashiram as a Kotwal:

GHASHIRAM. Then why are you this late(kicks him) speak quickly?

SUTRADHAR. Sir, I was going to fetch the midwife was

GHASHIRAM. Midwife, who's delivering?

SUTRADHAR. My wife.

GHASHIRAM. Why does she deliver in the middle of the night? (slaps him)
speak up.

SUTRADHAR. Her time had come!

GHASHIRAM. Where is the midwife?

SUTRADHAR. She wouldn't come. Said she didn't have a permit. Said she'd
come after the four o'clock Cannon

GHASHIRAM. Good. Have you got a permit? Speak

SUTRADHAR. No, sir

GHASHIRAM. Why not? Go out on the road at night without a permit and
you'll get whipped. (Tendulkar 389)

The law and order condition of Pune is deteriorating in the tenure of Ghashiram. He is not concerned with the welfare of the people. He always finds ways to disturb the people of Pune. One such attempt is to take permit for every other thing. In the above lines, Sutradhar's wife is in a family way and midwife is reluctant to come, as she does not have the permit. Moreover, Ghashiram threatens Sutradhar of whipping, as the latter does not have the permit to walk on the road at night. Ghashiram uses the law to take the revenge of false allegations against him. His revenge is horrible because he is as merciless as Lady Macbeth in the famous play *Macbeth*, written by William Shakespeare. Shakespearean tragic heroes have one tragic flaw, which is responsible for their doom. King Lear wants to listen to his praise, which proves fatal for him; he asks Cordelia to leave the country for not praising him like her sisters. Hamlet's tragic flaw is procrastination, which is responsible for his tragedy. In a similar pattern, Ghashiram has the weakness of impatience and vindictive bent of mind. He surpasses all limits to take revenge. He does not show patience in the adverse circumstances. His impatience and anger lead him towards his doom. Vijay Tendulkar has successfully given a social message of being patient through the character of Ghashiram, which is still relevant in contemporary society.

Nana represents antagonistic forces in this play. As a ruler, it is his moral duty to protect the people, but he gives his people a Kotwal who is not less than a devil. For Nana, lust is everything, and satisfying concupiscence is his sole aim. Sutradhar and the mob converse:

SUTRADHAR. Nine Court Nana only thought of Gauri

ALL. Thought of nothing else

SUTRADHAR. Nine Court Nana only dreamed of Gauri.

All. Dreamed of nothing else

SUTRADHAR. Nothing but Gauri for Nana

All. No one but Gauri for Nana

SUTRADHAR. Couldn't think about his home

ALL. Couldn't think about his people

SUTRADHAR. Couldn't think about his work

ALL. Couldn't think about his God

SUTRADHAR. Wouldn't do without Gauri

ALL. Not a clue without Gauri

SUTRADHAR. For nana no labour just lust

ALL. Lust knows no age, no shame. (381)

Nana's character is evident in this conversation. He has no shame that Gauri is no match for Nana because of the age difference. He should treat her as a daughter, but his mind is overpowered by lust. He cannot think anything except Gauri; he cannot think of the people without Gauri. People comment that lust makes the people blind and Nana is blind too. If Ghashiram is to be blamed for his heinous act of offering his daughter, then Nana should also be held responsible for his shameless lust for women.

He represents a political class who is not concerned with the cause of the people. Gauri dies in pregnancy, and Nana buries her. He has no regret of Gauri's death; he is thinking of his next marriage. Vijay Tendulkar has depicted Nana as a honey-tongued person who has bitterness, poison, and conspiracy hidden under his sweet and gentle disposition. He does not rant like Ghashiram, but he accomplishes his evil designs in a diplomatic manner. Though he is responsible for the death of

Gauri, he does not admit it. He tries to convince Ghashiram that it is the will of God, which must be endured with a brave heart. He is a shrewd politician who uses Ghashiram for his purpose. Nana gets rid of him through his diplomacy.

Ghashiram's mind is in the control of his anger and revengeful instincts. He does not tell lies for his benefit. Nana has a stony heart, and he has full control over his speech. He is addicted to beautiful girls. Politicians, like Nana, never think of the welfare of poor people. They are engrossed in fulfilling their carnal desires. Pleasure is the purpose of life for them. They do not bother if the pleasure comes from the death and destruction of the common people.

A ruler is ideally not less than a God for the subjects. If the character of Nana is analysed in the light of this remark, he stands nowhere. Instead of God, he can be compared to a devil who is merciless and brutal. Tendulkar shows in him a tyrant who is diplomatic and methodical in his ways. Unlike Ghashiram, who is rash in his approach, Nana does not get carried away when he is angry. He loses control over his senses and emotions when he comes across a beautiful woman, which is his weakness. Both of them go to any extreme to fulfil their desire, which is lust in the case of Nana and revenge in the case of Ghashiram. Like 'Doctor Faustus,' Ghashiram gets the power for a limited period of time. He faces death in the hands of those people whom he has made the victim of his brutal instincts, which are responsible for his plight.

In the study of characters, the female characters in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* cannot be ignored. They do not have any will or independence. Gauri and her mother are seen following the unjust commands of Ghashiram. They never show any revengeful attitude in spite of being offered to Nana by Ghashiram. This shows the

plight of a female in a male-dominated society. Female voices are silenced at the altar of patriarchy, which demands the sacrifice from women on the basis of gender. They sacrifice their lives for the whim, fancy and revenge of Ghashiram. Female characters in the play are very submissive. Gauri does not say anything when her father offers her to Nana. It is more or less a barter, where the money is not involved, but goods are exchanged. Gauri becomes a commodity sold in the market by her father to purchase temporary power. Female has been the victim since time immemorial. The things are not much different, even in contemporary times. They are still being used as bait to acquire power and position. It is Ironic that, this so-called modern society, which outwardly champions the cause of women emancipation still involved in such evil pursuits.

Money hides the shortcomings of rich and influential people. Ghashiram Kotwal feels that he will be successful in marrying his daughter off with the help of his power, position and money, but this does not happen. Nana secretly buries Gauri and gets ready for a new marriage. The death of Ghashiram in this struggle gives no message of the death of evil, as it does not reflect that the death of Ghashiram is the death of people like Ghashiram. Nana, who is equally Immoral, is still alive and enjoying conjugal pleasures. It is the success of cleverer between the two and Nana wins this battle and he remarks “Use a thorn to take out a thorn. That’s great. The disease has been stopped. Anyway, he was no use anymore” (413).

The play contains incidents of violence and atrocities, but it is still considered as one of the best plays of Vijay Tendulkar. The writer has exquisitely used songs and music to mitigate the effect of intense violence and cruelty. Tendulkar himself says in this regard when asked by Samik Bandyopadhyay:

Why did you choose the form of the musical for this play? Just because you wanted to experiment with the musical, or because you thought the folk musical could give history just that bit of the deglamorization that you needed for this subject? (590)

Tendulkar answered as following:

Not that I was not interested in a musical but I cannot think of a form first and then look for a subject that will suit the form. I have had a couple of folk forms(not the popular ones) in my mind for the last few years and yet have not been able to do anything with them. Ghashiram started with a theme, then came the specific 'story' or incident which was historical and then the search for the form began...Deglamorization of the historical incident incidentally happened because of the form and I liked it. I meant it. (590)

There is one common element in most of the male characters depicted in the selected plays; they consider female as an inferior being, and their property to be used or sold. Ghashiram is not different in this context. Sexual urge and violence are inherent in humans, but the intensity varies from person to person. There is nobody in this world who is free from evils. However, the excess of everything is bad, and it is rightly shown in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* where Ghashiram takes advantage of the sexual urge of Nana to take revenge from the Brahmins of Pune. In the end, he pays for his deeds with the tragic death of his daughter, and he is stoned to death as well.

In the plays of Shakespeare, the mob is shown as fickle minded. They blindly follow the victorious king or queen and shower their blessings on them during victory processions. Julius Caesar is an example, but Vijay Tendulkar has shown the psychology of the mob, that is different from the Shakespearean mob. The mob in the

play *Ghashiram Kotwal* raises their voice against the cruelties done by Ghashiram Kotwal. Vijay Tendulkar has depicted the character of the mob in the Indian context, where the people never forget to exercise their right when they get the opportunity. The role of the mob in the play is very critical as compared to Shakespearean tragedies where the mob is shown only for the purpose of welcoming triumphant kings. Vijay Tendulkar has presented the death of Ghashiram by showing him in the condition of mental instability. He is inviting the people to kill him as he does not want to live anymore. Ghashiram is unable to bear the shock, and he dies after being stoned by the mob. An eminent critic Smita Mishra in *The Contemporary Indian Dramatists* writes:

The title of the play, itself captivates its essence. It unites the public and the private being of a man. It is the transformation of a simple, unassuming man into a hubristic power crazy monster. The unsuspecting victim of a Machiavellian system embodied in the machinations of Nana, the true villain emerges unscathed from the turmoil that marked the rise and fall of Ghashiram. (64)

Dialectics takes into consideration other factors as well that relate phenomena and things. In this context, simply blaming the protagonist for the plight is oversimplification of the matter, as society plays an important role in shaping destiny. The character is trapped in a society that offers only problems and no solution. This Kafkaesque trait is observed while analysing the character of the protagonist.

In the play *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the protagonist struggles for more power. He tries to solve his problems in his way but fails miserably in doing so. Analysing his character, it can be assumed that he achieves success and becomes the Kotwal of Pune city. He also succeeds in taking revenge from the Brahmins. But in the end, he

achieves a tragic death for her daughter as well as for himself. Dialectic in this context, takes the humans to the higher truth that evil will lead to evil. A good reward cannot be expected for evil deeds. Dostoyevsky does not consider man a rational being. This is true if applied to the character of Ghashiram Kotwal. He takes irrational decisions and creates problems for his family, himself, and the people of Pune. Utopian living conditions cannot be expected due to irrational human beings. Ghashiram, as a Kotwal, creates upheaval in the city, which pays the way for his tragic death.

Kierkegaard believes that personal experience is imperative in shaping the destiny of humans. This thought seems relevant when the character of the protagonist of the play *The Encounter in Umbugland* is studied in this light. In this play, the struggle between the protagonist and antagonistic political leaders shows the real characters of both parties. Kierkegaard talks about three spheres of life: aesthetical, moral and religious as explained in earlier chapter. In the case of Queen Vijaya, she reaches the ethical or moral phase of her life early as she has to bear a moral responsibility and duty towards the nation at a tender age. Her personal experience, circumstances and shaping the influence of her mentor Prannarayan develops her into a seasoned politician, a diplomat and a benevolent queen who is concerned about the plight of the poor people. Dialectics takes into consideration various phenomena that cannot be judged in isolation. Surroundings, conditions and environment are imperative to shape the life of an individual. Vijaya does not lose her calm, and she gives a befitting reply to the experienced statesmen who want to rule indirectly by making her a puppet queen. Her character is the chief interest for the reader from the beginning until the end. Vijay Tendulkar has shown her in complete contrast to her father who is so fond of listening to his praises like King Lear in the famous play

King Lear written by William Shakespeare. In this struggle between protagonist and antagonist, she is the winner. In the play *Sakharam Binder*, there is a tussle of interests. Champa is ironically the protagonist, though she is depicted as a drunkard by the author. However, she does not hatch conspiracy like Laxmi. She becomes a victim because of the evil designs of Laxmi. Selfish interest can transform the characters. It happens when Laxmi succeeds in instigating Sakharam to kill Champa. It can be assumed that Champa is a girl of loose character as she has a sexual relationship with Dawood. Laxmi believes in Indian values, and she makes Sakharam change his ways. Laxmi succeeds in her conspiracy against Champa by informing Sakharam about Champa's relationship with Dawood. In this struggle, Sakharam and Laxmi belong to the party of antagonists. Champa dies a tragic death for no fault of hers. It gives an observation that Champa, despite her weaknesses, is a better human being than Sakharam and Laxmi.

A woman has always been a victim of social stratification in society. Her gender and social status play a great role in her life. Marriage has not been enforced upon a woman since time immemorial. However, in modern society, she is not able to enjoy such a status. If she tries to find a life partner and comes across various males, then it is seen with suspicion. So-called modern society, which champions the cause of woman emancipation, shows a double standard in this regard. It shows that the condition of the woman has been deteriorating.

Characterization plays a vital role in writing plays, as without effective characterization a play cannot create aesthetic impact which is one of the main purposes of any literary genre. Shakespeare is great because he has created great characters whom people still remember, read and analyse with great interest. It is true for Vijay Tendulkar also, as he is impersonal like Shakespeare while creating his

characters. The characters like Mitra, Sakharam Binder, Ghashiram, Leela Benare are round characters. They have various dimensions in their personality, which make them distinct and they catch the attention of the readers and critics. The characters like Benare, Ghashiram, Vijaya, Sakharam, Laxmi, Champa, Manik, Rajaninath, have various dimensions in their personality. This aspect in Vijay Tendulkar's art of characterization makes him a distinguished dramatist. A wide range of characters are observed in his plays. They vary from common middle-class society to kings and queens. Benare is a middle-class girl who has her own expectations and circumstances, on the other hand, Vijaya is a queen, and her condition and hopes are totally different. Vijay Tendulkar, as a dramatic genius has done justice in the depiction of characters. The characters do not look artificial as there is always sync in cause and response of the characters. The chain of events is so artistically weaved that the characters are developed flawlessly in the given circumstances. In *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Sakharam Binder* the characterisation has special focus on the relationship between man and woman. Vijay Tendulkar also presents an interrelation between the human mind, spirit and body. These aspects are all-important auxiliaries in shaping the character of an individual. Comparison between two female characters of the play Mrs Kashikar and Leela Benare is imperative in the context of this research work. Mrs Kashikar is a childless married woman having an emotional void in her life due to that. Mrs Kashikar's husband bullies her, but Benare cannot tolerate such behaviour. In both the circumstances, the sufferer is the female, and that is the tragic aspect in a country like India where a woman is still struggling for equality.

The questions raised by Benare, the central character of the play, exist in all ages and societies. Benare is projected as a rebel against the established values of the orthodox society. So, in a sense, she may be seen as Tendulkar's projection of a new

woman in the Indian context. Though strong woman characters have been shown in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar like the character of Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* the women characters in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* are submissive to their male counterparts. Gauri's mother does not oppose when Ghashiram offers his daughter to Nana. Unscrupulous ethics and opportunistic outlook define the chief traits of the people who enjoy power.

Protagonists of Vijay Tendulkar's plays are lifelike characters. They have their limitations, which do not allow them to achieve their goals. The antagonists are as real as protagonists are. The antagonists represent the negative side of the characters by scheming, plotting and creating problems for the protagonists. A web of problems that are emotional, psychological, and social in nature surrounds the characters. Literature reflects the tendencies of the age, and Vijay Tendulkar has taken real-life situations to develop his characters. The plot, the characters, and the setting do not take anyone to an imaginary fairyland where gods intervene in the affairs of the people. Common people can identify with the characters depicted by Vijay Tendulkar. His characterisation speaks volumes for his genius. He has given characters from different spheres of life. Vijaya, Ghashiram, King Vichitravirya are political characters whereas Manik, Sakharam, Rajaninath belong to urban middle-class society. His characterisation has played an important role in the success of his literary work.

Vijay Tendulkar through his characterization in the selected plays has shown that patriarchy is never liberal towards women, and it treats female sexuality as a potentially destabilizing force. Men do not recognize the freedom of women; they propagate the submissive image of the fair sex to tame the ambitious women. Only exception in the selected plays is Vijaya who wins over the patriarchal mind set of cabinet ministers.

Chapter – V

Struggle for Existence in the Selected Plays of Vijay Tendulkar

Human beings, animals, birds take birth and exist in the universe. If they do not endeavour to maintain their existence, they will perish. It is imperative for all living beings to give meaning to their lives, and it requires effort. That effort is the struggle for a meaningful existence. Nobody wants to live a meaningless life devoid of pleasure, satisfaction, hope, and opportunities for a fruitful existence in the world. It is an inborn tendency of living beings to strive to give meaning to life. Even the birds, animals and reptiles do everything they can to save their existence. However, the meaning of existence is different in the case of human beings. Other living beings want to have proper food and sleep; their struggle aims at achieving food for them and their young ones. They do not think beyond that, but in the case of human beings, the circumstances are different. Human beings have more powerful brain than animals.

Primitive man used to live in caves but slowly and gradually, he has changed his system of living, which leads to the modern style of living. The purpose is to make human life more comfortable and meaningful. Too much industrialization, destruction of flora and fauna for the luxury of the humans are due to the human desire of having fruitful and enjoyable existence in the world. Here it is noteworthy that the things that one can buy with money cannot achieve full satisfaction and the purpose of fruitful existence. Money can buy the bed, but not the sleep; money can buy the food, but not the appetite. The needs of humans are much more complex as compared to other living beings, so it requires more effort and struggles to achieve this team. The emotional needs of human beings are different from other living beings. They start feeling that everything is insignificant. Everything is without purpose, and there is no

hope of changing this situation. The reason may be unsuccessful marriage, death of near or dear one, any psychological disorder, problem with children or parents etc. The causes are many, so humans sometimes find it difficult to cope up with it. Then existential crisis may create upheaval in the life of human beings. To solve these issues, humans have to struggle to exist in this universe.

Vijay Tendulkar is aware of the fact that human life is full of struggles, and people cannot expect miracles at every point of life. He has shown reality in his plays, where the aspect of the emotional struggle is a vital element. In the play, *Silence! The Court is in Session*; the protagonist Leela Benare suffers an existential crisis; she is struggling to give meaning to her life. She wants to have somebody in her life to share her joys, sorrows, and anxieties. In this process, she gets infatuated towards males. Relationship with married, man is considered taboo not only in India but also in almost every part of the world. She is struggling to end this crisis, but she does not get any way out to overcome this crisis.

Existentialism deals with human lives in the world and their struggle for existence. They cannot escape from the responsibility of their deeds. They have to make choices in this hostile universe. This human subjectivity is an important element that cannot be ignored. There is a basic conflict between what humans want from the universe and what is received. Man is thrown into this universe without taking his permission, and a struggle for existence is imperative to support existence. Existentialists believe that human beings want to live a life full of reward and power, but they fail to get any help from the universe in this regard, which leads to frustration. The universe seems to be conspiring against men. This conflict with the universe results in dissatisfaction. Benare wants to find the meaning of her life, but this disorderly universe does not respond in a positive manner. Any human being

under such circumstances starts feeling alienated in this universe. Benare struggles for a life full of authenticity and meaning, in this meaningless and absurd universe.

Meaninglessness of life does not deprive her of her charm and liveliness in her behaviour. She is seen laughing, making fun whenever she gets the opportunity. In the case of Leela Benare, her character is in strife with a hostile society. She strives to achieve authentic existence and more meaningful survival. Her struggle is against those people who believe in double standards. Mood plays an important role in shaping the character. Heidegger also believes in this concept and it already mentioned in Chapter II of this research. Protagonist Leela Benare shows various moods in the court. In the beginning of *Silence! The Court is in Session*, she is seen in the Jolly mood when she says:

BENARE. [*Leaving the poem in the middle*]. No- I'll sing a song. 'An old man from Malad came up to the fireside... An old man from Malad, the old man's wife, the wife's little baby, the baby's nurse, the nurse's visitor. (Tendulkar 63)

She has a lively nature but she is not allowed to maintain her spryness. Her encounter with Samanth is a proof that she is not at all negative towards life due to the adverse circumstances faced by her. She makes her choice freely without any fear. It is the society which makes her life difficult. She does not budge even an inch most of the times in the face of adverse circumstances created by the society in the name of social customs.

According to the existential philosophy, an individual's decisions give shape to the future of that person. In the case of Benare, she is like a gushing fountain that can never put a restriction on its flow. Similarly, she is unable to control the flow of

passion. In her teens, she falls in love with her maternal uncle. Her fault in the view of society is giving importance to her soul self. This is the right of every individual and Benare must not be deprived of that. Simone de Beauvoir in her famous work *The Second Sex*, propounds that a woman is not born as a woman, but she becomes a woman with the passage of time. From her childhood, she is taught to behave in a particular way because she is a woman. Leela Benare, the protagonist of this play, is no way different in this aspect. The discriminatory behaviour of the court and society exemplify Simone de Beauvoir's idea.

Benare is suffering from existential loneliness, and alienation in a hostile, biased, hypocritical society. Sartre claims in being and nothingness that people are aware to some extent of their freedom and the responsibility that comes with it, but they try to hide this from themselves. Benare's speech from the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* highlights the importance of freedom in the life of a human being:

BENARE. "If I have hurt anybody, it's been I. But 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 those- No one! I will do what I like with myself and my life! I will decide." (58)

Benare is craving for freedom, and she is not allowing anybody to interfere with her choices. She takes the responsibility of her life as she has not sold it. She does not let anybody force his or her opinion or wishes on her. She cannot allow her desires to be brutally murdered by anybody. She wants to be the decision maker of her life and bears the outcome for her choices. She detests those people who judge her based on prejudiced parameters. She feels that her personal life has no connection

with the job that she is doing. No one has the right to associate her personal life with her professional life. The authority must not fire her because she is pregnant before marriage. At another instance, she says that:

BENARE. We should laugh, we should play, we should sing! If we can and if they'll let us, we should dance too. Shouldn't have any false modesty or dignity or care for anyone! I mean it. When your life's over, do you think anyone will give you a bit of theirs? What do you say, Samant? Do you think they will? (60)

It is conspicuous that she wants to exercise her freedom. She loves to enjoy life to the fullest. Here, she becomes a philosopher and further says that she does not care, anybody, because life is short, and when it comes to its end then it is not possible to borrow life of another human being. So human beings have to decide what they are going to do with their life. Being human is full of complexities which are difficult to understand. Being a tree, stone, pencil or any other non-living entity, does not provide an option to respond to the circumstances. This is also not possible in case of animals who struggle for their existence in this universe. Human beings cannot remain the same in all conditions. They respond and develop accordingly; they make choices and face the result.

This rational world of science and technology is equally irrational in the context of moral bankruptcy and emotional vacuum. People like Benare have to suffer at the hands of society with no fault of theirs. The theme of being lonely in a godless world is rampant in the works of many writers. In this perspective, *Silence! The Court is in Session* by Vijay Tendulkar and the plays of Samuel Beckett have similarities. Both of them show the absurdity of existence. Even the reality they represent contains

absurd elements. It is not only senseless but also illogical. In Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*; there are two tramps waiting for somebody whose name is Godot. They feel that if he comes, he will save them from misery. They keep on waiting throughout the play, and it ends where it begins. There is no change in the fate of Vladimir and Estragon. They are living in a hostile universe where man withers like atomic dust. Life of the protagonist in *Silence! The Court is in Session* is also more or less the same. She falls in love with many men, but nobody accepts her as a life partner. She is unmarried at the marriageable age. It seems that her Godot will never come and she is destined to bear the blames of being unmarried. She suffers in this meaningless world, but she does not have the power to set the universe in order. Her voice is silenced by the illogical arguments given by the so-called moralists of society, which include Sukhatme, Rokde, Ponshe, etc. Her only fault is that she wants to live her life in her own way. She does not want to harm anybody. In spite of the harsh attitude of society, it is the choice of Benare to respond in a positive manner. She does not pull a long face due to the setbacks she has received from life. She beautifully sums up her philosophy in her speech:

BENARE. I say it-I, Leela Benare, a living woman Life is not meant for anyone else. I say it from my own experience. It's your own life. It must be. It's a very, very important thing. Every moment, every bit of it is precious. (61)

She explains that humans can choose to live life in a carefree manner. Life is very precious and, it cannot be exchanged or borrowed, or lent. She wants to enjoy every moment of life without being a hypocrite or showing false pride; for her living, every moment to the fullest is the main motive. Being human a person should endeavour not to become the victim of ostentations which bring nothing but

unhappiness. However, she tries her level best to cope up with the stress to make her existence enjoyable. She suffers due to people who are interested only in her body and not in her real self or soul.

The transformation in her character shows her struggle for existence which is evident from the following speech:

BENARE. Shall I tell you people something amusing? When I was small, I was very, very quiet. I just used to need to sit and make plans -- all by myself. I wouldn't tell anyone. And, at the slightest excuse, I used to cry loudly! (64)

As a sensitive child in her childhood, she used to weep, but now she has become a different person who does not cry like a child. She has transformed herself to bear the emotional crisis adequately. She does not succumb to pressure so easily even Ponshe accepts the transformation in her character. People like Sukhatme indirectly blame her for not weeping.

The remark, silence must be observed while the court is in session is very significant, which carries a message that silence is more important than all the wrongdoings. Mock Court has no sympathy for the innocent people. The author satirically represents the court of law where keeping silence is more desirable than doing justice to the innocent people whose characters are assassinated in the court as mentioned in the following conversation:

SUKHATME. What else did you see?

ROKDE. That's all [*Sukhatme is disappointed.*] But I got such a shock! Sitting there in Damle's room the night falling...

BENARE. What a baby the poor thing is!

ROKDE. Then why did you face fall when you saw me? Just explain that!

Damle got rid of me. Without letting me come in. Usually, he always asks me in- into the room

BENARE. [Laughing] Damle alone knows why he got rid of you. And do you know why you imagine that my face fell? Because Damle snubbed you in front of me. Why should my face fall? It stayed right where it should be!

SUKHATME. [To Kashikar] Milord, I submit that the witness Mr. Rokde saw and he alone knows why he stopped at that- I submit that what he saw be noted in the record. Even to an impartial observer, it reveals that Ms Benare's behaviour is certainly suspicious.

BENARE. It reveals nothing of the sort! Tomorrow I may be seen in our principal's office. Does that mean my behaviour is suspicious? Ha! Our principal is sixty five! (87)

NS Dharan, in his book, *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar* observes in this regard:

That the urban middle class, with its sham morality, cannot tolerate Benare's strident independent ways, is satirically presented through Beenare's lone but utterly nonchalant defence of herself in the face of interrogation at the hands of the malicious Sukhatme who is bent on making Rokde admit that he actually witnessed the scene of Banaras and Damle making love. (53)

It is not possible for Benare to remain silent at the insult that she has to face. Her bursting into an elegantly delivered monologue lays bare her heart which shows

betrayal by professor Damle. Force due to the partial behaviour of the other characters who have made her a punching bag in the court.

In *Waiting for Godot* two tramps Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot, at least they have some ray of hope in utter helplessness, but in *Silence! The Court is in Session* the protagonist does not have any hope that a saviour will come for her rescue. She does not even wait for her Godot who can probably be Mr Damle and there is no possibility of his arrival to save her from quandary. She faces the society alone and suffers the hostility and prejudiced behaviour. In *Waiting for Godot* one of the tramps says “If he does not come. Then we hang ourselves (16).

Condition of Leela Benare is similar when she says; there is great joy in suicide. She finds extreme pleasure in an attempt to suicide that is failed. She wants to enjoy the pleasure of death. She considers life worthless, as it is full of repetitions, which are boring and add no variety to life. She wants to save the child, but the court does not allow the child to take birth, because; it is due to illegal relations. If the child is born, it will shatter the roots of the morality of civil society. This tussle takes place between victim Leela Benare and the court. The argument results in the verdict, which proclaims the premature death of an unborn child.

The existential crisis has been faced not only by real-life characters like Benare but also by epic characters like Arjuna in Mahabharata. His soul struggles for his existence amidst a complicated situation of war with his own relatives. Arjuna has to harm them for the existence of Pandavas. The solution to this existential crisis has been given by Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna enlightens him by making him understand the importance of Karma. Humans have to make choices, and they cannot let things happen without putting their efforts. If a person like Arjuna has to suffer an existential

crisis in his life at the time of war against Kauravas, the characters like Benare, Vijaya, Laxmi, Champa Ghashiram, Sakharam, etc. cannot be spared. They are confronted with a situation where they have to make choices and take decisions. These decisions are responsible for shaping their lives.

Leela Benare is tortured by society, and women like her who are pestered by society cannot look at the outside world for help. Leela Benare cannot escape from the reality of life. She has to struggle to save her existence from the clutches of the blame of being a pregnant mother without marriage. Kashikar speaks the following dialogues in context to this aspect:

KASHIKAR. Prisoner, Ms Benare under Section No. 302 of the Indian Penal Code you are accused of the crime of infanticide. Are you guilty or not guilty of the aforementioned crime? (Tendulkar 74)

Leela Benare is a suitable case study to understand the concept of existential loneliness that many people feel at certain points of time in life. To provide a solution to this problem, knowledge of truth becomes imperative. Knowledge of truth means knowledge of reality. To get rid of this, humans need to have a mind, which is mature enough to think in a free and frank manner, to make decisions and to act strongly. A person needs to be so strong that worldly problems become ineffective on that individual, but this is not easy to attain.

The play *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a glaring example of how women are treated and tormented in a society that gives her the status of a goddess. It is ironical that a woman who is considered a goddess cannot live her life independently. She is trapped in a cage of societal bonds which are different for male and female. People like Ponshe Sukhatme, Kashikar are the ones who try to make the most of

every opportunity they get to insult a helpless woman. A woman like Benare has no hope of help from anyone. People like Samant are good, but they cannot help her to save her from suffering. She is alone in this struggle and tragedy is that even a woman sometimes does not have any sympathy for another woman. It is not erroneous to say that the identity crisis is depicted through the protagonist of the play that is Leela Benare. She yearns for her identity in a society which is hostile, biased, and hypocritical. The other characters are also suffering from a type of identity crisis; Mrs Kashikar is childless; Ponkshe is unable to become a scientist; Karnik is a flop actor; Sukhatme is a failure as a lawyer; so all of them are facing a crisis of individuality. They do not have an individuality of their own in terms of their expectations.

In the play, *The Vultures* the characters are facing an existential crisis. They are striving to receive the maximum share of happiness. Some characters experience the bliss of happiness in terms of money and some find in terms of emotional satisfaction. To fulfil both types of needs, they need to struggle, as the circumstances are not making it easy for them. Good characters like Rajaninath and Rama find themselves in a confined place that has only evil to offer. Rama is struggling to give meaning to her life by being a mother, which is not looking possible, as her husband has become impotent due to excessive drinking. She finds a ray of hope in Rajaninath and shares her feeling with him. Rajaninath impregnates her. She has to suffer due to the other members of the family.

The children endeavour to grab the maximum share of their father's property. They can even kill any member of the family for money. This struggle for existence has taken a new shape, which is breaking the bonds of humanity and kindness. Father is in the nagging fear of being killed by his children. Manik, his daughter, is in the fear that her brothers may kill her. Rama has to suffer when Manik tries to kill the

former's unborn child in the womb. Manik is pregnant before marriage, and her brother kicks her womb. Brothers, sister, and Pappa are striving to hurt one another for their gain.

This play seems to exemplify the theory, which suggests that one man's loss is another man's gain. The characters of the play strive to ensure their meaningful existence, and in this effort, they harm one another. Freedom of choice is an existential trait exercised by the characters. They take their decisions to give shape to their lives. They are responsible for the repercussions of their choices. Rama chooses to allow Rajaninath to make physical relations with her. Manik is responsible for choosing a lifestyle devoid of any moral values. She is a drunkard who has relations with many men. Both the brothers have spoilt the business because of their inefficiency, but they want to take the maximum share from their father's property.

The choices made by the characters cannot be considered rational on moral grounds. It is a blind struggle of existence, which is emotionless, selfish, and full of violence. Pappa's struggle is, to save his life from the jaws of his children who have become human vultures. He has not set a good example for his children as he has ruined his business partner and illegally occupied his wealth. He is getting the same treatment from his children who want him to give them the last penny which he has. Pappa's character represents capricious nature of human beings when he tries to convince Rajaninath to join hands against his legitimate children. Such human beings who have no feelings for blood relations are living to maintain their existence. They feel this world is without God, and they are free to follow any immoral course of action. They do not hesitate to commit heinous crimes to succeed in their struggle. They are involved in strife to give meaning to their life, and this meaning varies from person to person. The characters in the play *The Vultures* have one meaning and one

aim in their life and that is money. This struggle for existence revolves around money. They consider life meaningless without money. Rama and Rajaninath, no doubt, are exceptions in this context.

In the case of Rama, life becomes meaningful if she becomes a mother. She is suffering from existential loneliness, which can be fulfilled only if she gives birth to a child. She makes relations with Rajaninath to achieve some meaning in her life and to get rid of the existential loneliness, which has become an obsession. Without a child, her life is full of nothing that is emotions, love, and security are missing in her life. She is living in a claustrophobic atmosphere, and Rajaninath is like a cool breeze in such conditions. She welcomes this breeze from the core of her heart. Existence of a vulture depends on feeding on dead bodies of others. In this play, the characters do not hesitate to kill their own kith and kin to feed on their dead bodies in the form of monetary benefits of cash and kind. Matthew Arnold describes a similar situation in his poem *The Dover Beach* in the following lines:

And we are here on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight
Where ignorant Armies clash by night. (35-37)

Matthew Arnold describes the struggle full of noise and confusion. The army is ignorant in this pitch-dark environment because they are unable to understand the difference between friend and foe. In this case, they are killing their friends by mistake. This poem has been written in the Victorian age where Arnold has described the loss of faith and presented ugliness and utter chaos. The condition in the modern period is getting bad to worse which is depicted in the play *The Vultures*, the characters are in the race of killing one another, and they know that they are killing the members of their family. Such degradation in modern society is certainly

lamentable, and the struggle is more horrific and uglier than the conflict in the Victorian period.

Horrible violence in the play is enough to tell the tale of struggle in the play *The Vultures*. It is shocking to observe Manik's sari smeared with blood when her brothers try to break her leg. They do not want her to meet the king of Hondour. Later on, they come to know that her sister's paramour has died of a heart attack. Their plan to blackmail the king fails. They have no pity towards their pregnant sister and they brutally kick her womb to kill the unborn child. It seems as if their blood is affected by a disease which contains the germs of selfishness, and meanness. When Pappa is facing a threat to his existence, he tries to lure Rajaninath to win his favour and speaks the following lines in the play *The Vultures*:

PAPPA. I am telling you. So you are my true son. You stayed in this garage, rotting away like a beggar. My mistake, really, that... And those pimps grabbed the house. They have made a gutter of their ancestral home, the pimps. Made a cesspool of it! See what blight's come over the house! My bile rises to see it. (Tendulkar 259)

It is Pappa's endeavour to save his life from the clutches of his children. Pappa tries to save his skin by taking the help of his illegitimate son. He accepts his mistake that he has not treated Rajaninath well by providing him with the place in the garage, but not in the house. His sons want to and grab his property. They have converted the ancestral house to a gutter. Pappa is not happy with their attitude, and he attempts to win the favour of Rajaninath to save himself.

The characters like Manik and her brother are striving to end their misery by using unfair means. They want to give meaning to their life by using immoral

shortcuts, as they do not believe in earning by hard work. Their struggle is focused in the negative direction. Humans strive to save their existence, and it is conspicuous in the play *The Vultures*, but the efforts done by the characters are not moral. This universe is without a set of universal rules applicable to all. If any individual does an immoral deed, there is no guarantee that he or she may get punishment for the same. In *The Vultures*, various characters commit the crimes, but none of them gets penalized. Life has become a very trivial thing for the people, and they do not think twice while killing anybody for the sake of success in their goal. It is one of the reasons that many good people suffer in this world. What worsens the struggle is the alienation. In this play, Rama is a person who does not possess the quality of vultures like other members of the family. The vultures victimize her. She has to suffer atrocities from her own members of the family. This aspect makes her struggle replete with ordeals and sufferings. Her encounter with nothingness due to childlessness even works as a catalyst to deteriorate her plight. In the case of Ramakant and Umakant, money can fill this nothingness and give meaning to their existence. Pappa needs shelter and security to fill his nothingness as he is under the threat of being killed by his children. His struggle is both physical and psychological as he suffered the pain of being killed and beaten by those whom he had given birth.

In the play *Sakharam Binder*, female characters find the male-dominated world hostile towards them, and that leads to their suffering. Sakharam gives shelter to homeless females who have no hope left for life. They have no other option, and they accept Sakharam as their master. The female characters are suffering in this male-dominated world, and people like Sakharam take advantage of their sufferings. His house gives some meaning to the meaningless life of homeless women. Though

they have to suffer a lot in this house, yet they find it imperative to retain their existence:

SAKHARAM. You must have gone off your mind. Talking to an ant? You probably know the ant?

LAXMI. Oh, yes. Once you start talking, you get to know each other. I give him sugar, so he comes to me.

SAKHARAM. As if, there is just that one black ant here! There must be heaps of them in the house. Any one of them might come and...

LAXMI. But I can recognize him now.

SAKHARAM. How?

LAXMI. I can't say how. I know when he comes.

SAKHARAM. You know! And how?

LAXMI. From the way he walks. (138)

It is explicit that people like Laxmi, who do not have any entertainment in their life, can tap any source of entertainment which is available to them. It serves as a stress buster to their struggle. In the house of Sakharam, she does not find any amusement and pleasure, so she becomes friends with an ant. She treats it like a guest and daily gives it sugar. It is nothing but an endeavour to give a meaning to end the meaninglessness of their existence. On the other side, there are people like Sakharam who are born to disturb others. He has made her life hell. The conversation from the play *Sakharam Binder*, is a reaction of Laxmi's attitude towards an ant:

SAKHARAM. You laugh for the ant. But you won't laugh when I ask you to. I will twist that foot of yours, you get me? Now sit up, you are not to sleep. Wake up.

LAXMI. Honestly, I can't. Let me sleep.

SAKHARAM. No, you can sleep later. Get up and laugh. Laugh or I will choke the life out of you. Laugh! Laugh! Go on Laugh. (Tendulkar 141)

It is one of the speeches that show the existential struggle of Laxmi. She is forced to laugh when she wants to sleep. Sakharam threatens her with dire consequences if she does not laugh. It shows the struggling life of Laxmi who has left the house of her husband, but during her stay at Sakharam's, she has got no respite from ordeals.

Vijay Tendulkar has depicted the selfish attitude of the people in the struggle for their existence. Sakharam does not need Laxmi anymore and wants to get rid of her. He can even kill her. However, Champa does not allow her to do so not for the sake of Sakharam but for herself. In the house of Sakharam, Champa gets at least necessities of life which is mentioned in this conversation:

SAKHARAM. She must leave the house at once.

[Champa is silent]

Champa, I am warning you. Send her out first

CHAMPA. Who am I to send her out? The house is yours. You throw her out if you want to. I didn't bring her here in the first place

SAKHARAM. Then why did you interfere?

CHAMPA. Why? Because you will be hanged for murder, and to fill this Belly of mine I will have to start hunting around every day for a new customer. Instead of having ten beasts tearing at me every day, I would rather do what one says to me. You get me? Come, wash your feet now. Your tea is ready (183).

The existential struggle of Laxmi in the play *Sakharam Binder* becomes horrible with the murder of Champa. She manipulates the situation in her favour and instigates Sakharam to commit a heinous Murder. The following conversation shows a complete transformation in her character to safeguard her existence:

SAKHARAM. [Scared]. Murdered-- I have murdered her-- Murder- I have murdered--

LAXMI. [*Summons all her strength*] Hush! Don't shout. Not a word [*Continuous staring at the lifeless Champa.*] Anyway, she was a sinner. She will go to hell. Not you. I have been a Virtuous woman. My Virtuous deeds will see both of us through, I will stay with you. I will look after you. I will do what you say. In addition, I will die with my head on your lap. Yes, now don't be afraid. We'll--we'll bury her. Where do you think? Not out there-- no. Somewhere here. Inside and we will say that she went away. No one will suspect. I will swear by God. He knows everything. He knows I am virtuous. He will not judge you. I will tell him to count my good deeds as yours. I will do everything for you. Yes— (196).

Laxmi is desperate to do anything to safeguard her existence. She manipulates the facts by giving a wrong interpretation of the murder committed by Sakharam.

Sakharam is not in a condition to understand anything because of the impact of the murder on her mind. He is not in a position to exercise the powers of his brain. Laxmi takes advantage of this condition and pacifies him that he has done nothing wrong, and he will not get any punishment in the abode of God, as God will transfer her good deeds to him. She gives him assurance that she would be with him through thick and thin. She makes him believe that nobody will ask anything regarding the murder. On the face value, she is trying to save Sakharam, but actually, she is safeguarding her existence, which is at stake because of Champa.

The female characters struggle for more authority, but Sakharam does not offer any power to them. He is all in all in the mini-universe created by him in his small house where everything takes the command from him. If anyone tries to violate his will, that person will have to face the dire consequences. Those women, who strive to end the absurdity of their life by taking shelter in his home, do not find it a comfortable place. They have to kill their emotions to safeguard their existence. Laxmi is in need of food and shelter which Sakharam provides her. She adjusts herself according to the rules and regulations made by Sakharam who says in this regard:

SAKHARAM. Come in. Have a good look around. You're going to live here now. This house is like me. I won't have you complaining later on.[*She casts a nervous glance across the room*]. Yes, look carefully around the place. If you think it's alright, you put down your bundle and stay. Otherwise, you can clear out. This is not a royal palace. It's Sakharam Binder's house. And Sakharam Binder is not like your previous man. You'll find out what he is like. No free and easy ways here, see? I'm hot-headed. When I lose my temper, I beat the life out of people. (197)

It is difficult to expect rational behaviour from people like Sakharam. He is a womanizer. When he finds a new woman that is Champa, he endeavours to get rid of Laxmi. It makes the struggle of Laxmi even more difficult. She tries to use every trick to stay in the house. In this hostile Universe, which is irrational, humans cannot expect desired outcomes of the deeds all the time. Change can be either good or bad. Sakharam has no kindness towards homeless women who take shelter in his house. Man is what he makes himself in the given circumstances which play a role in making the personality of an individual. Sakharam's childhood experiences, his sufferings that are physical, as well as mental, make him a cynical and selfish human being who only cares for his needs. His childhood struggle has converted him into a libertine who does not believe in the Institution of marriage, and he decides to remain single. He believes in morality, which suits him. He is a fetch and carry person who has to struggle for his livelihood. It is his home, which gives him some authority that he wants to enjoy.

The characters in the play Sakharam Binder are involved in a struggle which takes them to a level where they do not think of right or wrong. They do not hesitate to kill anybody to save their existence. Capriciousness in human nature is conspicuous when the response of the characters is observed in the prevailing circumstances. Laxmi does not hesitate to plot against Champa, which results in the tragic murder of Champa. However, she is a God fearing woman who worships God daily. This aspect of her personality presents the fact that human beings can also cross the limits to save themselves. They can change themselves from humans to beasts. The struggle of Champa is also very tragic. She has to succumb to Sakharam to fulfil his erotic desires. She finds it hard to handle and does it under the influence of alcohol. However, human capriciousness is seen in her behaviour as well when she is seen

making physical relations with Dawood in the absence of Sakharam. When she feels insecure in the house of Sakharam, she finds no harm in getting intimate with the man of her choice. Her husband has discarded her, so she does not want to go to him. She wants to fulfil her nothingness by being physical with Dawood. Human beings struggle to fill the emotional vacuum which creates nothingness for them, so sometimes they take such steps which are impossible to reverse like committing a murder. Life once lost cannot be regained, but humans forget this aspect in their struggle that they have no right to take the life of any human. Murder of Champa by Laxmi and Sakharam validates this fact. It is a hostile universe, which they cannot set in order. It happens with Laxmi who suffers and meets a tragic death like Joseph K who is killed without any fault. Even her husband realizes his mistake, and in a drunken state, he desperately searches Champa. Had she been alive he would have taken her home and they would have a more meaningful life. However, this universe is absurd; that is why people come across meaninglessness at various stages of life.

Sakharam is not hypocritical; he expresses what he feels. He is suffering from a weakness of loneliness, which is a threat to his existence. To overcome this problem, he shows himself as all-powerful in front of the needy women. He admits that outside this house the life is full of struggle where nobody considers him more than dirt. His lifestyle is his self-devised method to overcome the boredom and meaninglessness due to loneliness and incompleteness in life. Those needy women give meaning to the survival of Sakharam. He believes in his freedom, but the female characters in the play do not enjoy such freedom. They are not allowed to talk to strangers. The lifestyle of Sakharam is very shocking, he gives shelter to the cast-off women, but on the other hand, he deprives them of their rights. It makes the life of the women characters more pitiable. They are nobody to decide anything, but Sakharam

can ask them to leave the house at any time. The women accept his demands to fulfil the basic needs of food, cloth and shelter. Even Sakharam admits that husbands do not take care of their wives. They are cruel, and they treat their wives badly as is evident from one of his speeches in the play.

SAKHARAM. I tell you, Miyan, those fellows- they can't father a brat and they take it all out on their wives. Beat her, kick her every single minute of the day. They are an impotent lot! For them, the woman is just dirt that's all (129).

It signifies the struggle of a female after marriage. The husbands are not responsible fathers. They beat their wives brutally and kick them every now and then. However, they themselves are physically, mentally and sexually weak. They do not respect their wives, whom they consider as dust particles. The lines are ironic in the sense that the behaviour of Sakharam is not different. He also behaves rudely with the women by being harsh and cruel to them. He even goes to the extent of killing Champa for having illicit relation with Dawood. An eminent critic V.M. Madge in *Vijay Tendulkar's Plays* observes:

With Laxmi's return, the play veers off into a different thematic mode. No longer is it the battle between Sakharam's unorthodoxy and the hypocrisy of the world. Now it is the human struggle for survival, for shelter symbolised by the battle between Champa and Laxmi over Sakharam's resources (127).

The characters in the play *The Vultures* are worried about their existence because they feel the danger of being killed by the members of their own family. This aspect of the existential struggle is conspicuous in the following conversation from the same text:

RAMAKANT. [*To Umakant*]. Brother, we are beasts! [*They both laugh*]

MANIK. [*Hiding her face and crying*]. Oh—h! These bastards'll burn me alive one day! They'll poison me they'll slit my throat (Tendulkar 215).

These lines depict the fear of Manik. She is worried that her brothers will kill her one day. They may poison her or cut her throat. They are laughing like devils accepting that they are beasts who can commit any heinous crime.

The following words from the text give a clear indication of what Umakant wants to do with his father. In the given conversation he wants to end the existence of his father without thinking that he exists only because of his father:

RAMAKANT . Wise, wise girl Manik. Wise, wise y'know, brother. Let's take Pappa for a ride tomorrow. On a dead horse. Flatter him...to the bloody hilt...right up...and then...wham! Eh? End of the game. [*Laughs, banging his teeth.*] The money... in our hands!

MANIK [*In great glee*]. Then my thousand-rupee necklace...

RAMAKANT. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Dearest Manik. Poor, poor Pappa. Poor uncle...

[*The screeching of vultures grown louder*]. (Tendulkar 221)

The children want money at all cost, so they can go to the extent of brutally killing their father. It is very shocking for the reader. However, Vijay Tendulkar has presented this aspect so realistically that it does not look odd. In modern society, fratricide and patricide are a reality. Newspapers are full of news of crimes for the

sake of money. It seems that some people have burnt the morality in the fire of materialism. Pappa's children and he himself are an example of such people who can kill anybody for the selfish purpose. Pappa feels helpless and says:

PAPPA [*Bellowing like a ball*] let go of me! Help me! Help! Quickly!

Murder! They are murdering me! Run! Mother! Ah! Ah! (228).

It is evident that the house of vultures has become slaughterhouse where nobody is safe. Everybody is struggling for the existence and in this struggle; even a father is asking the help to save him from his children who are desperate to kill him.

The play *Encounter in Umbugland* presents the struggle of the politicians to be in power. Struggle to exist in the politics of the country is the motive of the central characters of the play. Being politicians, their aim is to become more powerful. Existentialism does not specify a particular viewpoint in politics, but it lays stress on the individuality and the choices made by the individual. They change their colours like a chameleon for achieving their selfish goals. Human beings have a tendency to strive for more power. They feel that power gives meaning to life. Sometimes, this power struggle crosses the limits of ethics. In Vijay Tendulkar's *Encounter in Umbugland*, he has shown that some statesmen want to grab the power, but they are unable to reach consensus due to their stake and faithlessness. Their decision to make Vijaya a puppet queen is the part of their struggle to grab the power indirectly. The meaning of life for a politician is more power and bereft of power they feel that life has no meaning. Due to this reason, five statesmen in this play try to take every step to be in power. They feel that Vijaya is a novice and she does not understand the intricacies of politics, but they are mistaken as she defeats them in this tussle of a power struggle. Adversity sometimes plays a vital role in shaping the characters of

human beings, and it happens with Vijaya when she loses her father in her childhood. She is an innocent girl who does not have an interest in the power struggle. She tries to be away from politics and focuses on playing hopscotch to have fun. Prannarayan educates her; she becomes active in politics and turns the table against the five political leaders. Prannarayan is a eunuch, whose only aim is to educate queen Vijaya to keep those five political leaders, who are the cabinet ministers, away from the power. The characters in the play are free to make choices for their life. They struggle, conspire and make opportunistic alliances to give meaning to their lives. However, the result of their action is not sure. They cannot escape from the fall out of their deeds. Sometimes the result is different from the expectations. The king Vichitravirya wants a long life, and he feels that he will live till eternity. However, he dies just after the completion of his portrait. Even the life of a king has no value in this irrational universe. Human beings have to make efforts for maintaining their existence. The sincere efforts can change the circumstances, but the change can be either good or bad. The Statesman in the play, *Encounter in Umbugland* struggle to change their circumstances to be in power. After the defeat from Queen Vijaya, they are at the mercy of the queen. It is not mandatory that the reward of the struggle is always sweet. It is not appropriate to ignore people of Kadamba in this discussion. Though the main characters are involved in the power struggle, yet there is one more struggle where people are living from hand to mouth. That is the struggle of the people of Kadamba. The political class neglects them. They are involved in illegal activities due to the lack of necessities like food, shelter, and clothing. The cabinet ministers want to ignore them, but Vijaya is willing to do something for them. This quality of Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland* makes her different from the cabinet ministers which can be noticed in this conversation:

VIJAYA. For cleanliness, you need certain amenities. Sometimes in an entire settlement of the Kadambas there isn't a single lavatory; can you imagine it?

PISHTAKESHI. Before I became a Minister, the place where I had stayed had one lavatory for every three families

VIJAYA. Pishtakeshi, what is one lavatory for three families compared with no lavatory at all in an entire settlement

VRATYASOM. A lavatory is a luxury that comes with cultural progress. In our village, there isn't yet a single lavatory. And yet you won't find one example of treason there! That's the village I come from. I call theirs true patriotism, Karkashirsha

KARKASHIRSHA. Vratyasom, what connection is there between loyalty and a lavatory? (Tendulkar 321).

Vijay Tendulkar has shown the struggle of the people of Kadamba through powerful dialogues. The conversations are full of witty humour. While reading this play, it is observed that humour is a serious business for Vijay Tendulkar. Pishtakeshi in the above line boasts of being in the place where people have one lavatory for three families. Vijaya brings to notice the serious condition of the Kadamba people who do not have basic facilities like a lavatory. Vratyasom considers that the toilet is also a type of luxury, and he can show his village where there is no lavatory and no sign of mutiny. Karkashirsha points out that there is no connection between lavatory and mutiny. This conversation gives the idea that the leaders have nothing to do with the problems of the commoners. They boast that the commoners have the capacity to live in unhygienic conditions because they love their leaders. In their opinion, it is a sign

of patriotism. It implies that except Vijaya the other cabinet ministers are living in a fool's paradise and it adds to the struggle and misery of the commoners. Tendulkar has elegantly exploited the use of humour to present this idea in a more striking way.

Though Vijaya is a queen, yet she has to struggle to save her existence from the conspiring cabinet ministers. The following lines from the play *Encounter in Umbugland* show her anxiety:

VIJAYA. I am very tired. I'm just exhausted. Prannarayan, I feel as if this lap is only support I have got in the world. I can relax unafraid. All the rest is a dense forest. All around me are gathered beasts of prey. Above me a terrifying ghost is laughing aloud...the ghost of my father. Prannarayan, I'm scared! What's going to happen to me?

[Prannarayan gently strokes her head]. (306)

Vijaya's plight is shown through her conversation with Prannarayan. She is feeling down and tired. She thinks that she has no support except Prannarayan, where she can find a lap to rest without terror. She feels that this world is a forest and horrible beasts, which can kill her, surround her. On top of that, she is experiencing a sight of her father's ghost laughing at her. She finds these signs as ill omens and worries about her future in such circumstances.

This universe does not provide anything without effort. Humans cannot be passive to achieve their goals. In the play, *Encounter in Umbugland*, everybody is involved in a struggle to set the things in order to attain a more meaningful life. The rulers and the ruled are one in this aspect without exceptions. The cabinet ministers admire the King for his meaningless discourses. They continue to shower their compliments even after repeated insults:

PISHTAKESHI. Karkashirsha, before my eyes we have entered 40 years of all this. When we came into politics, we were at the height of our foolish twenties. Then we became ministers. From that time to this, we have continued to receive such treatment from His Majesty at first we bore it enthusiastically, as our sacred duty. Then we completed with each other in swallowing it all, as a temporary stratagem. After that, we all waited patiently together, as a matter of policy. Now it has become an entrenched habit (274).

Pishtakeshi mentions the struggle of the cabinet ministers of Umbugland. They have to pocket the insult. The king is a whimsical personality, who insults his cabinet minister time to time without any reason. They are incapable of changing the attitude of the king, but they have transformed themselves by developing the habit of digesting the insult. They know that they cannot survive in this court without listening to the king's good-for-nothing discourses. This aspect is also symbolic as people in contemporary times face similar circumstances when they have to accept and praise their employer's views, whims and fancies. If they do not endure, they may lose their jobs, which are imperative for their existence. King is aware that the cabinet ministers do not like him, and they will feel happy at his death.

The selfish interest for existence plays a vital role in the selection of their course of action. People do what is necessary for their survival. The people dwelling in the irrational universe always endeavour to take rational decisions to set the things in order. If one person considers something as rational, the other individual may think it as irrational. Vijaya wants to go ahead with the Kadamba plan, but the other cabinet ministers find it a fallacious decision.

Vijay Tendulkar has presented the struggle of various strata of society in a realistic manner. It is the emblem of his creative genius. The characters are involved in the struggle of their existence, but even then, the flavour of the play is not tragic. An intelligent mingling of the humour and satire make it very entertaining. The approach of Vijay Tendulkar is to show the seriousness of the message in the shape of witty humour. The comic aspect of the struggle is not only funny but educative as well.

The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* brings the struggle for existence as well as a struggle for more power. The protagonist Ghashiram has reached Pune, to struggle for employment, and to fulfil the basic needs of his family. He symbolically gives a message of helplessness of humans due to a sudden irrational change in the circumstances. It happens with Ghashiram when the people of Pune accuse him of theft. He has to be in jail without any fault. He is adamant of taking revenge. His choice for taking revenge at all cost transforms him into a different man. When he removes a thorn from Nana's foot, he appears to be a kind person, who is polite and a bit diplomatic. He presents his art of oratory skills to impress Nana. However, the incident of theft becomes the turning point in changing his personality from an orator to a cruel Kotwal. Humans cannot escape from the responsibilities of their deeds or actions. Ghashiram leaves no stone unturned to take revenge. People need to be wise in choosing the course of action while taking the decisions on important aspects of life. Ghashiram's decision is solely based on his uncontrollable fire of anger. Blindfolded by the anger, his choice of offering his daughter represents the unethical side of his struggle to be in power. In the case of female characters, it is a tragedy of inaction for them. His wife and daughter do not resist being the part of the inhuman sacrifice. They have not got any scope to show their individuality. This aspect makes

their plight more miserable. It seems that they are born to do sacrifice for their male counterpart. They suffer without any fault. Ghashiram struggles for achieving power and changes his position from an oppressed commoner to a ruler. However, what he does to attain this is not at all ethical. Life of a human has no value in this hostile universe.

In the play, *Ghashiram Kotwal* struggle is not only between the protagonist and antagonist, but it also exists between the protagonist and his inner self. This very struggle leads the protagonist to the path of self-annihilation. The antagonistic forces are outside as well as inside the protagonist. Keeping this aspect in mind the play can be compared to any Shakespearean tragedy, where hamartia of Ghashiram is his uncontrolled anger, which is responsible for his death. Offering his daughter to Nana, an unscrupulous politician is a step, that destroys his family with his evil pursuits. His behaviour after being falsely accused of theft is not less than a psychopath. Power and Instinct of revenge turn him into a beast. He becomes a devil who has no heart. He torments the Brahmins of Pune by making them holding red-hot iron balls. He implements his self-made laws. A permit is required for everything in his tenure, but the wheel of time takes a turn and Brahmins of Pune gets the permit from Nana to kill Ghashiram. It adds to the ironical effect in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal*:

SUTRADHAR. Brahmins! Ho! Listen! Listen! As per your demands, the Peshwa's chief minister Nana Phadnavis has given the order for Ghashiram Kotwal execution. First, shave his head and anoint it with Sindur. Then run him around town on a camel. To an elephant's leg and lastly give him the sentence of death. At the very end, tie one of his hands behind his back and let Ghashiram Savaldas face the mob.
(Tendulkar 413)

Struggle between the ruler and the ruled is depicted in which the ruler faces defeat at the end. This defeat costs Ghashiram Kotwal his life as he is stoned to death as per the orders of Nana after the complaints of Brahmins. Nana and Ghashiram are the two forces which are at war with each other. In this war, Nana is the winner using his shrewdness and diplomacy.

Ghashiram's struggle has seen a reversal in fortunes from a convict to a Kotwal. Later on from the position of a Kotwal he becomes the victim of Nana's cunning and dies a tragic death. An eminent critic Neela Bhalla observes:

Ultimately his thirst For Revenge changes into a raw lust for cruelty. Blood is an aphrodisiac to him and he wades deeper and deeper into a horrific crime. He is drawn inevitably and inexorably to his own violent end, being stoned to death by the enraged and long-suffering populace. (131)

Ghashiram feels that he has the power, so he will face no problem in marrying his daughter off. He wants to find a suitable match for his daughter. He thinks his struggle is over, and everything is in his favour. He speaks the following lines feeling proud of his achievements:

GHASHIRAM.(enter smoothing moustache) I have got the Kotwali and I have got Poona straightened out! All these hard, proud Brahmins are soft as cotton now. No one dares to look Ghashiram straight in the eye! Now, once I find a fitting husband for my darling daughter- that piece of my heart name the Lalita Gauri- and get her married, then everything will be the way I want it... It's easy to find a bridegroom when one has money, jewels and respect. (398)

It is Ironic that he has no idea that Gauri will die before her marriage. All his efforts to purchase the power for the betterment of his family and himself will turn out to be a complete fiasco. Ghashiram feels content for being successful in taking revenge from the Brahmins of Pune. He goes to Nana to meet his daughter and finds that she is no more. Nana is diplomatic in sharing the truth with him. On the contrary, Nana is preparing for another wedding, which adds fuel to the fire. Ghashiram is unable to control his emotions. After his departure, Nana gives the instructions that Ghashiram should not be allowed to come into the palace.

Gauri dies a tragic death, and Ghashiram doubts Nana. However, he is helpless because Nana is powerful and mean. Nana is responsible for the death of Gauri. *Ghashiram Kotwal* throws light on the ruling class who does not value human life except their near and dear ones. They think of their personal gains, and their attitude makes the life of poor and needy people more miserable. Ghashiram struggles from beginning to end, but his struggle does not bring a fruitful reward for him. He dies a tragic death. He struggles to set the things in order but fails miserably. His choice leads him to a situation where death does not matter to him. He is stoned to death. His agony is more tragic than the physical torments he has to bear at the time of his death. He dies with guilt more than by the stones. It is conspicuous when he says:

GHASHIRAM. Hit me beat me. Beat me some more. Hit me!

(Suddenly Ghashiram shields his face as if a stone hit him)

Why stay so far away? Come on, you cowards. Still scared? I Spit on You. Beat me. Come on, beat me. Come on. Come on. Stone me, congrats. Pig shit! Come home and beat me. I dare you. Hit me. Look-

one of my hands is tied. And you are scared! Come on come on, beat me. Crush me! (*The mob yells.*)

Ghashiram Savaldas! Ghashiram Savaldas! I danced on your chest but I wasted the life of my little daughter. I should be punished for the death of my daughter. Beat me. Beat me. Hit me. Cut off my hand and feet. Crack my Skull. Come on, come on. Look! I'm here. Oh that's good, very good. (415)

He gets the desired punishment of his sins, but Nana does not get any punishment for his evil deeds and designs. He remains free and enjoys the luxuries of life by marrying one more time. It leads to the fact that there is nothing like a universal law, which is applicable to all humans. One person gets punished for the wrongdoings, but the other is enjoying and ruling the people. The situation is an absurd one, which defies the logic of equality. Ways of life are absurd as they may take the people to happiness or misery depends on the choices made by the individuals. Some humans are so unfortunate that they do not choose their course of action. They follow the command blindly as the female characters like Gauri or her mother in the play. Ghashiram struggles for more power because he is over-ambitious. He tries to reach the sun with the help of waxen wings. It leads to his doom. Ghashiram, at the time of his death, feels that his life has no meaning now. He has lost his daughter, and he cannot live without her. The meaninglessness of life after undergoing harrowing experiences has put him in a miserable condition. He welcomes death. This struggle for power has taken away his senses. People lose their sanity due to adverse circumstances, and they lose the sense of right and wrong. It happens with Ghashiram Kotwal, and his madness makes him fall in the trap of Nana.

An existential gaze at the play reveals an irrational and hostile universe traps Ghashiram in its web. The result is alienation, at a place where he has come to make his fortune. He suffers due to a corrupt political system where unethical becomes ethical for powerful people. His neediness for power for the sole purpose of vengeance leads to his obliteration. He cannot escape the consequences of his choice. He tries to set the circumstances in order by attaining power from Nana. He succeeds to become powerful, but in the end, he becomes the victim of power.

The characters seem to be trapped in a cobweb of struggle in all the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar. They are striving to gain maximum from the life so as to provide a meaning to their existence. Leela Benare finds herself in hostile environment where she has to struggle to save her from loneliness. She wants to get rid of the nothingness and vacuum of meaninglessness. In this struggle, she has to face challenges posed by the agents of society. They do not allow her to live her life in her own way. She has to face the adverse circumstances because she has no support; she finds herself alone. She endeavours to get a life partner, but she fails in her attempts. People like Damle and her maternal uncle misuse her; lawyers like Sukhatme assassinate her character; Ponkshe and Rokde blame her. She struggles to exist by fighting with the loneliness on one side and on the other side faces the challenges posed by the people. Life of Benare is suffering from an existential crisis. She tries to end this crisis but after her repeated efforts, she finds herself unable to handle this struggle. Like Leela Benare, Rama is also struggling with meaninglessness of life. She feels that it can be meaningful by having a child in her life. However, her husband is impotent and he cannot fulfil her desire to have a baby. She makes relation with Rajaninath, which manifests her willingness to overcome this situation to give some meaning to her life to end this existentialist crisis. The other characters of the

play in *The Vultures* are involved in a rat race of amassing wealth by unfair means. This struggle is more towards the material side of the life, whereas Rama's struggle is to overcome the emotional crisis. Pappa's struggle is to save himself from his children who are willing to kill him to possess his property. Everybody in this play is struggling to give meaning to his or her life in his or her own way. Purpose of the struggle in this play varies from character to character. Power struggle is an important aspect in the play *Encounter in Umbugland*. Cabinet ministers want to attain power so; they make Vijaya a puppet queen. Vijaya does not accept their commands and give them tough time. Vijay Tendulkar shows how the politicians consider power a vital element for their existence. They struggle to achieve more power and higher positions to give meaning to their life. Bereft of power their life is meaningless for them. King Vichitravirya tries to guide them about the disadvantages of power but he himself does not believe in what he says. He wants to be in power until eternity. Ghashiram struggles for more power but his struggle ends tragically with his death. On the other hand, Vijaya achieves success in this game of power struggle. Basic needs are the cause of existential struggle in case of Lakshmi and Champa. They want to maintain their existence and they choose to accept the restriction imposed by Sakharam. Sakharam does not believe in the concept of marriage but he prefers to have a female companion to get rid of loneliness. He is also suffering from an existential crisis, which he tries to overcome by giving shelter to the homeless women. He wants to have sexual satisfaction for his meaningful existence. Champa wants food, clothes and shelter for their existence. The struggle of existence makes Lakshmi take the decision of murdering Champa who has become a threat to Lakshmi's existence. The important characters of the selected plays are involved an existential struggle. The circumstances and outcome of the struggle are not similar but

they cannot avoid the struggle. This aspect of struggle is a necessary evil in the life. In an existential crisis the characters of the selected plays feel that their life has become meaningless and they strive to get rid of that meaninglessness. During this phase of struggle they cross the limits of morality in all the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

Vijay Tendulkar, in the selected plays has shown a struggle for existence, but this struggle has various dimensions. It is a power struggle in the play *Encounter in Umbugland*; it is the struggle for fulfilling the basic needs as well as emotional and sexual needs in the play *Sakharam Binder*; Struggle for material pursuits and struggle to fulfil emotional vacuum in the play *The Vultures*; struggle for a happy life free from double standards of society in *Silence! The Court is in Session*; struggle for existence and more power in *Ghashiram Kotwal*. The aspect of the struggle manifested in the selected plays varies from one person to another but it is linked to their existence. They can get a meaningful existence if they succeed in their struggle. Therefore selected plays clearly show a struggle for existence, but its form has variation according to the emotional, psychological, social, economic, and physical need of the characters.

Conclusion

The aspect of being and becoming is critical in determining the environment of society. The effect is manifested in social, political, moral, economic, psychological, behavioural, sexual and religious, facets etc. For example, it is the moral and professional duty of the doctor to cure the patient, but sometimes it is observed that the doctor is responsible for the death of the patient. It occurs due to the venomous mingling of corrupt practices or sloppiness in the professional ethics. Being a doctor, a person is not expected to become a murderer. If it happens, it will be a conflict between being and becoming. This type of conflict in various forms is the root cause of many complications in society. When the roles are not performed in an appropriate and ideal manner due to any reason, it leads to a conflict. This conflict is the visible in micro as well as macro level. This research has dealt with conflict between being and becoming in various forms or dimensions.

The selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar have characters from different spheres of society. There are characters from urban middle-class society like in the plays *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Sakharam Binder*, and *The Vultures*. On the other side there are political characters in the plays like *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Encounter in Umbugland*. Only one factor cannot be responsible for the transformation or change in the characters. There may be emotional, psychological, behavioural, human, social, and many other aspects play a vital role in this regard. The nature of change varies in different characters. It is not always towards the positive side in most of the characters. The characters undergo a process of change by facing different circumstances. Their role, responsibility, relationship, position, gender also play a vital role in affecting the being and becoming aspect.

As a part of society, humans are more concerned with their societal existence. They believe their existence is their being. They always strive for authentic existence that can give more meaning to their lives. Women like Leela Benare in the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* are often found suffering in such society. Being a woman, Leela Benare becomes the victim. She becomes an easy target for the people and they relish assassinating her character. Society makes her a victim of partiality. This biased is seen in village as well as rural society where people. The plight of other female characters like Champa and Lakshmi in the play *Sakharam Binder* is also not different from Leela Benare. They are the victims of adverse circumstances, but the factors responsible for changing their being are different. Lakshmi and Champa take shelter in Sakharam's house to have necessities of life. As they are women, they do not prefer to stay alone and decide to become concubines of Sakharam. Their existence is their being. Therefore, the fulfilment of basic needs is an important factor that determines their course of action.

Domestic violence is still a reality in this modern era and a woman mostly suffers in this scenario. Female characters in the selected plays like Laxmi and Champa in *Sakharam Binder*; Gauri in *Ghashiram Kotwal*, and Rama in *The Vultures* become victim in one way or the other. Rama has become victim of unfavourable circumstances due to an unsuccessful marriage to a drunkard. She has to tolerate harsh behaviour of her husband and her in laws. Her plight is not better than Champa and Benare who are also the victim of the circumstances. Being a Woman Champa becomes the victim of conspiracy. Sakharam kills Champa due to constant instigation by Laxmi. Gauri is also a tragic female character who becomes a victim because she is a woman. Therefore, these female characters are victims in one way or the other. This gives the idea that in the selected plays, being a woman is responsible for

becoming a victim. However, the character of Vijaya is an exception that is exactly opposite to the other characters of the selected plays. Being a little girl, she is supposed to play games but she becomes a shrewd diplomat and defeats the evil designs of the cunning cabinet ministers. This also shows a conflict between being and becoming but the outcome of the change is positive which is contrary to the other female characters. The way she gives a befitting reply to the corrupt statesmen is an example of the will power and woman power. If a woman decides not to succumb to the pressure, then she can achieve success against all odds.

Sometimes a woman does not show any concern to other woman's problem. This state of affair aggravates their problems in any society. Being a woman Laxmi should help the fellow woman in the play *Sakharam Binder*, and she has no right to plan death for anybody, but she chooses to become a conspirator. On one side, she is a victim of circumstances but on the other side, she hatches a conspiracy to get Champa killed. This characteristic of the play certainly points towards the aspect of conflict between being and becoming prevalent in the attitude of the central characters of the play. One noteworthy but tragic aspect is the transformation in the character of Champa's husband, who is a drunkard. Being a drunkard, he is expected to be less sensitive towards the feelings of his wife, whom he used to torture. However, her absence enlightens him, after which he becomes mad without her presence, so the aspect of conflict between being and becoming is noticed in his character due to his emotional disturbance in her absence. Although his role is very less, yet the transformation in his character is significant. Her husband is unable to locate her and he has no idea that she is no more.

Moral values are on the verge of decline in so-called modern society. People are becoming materialistic and they measure the happiness in life with money and

material. Humans are losing humanity and this is a very serious concern. In the play, *The Vultures* the characters are less human and more like vultures in their attitude. Being human, they should have humanity in them, but they have a barbarism of a vulture, as they do not hesitate to harm and murder the members of their own family. The vulturine qualities are in the blood of these characters, which is the root cause of conflict between being and becoming in this play. Screeching of the vultures in the play is shown to highlight such qualities in the characters of the play. Rama has become a victim of being a woman among the family of vultures.

Materialism is the cause in fluctuating the being of characters in the play *The Vultures*. They decide to become vultures for the sake of material pursuits. Manik tries to kill the child of Rama using black magic. Ramakant and Umakant want to kill their father to possess the money that he has. These are not the traits of benevolent humans. They have become vultures who can kill their own family for selfish purpose. Being humans, they must not follow the path of crime, but their senses are dead and human life has no value for them. Like a vulture, they do not hesitate to kill their father. The brothers go to the extent of kicking the womb of their pregnant sister Manik. Materialism has converted them to vultures from human beings.

The aspect of being and becoming is not only visible in human traits; there are also various other factors that point towards the conflict between being and becoming. The role of state apparatus cannot be neglected in this regard. It includes media, court, educational departments, and trade unions etc. that are not directly under the state control. The prevalence of corruption in various institutes of society also leads to conflict between being and becoming. In the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar. Leela Benare finds herself in the snare of the mock court in *Silence! The Court is in Session*. Ideally, people expect justice from a court of law, but the factors of corruption,

sadistic pleasure have turned it into a place where the court has become an abode for lawlessness. Benare's sin is her longing to live her life peacefully and independently. Sukhatme, the lawyer in the play is playing with the loopholes law for sadistic pleasure. Being a lawyer, he should support justice but he is supporting the cause of injustice in an indecorous manner. He is becoming a schemer, a sadistic person who misuses the law to assassinate the character of a damsel in distress. Conflict of being and becoming is discerned in the character of Sukhatme who is creating problems for people by construing the law in an erroneous manner. Even the court of law is no more a place where law prevails; it has become a claustrophobic room to disturb weak and innocent people like Leela Benare.

Human weakness is an important factor in determining the future of any human being. Humans have to suffer due to their tragic flaws. If a person is more prone to anger, the possibility of irreversible harm in paroxysm of anger cannot be ruled out. Ghashiram in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* has an uncontrollable instinct of revenge. His irrepressible temper urges him to cross the limits to become an avenger. He is emotionally and mentally so distressed that he offers his daughter to Nana to purchase power in the form of becoming Kotwal of Pune. Vijaya, in *Encounter in Umlugland* receives power due to a conspiracy by cabinet ministers, but unlike Ghashiram, she is deft at handling power. She does not become the victim of circumstances and wins over her adversaries whereas Ghashiram receives death due to his failure in controlling power. Sakharam is a Brahmin, but he is Brahmin by birth and a scavenger by his deeds, which he himself admits in the play. Being a Brahmin, it is expected that he will comport himself like a Brahmin whose responsibility is to provide knowledge but contrarily he offers death to Champa. Being a Brahmin, becoming a murderer is one of the notable aspects of this play. It is a message for society to follow the path of morality.

The research has found that Ghashiram does not want to harm anybody at the beginning of the play. He has arrived Pune in search of livelihood. Being a Brahmin, he wants to find work that suits a Brahmin. However, the circumstances make him a victim, and he has to go to jail. Later, he becomes Kotwal by offering his daughter to Nana. He is successful in taking revenge, but the excess of everything is bad. He becomes the victim of the people's revolt and Nana's diplomacy. Nana is a politician, and as a leader, it is his duty to work for his people. However, he has become a lustful beast who is only engrossed in sexual pleasure. Lives of the people do not matter to him. Nana's character is a journey from being a politician to becoming a parasite from whom nothing good for humanity is expected.

It seems that politics and conspiracy have become synonyms. However, both have different meanings. Political conspiracies can be observed in old as well as contemporary times. Plays *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Encounter in Umbugland* deal with a political theme, which shows the power struggle of the politicians for achieving personal goals. The king Vichitravirya wants to live a long life, but he dies just after the completion of the portrait. As a king, it is his duty to work for the welfare of the people; but he is also like Nana who does not think to serve the people. His cabinet ministers are not selfless politicians; they hatch conspiracies to attain power. Being cabinet ministers, they have a responsibility towards the people, but they have become the slaves of power. Being powerful has become the sole aim of their lives. They become the conspirators after the death of the king. There is a transformation in the character of Vijaya. She is a girl who is more concerned about what to play, but at a later stage, she plays the game of politics effectively. Her journey from being a novice in politics to becoming a seasoned politician is the most important aspect of the play. Her refusal to be a puppet queen is her choice to exercise her free will. She is one of

those women who do not want interference in their decision from men. She does not consider herself inferior to men. With her wisdom and guidance of Prannarayan, she turns the table against the cabinet ministers and changes the situation to her favour. Instead of being dominated by the male cabinet ministers, she dominates them. She is certainly a symbol of woman emancipation

In any patriarchal society, it is not easy for a woman to exercise her free will. She is questioned from time to time, but a male enjoys a privilege in this regard. In this tussle between male and female a woman is targeted more than a man. In the case of Leela Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* a contrary view may present the perception that Benare is relishing the pleasures of life by having relations with various males. She is at liberty to take her own decisions, but she does not want to enjoy her life at the cost of disturbing others. She cannot exercise her freedom, as she is a female in the male-dominated society. She is undoubtedly the victim of the patriarchal values. Leela Benare desires to live her life peacefully, but she has to face hardships at every phase of life. From her childhood to her youth, she has been victim due to the patriarchal values, which sometimes become a hindrance for any female in an orthodox society. She is scathingly censured to have relations with her maternal uncle in her tender age, but nobody questions her uncle. Being a female, she has to suffer at the hands of the patriarchal society. She has an affair with professor Damle who is a married man having wife and kids, but only Benare is humiliated in the court and nobody is bothered to call professor Damle in the court, who is equally responsible on similar grounds. It shows that society has different parameters of morality for male and female. For the males, the body of the Benare is the destiny but she longs for emotional support. They exploit her only for bodily pleasures and leave her in the lurch. Benare is asked to get the child aborted as per the verdict of the court,

which is purely based on patriarchal values that always see the fault in the female. A harmless female like Benare wants to live her life peacefully, but the patriarchal values pose challenges, which sabotage her emotional equilibrium. In a patriarchal set up male considers himself all in all. His decisions are followed by the females in the family. In *Sakharam Binder*, Sakharam is dominating from beginning to end. He considers himself the god of his house. He sets different parameters of morality for male and female, where the female is on the losing side. Patriarchal values govern the wheel of circumstances in favour of men. Women like Laxmi and Champa suffer from those values, as they do not have the access to control the movement of the wheel of circumstances in their favour. They need help from people like Sakharam because they are unable to find a way out to save their existence. He exploits them to fulfil his erotic desires. Spirits of patriarchy and existential crisis play a great role in shaping the characters of the play. The characters in this play, like other selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar, attempt to achieve the maximum from life and in this endeavour, they become selfish and mean. Because of the transformation in the characters, the play is a journey of being and becoming for the characters.

Male-dominated society does not allow women to live freely. Women are not allowed to exercise their will, as there are restrictions of the patriarchy. Female characters in *Ghashiram Kotwal* do not show any reluctance against their exploitation because of the complete dominance of Ghashiram. Women are shown to have no significant role in this patriarchal world, where everything is not fair with the fair sex. They have to suffer partiality, as they are considered as the objects to be used or thrown at will. However, Ghashiram repents on the death of his daughter, but it is too late. It is not fair to endanger the life and prestige of his daughter to avenge his opponent. Male domination is one of the chief aspects of the play and male characters

in the play do not give due importance to emotions of women. They also face existential problems or crisis, as if they are born to be exploited, and they are emotionless robots devoid of the right to struggle. It is a very pathetic state of affairs in the country, where people consider woman as a goddess. Ramakant in the play, *The Vultures* wants a son from his wife, which shows the patriarchal bias even in the contemporary times where there is a lot of clamour about equality between the genders. But the ground reality remains the same people still want a male child in the so-called modern society. Urban people are becoming vultures for their selfish interest weakening the roots of morality. These human vultures are harming moral values; morality is bleeding helplessly in such a condition. Good people like Rama and Rajaninath cannot do much, and they are victimized and exploited. Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland* successfully overcomes the challenges posed by the patriarchy that is the male cabinet ministers. Education plays a great role in shaping the characters of the individual. Being a mentor of Vijaya, Prannarayan becomes the man behind changing the shape of the nation. Her decision to work for the betterment of the Kadamba people works well, and it mobilises the support of the people. She is able to defeat the cabinet ministers with the support of the people. In this scuffle of power, her choice brings her reward, but the decision of the cabinet ministers to make her a puppet queen backfires badly, and they suffer. Unlike Vijay Tendulkar's other plays, the woman does not become the victim of patriarchy in this play.

Freedom is very important element in human life. A life with all amenities but without freedom is not worth living. It is not less than captivity. In the selected plays characters struggle to have more freedom to give more meaning to their existence.

Vijay Tendulkar has presented an existential crisis in the life of Leela Benare, who tackles this crisis bravely, but after horrible questioning by Sukhatme, she

succumbs to the pressure in the court. It is manifested in the monologue of Benare at the end of the play. Struggle for existence is one of the chief aspects of the play. The characters want to gain maximum from their lives for a more fruitful existence. Laxmi and Champa take shelter in the same house, as they are the victim of circumstances. Laxmi is a theist, and she is expected to show superior criterions of morality as compared to Champa. However, she chooses to become a conspirator and instigates Sakharam to kill Champa. She takes the drastic step to get Champa killed because Champa's existence will lead to Laxmi's departure from home. Ghashiram cannot blame anyone for his plight, as it is his own decision to avenge by using his daughter to gain temporary power. With this bartered power, he could not go a long way, and he meets his own disaster. This bartered power becomes the root cause of the death of his beloved daughter as well. This aspect of the play is very tragic, but a person cannot escape from the outcomes of his or her actions and decisions. Moreover, decisions taken in anger may ruin the life. Ghashiram is to be blamed, but the conduct of Nana depicts him as a follower of evil and lust. Nana enjoys more freedom and power, which he does not deserve; keeping in view the way uses his power and position to accomplish his evil deeds. He should also get punishment, but only Ghashiram suffers for his decisions. Nana is getting married again, which points out that many times the wrongdoers do not get the punishment of their wrongdoings. Nana is more diplomatic, and his choice is more effective, which leads to the end of Ghashiram. Morality seems to be the loser in this struggle, and evil seems to be in the triumphant position in the hostile universe depicted in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. The crisis of human existence is one of the major aspects of the play *The Vultures*, as the characters are involved in a struggle to save their existence. They are in fear that the members of their own family may murder them. The place where they live has

become a more horrible place than a forest because even the wild beasts do not kill their offspring. The characters of the play *The Vultures* have crossed the limits of meanness, cruelty and selfishness. Rama has the same position in the house as Benare has in the court. Both live in the claustrophobic atmosphere, but they try their best to exist with the oxygen of hope.

The characters are undergoing a journey of transformation, which is based on the choices made by them. The characters of Vijay Tendulkar's plays do not necessarily have black or white shade; rather they are grey; which signifies the traits of morality as well as unscrupulousness. Laxmi, Champa, Sakharam, Rama, Rajaninath, Ghashiram, etc. are the characters who have good as well as evil shades. This complexity of the characters is the hallmark of his characterization, and it is one of the aspects to notice a change in them in their journey of being and becoming. Sometimes humans are not fortunate enough to make the choice as shown in Ghashiram Kotwal where female characters are not given this opportunity. However making no choice is also a choice.

This research has found that becoming is more dominant than being. It plays a major role in deciding the behaviour of an individual. Life is a journey from being to becoming, and the selected plays of Vijay Tendulkar reflect the same through the existential aspects of human relation on cosmic scale by his paraphernalia of struggle and crisis.

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