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Subaltern consciousness in plays of Vijay Tendulkar

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Abstract:

The study of subaltern consciousness and gender issues has become one of the dominating subjects in post-colonial literature. Today we speak about women empowerment and grooming, we are sensitive about their issues, we also demand equal status and opportunities for women in society. In India, we have to struggle for equal status and opportunities for women. Today in the modern world of technological advances women have to suffer and struggle for the issues that generally taken for granted. We have been observing her humiliation, exploitation, oppression, and suffocation. Today itself she has to combat for the right to education, right to health, right to marry to somebody of her choice, right to go out, right to earn, and even right to express her feelings openly. Vijay Tendulkar is a famous writer in the post-independence era. He is basically a Marathi playwright and his many plays have been translated into English and other Indian languages. The distinctive quality of Vijay Tendulkar is his method to depict women characters in his plays. His all plays show the hidden side of women's psyche. He shows that how women are subalterns in society. He opens up women's mind through women character and tries to give them justice but still, due to some social rules and regulations, women characters have to suffer at the end of their lives. His plays reflect contemporary social, political, religious, and domestic issues related to women. In most of his plays, women are shown as silent sufferers and victims of patriarchal society. The present research study aims to study subaltern consciousness in select plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

Key Words: *subaltern consciousness, female psyche, oppression.*

Introduction:

In ancient times women have high status. It is said that women were active in various fields like social, political, financial, religious, etc. but in the medieval period situation of women become worst. Gender bias entered into the cultural heritage of our society. In many countries, discrimination against women started with their birth. Customs and traditions become hard against women in

society. In today's era when a girl is born, she is not welcomed warmly in many families. Female fetuses are being aborted because of this discrimination. Women in India are discriminated against in terms of their health and education. Even in basic needs, girls are taken for granted and preference is given to boys. Girls do more work for the family than boys but still, every comfort is given to boys. Women have been subjected to several restrictions, humiliation, violence, and exploitation. Women everywhere in India are not free to take decisions of their own. Men in the family are always to take decisions on behalf of women. In some cases, they are not even asked while taking important decisions related to her and her family. This is all because she is recognized as a subaltern for ages. She is treated inferior to males in our male-dominated society.

In the present situation, women are not allowed to go out alone at night because of the fear of being raped. Women are living life under the burden of fear and worried about their safety. Women are also harassed for money, dowry, and physical needs which may lead to suicide or murder.

Subaltern consciousness:

Subaltern means a person holding a subordinate position. Antonio Gramsci coined the term subaltern to explain the socio-economic status of "the native" in an imperial colony. The term was first used in the non-Military sense by Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1881 to 1937), an Italian writer, to refer to any person or group of inferior rank and station, and can be employed in discussions of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion. Subalterns are people or groups of people who are discriminated against in society and struggling for their basic rights. In our society, some people belonging to certain castes can be called subalterns because they are restricted to basic rights. Women all over the country can also be called subalterns because they also are denied their basic rights. They are exploited and humiliated because they are classified as subordinate to men.

Vijay Tendulkar's plays:

In the post-independence period, Vijay Tendulkar was a very famous playwright. He wrote several plays, he wrote thirty plays, twenty-two one-act plays, dramas for children, short stories, novels, and literary essays. His plays are translated from Marathi to English and other languages. Basically, he wrote plays based on social issues. He depicts social, political, religious, historical realities through his plays. Vijay Tendulkar focuses on the ugly side of society that women are being worshiped as Goddess and on another side, she is harassed, exploited, and humiliated. She can't complain to anybody else because subjugating and objectifying women is considered legal in society.

Vijay Tendulkar's Ghashiram Kotwal is a story set in Pune. This is a story about the antihero Ghashiram Kotwal who came to Pune to earn a livelihood but is thrown into jail. His life is ruined

due rulers of Pune, Peshwas. He wanted to take revenge for his insult so he uses his own daughter as an instrument against Peshwas. He wants to take revenge on the Brahmin community. Vijay Tendulkar depicts Gashiram Kotwal as a morally degraded father who uses his own daughter for his benefit. Gauri is a subaltern who is viceless and blindly follows her father's orders. She offers herself to Nana Phadnavis, representative of Peshwa. Nana Phadnavis used Gauri to satisfy his carnal desires. Gauri become a victim of treachery, violence, and sexual abuse.

In the views of Nana Phadnavis having sex with multiple women is a symbol of power that he could get anything he wants. Liquor and young girls become his habit to show the impact of his status in society. Gashiram Kotwal himself throws his young and tender daughter in the mouth of womanizer Nana Phadnavis. As a young girl, she has her dreams of a happy life but she is forced to become the mistress of Nana. She is exchanged for Kotwali, a job for Ghashiram. Gauri compromises her self-respect and honor for her father's wish. She also sacrificed her desires and dreams for the ambitions of her father. Gauri was the favorite mistress of Nana but after some time he loses interest in her and she lost her charm and status. She dies a shameful death and Nana told to throw her dead body in the river. She never speaks out her grief in the play but she silently follows the orders of Gashiram and Nana. At last, Gauri is victimized and got a terrible end of her life. Gauri is representative of that woman who is thrown into a pathetic situation where she is physically, mentally exploited.

Vijay Tendulkar's play Kamala is based on a real incident. Kamala is a girl bought by Jaisingh Jadhav from the rural flesh market to present her in a press conference. Jaisingh Jadhav is married to Sarita. Jaisingh Jadhav wants to get a promotion in his job and earn a name and fame by giving sessional news and Sarita also thought that by doing so Jaisingh is saving the life of a helpless girl. He became selfish for the reputation in his career. Sarita and Kamala both are subalterns in the play who cannot think and say anything. Sarita, as the ideal wife loves, cares for, and respects her husband but in return, she got nothing from her husband. Kamala is a smart woman she makes Sarita aware of Jaisingh's behavior about her. Kamala said you call yourself his wife but you are the slave of your husband. Sarita adjusts her life with Kamala and Jaisingh. She became a slave, material for her husband which gives him sexual pleasures, domestic comforts, and luxury. Jaisingh treats Sarita and Kamala as his slaves. Both Kamala and Sarita become victims of a male-dominated society. Kamala and Sarita reveal their simplicity, innocence, sincerity, and devotion in the play. Both are victimized at hands of Jaisingh who is disloyal. Loveless and hypocrite.

Conclusion:

Vijay Tendulkar portrayed his all-women character in the form of sufferers and victims. His all dramas show reality about women's life. He depicts diverse women's temperaments and human

nature in his plays. Most of the plays are feminist plays. In our society, it is necessary to teach the young generation how to deal with the problems of women. They should be aware of the fact that how women have to suffer in society. Children should be taught in the family how to handle women's issues and how to behave with women in the family and outside the home. Women should make mentally, physically, and emotionally strong to fight against all kinds of problems in her life.

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