

# **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, ARTS AND SCIENCE**



**ISSN 2319 – 9202**

*An Internationally Indexed Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal*

**WWW.CASIRJ.COM**  
**www.isarasolutions.com**

Published by iSaRa Solutions

## Idealism versus Reality: A Study of Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*

Subhash

M.Phil Research Scholar  
MDU Rohtak

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the four prominent dramatists who emerged in 1960 on the literary horizon of India. The other three are Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Badal Sircar in Bengali and Girish Karnad in Kannada. He has been the most influential dramatist and theatre personality in Marathi for almost four decades. He started his career as a dramatist in the mid-fifties. Many of his plays have been translated and produced in major Indian languages. Arundhati Banerjee observes,

“In all his early plays Tendulkar is concerned with the middle class individual set against the backdrop of a hostile society. Another distinctive feature of these plays is the absence of an easy solution. Tendulkar presents modern man in all complexities. He portrays it from different angles, without trying to moralize and philosophize in any way. Most of these works are endowed with his characteristic style of dialogue – jerky, half finished, yet signifying more than what it says”(7).

*Kanyadaan* (1983) is taken to be the most controversial of all the plays written by Vijay Tendulkar. It dwells on an extremely sensitive social and political issue, namely the conflict between upper castes and Dalits, a phenomenon still rampantly prevalent in several parts of India. Despite fifty years of independence Dalits continue to suffer abject misery and ill-treatment at the hands of the upper castes. Politicians, instead of trying to uproot this evil, seem to capitalize on it. Tendulkar delves deep into this social evil and presents it as it is. These interlocking issues are played out in this play. He raises disturbing questions, but never bothers to answer them. This method of his is truly characteristic of a genuine playwright whose foremost concern is to open his reader-audience's eyes to a social problem which continue to evade easy solutions.

The play *Kanyadaan* has the background of the twentieth century history of struggle over the practice of untouchability and the immediate phase of the Dalit movement in Maharashtra and in the nation as a whole. It is a psychological study of the social tensions caused by castism in India and the development of Jyoti's character from a highly cultured Brahmin girl into a hardened spouse of her Dalit husband. As the title suggests, the play centres round the theme of matrimonial relationship. Jyoti, a young Brahmin woman, comes from a politically and socially

active family. Yadhunath Devlalikar, her father, is an MLA. Seva, her mother is a busy social worker. Her brother Jayaprakash is an M.Sc. student. Jyoti is an educated working woman. Theirs is a urban middle class family. Brought up in such a progressive-minded family, Jyoti decided to marry Arun Athavale, a Dalit youth from a village, whom she has known only for two months. Arun is poor, but talented. He is a B.A. student. He writes poetry – a factor which seems to have influenced Jyoti in her decision to marry Arun. Jyoti informs her parents and brother that she has decided to marry Arun. Nath Devlalikar, the idealist who dreams of a castles society, thinks it a great opportunity for an ideological experiment. Nevertheless, as they are used to Nath's ways, they finally agree. Jyoti and Arun get married. "What follows is a sequence of violence, misery, and disillusionment."

The play is divided into two Acts each of which is further divided into scenes – Act I has two scenes, and Act II three scenes. Comparatively speaking, it is a shorter play by Tendulkar. Yet, it is the most gripping of all his plays. The evolution of Jyoti from a soft spoken, highly cultured Brahmin girl into a hardened Dalit girl is really incredible and distressing. One cannot but wonder if such a sacrifice, as Jyoti's, is possible among modern women! The unpredictable transformation occurring in Nath's attitude to the world is also vividly portrayed by the master playwright. The play, therefore, is at once a domestic, social and political one. In the opening scene we witness a happy family gathering. At this time, we feel a little disturbed at the fact that both Nath and Seva do not spend much time with their children. Nath is a busy man who is almost always on tour delivering public speeches. Seva is also busy organizing women's rallies and camps. Nath himself is always aware of this, and both Jayaprakash and Jyoti are accustomed to their long periods of absence. Here the playwright throws light on the fact that, in the contemporary society, educated parents become oblivious of their familial responsibility of tending their children while fulfilling their social obligations.

When Jyoti declares her intention to marry Arun whom she met in the Socialists' study group, Seva and Jayaprakash are shocked to hear her. But Nath is excited and dismisses his wife's questions concerning the boy's background and occupation as irrelevant. Jyoti tells her mother, "I feel he can be (trusted). His poem and autobiography have inspired me with complete faith in him"(10). Jyoti tries to allay her mother's fears by telling her that she will manage. She tells her parents of her intention of bringing Arun when they both are at home.

In scene 2, Act I, we see Jyoti bringing Arun to her house to introduce him to her parents and brother. Arun is dark-complexioned and has a harsh face. Yet he is good looking. On entering the comfortable middle-class house, Arun feels quite nervous and ill at ease. He does not want Jyoti to leave him alone, saying, "I feel uncomfortable in big houses..." (16). As the conversation progress, Arun grows more and more eloquent on the subject of untouchability. His words split venom. They express his hatred for Brahmins. He asks Jyoti:

Will you marry me and eat stinking bread with spoilt dal in my father's hut? Without vomiting? Tell me Jyoti can you sit everyday in slum's village toilet like my mother? Can you beg, quaking at every door, for a little grass for our buffaloes? Come on, tell me. (17)

Jyoti finds such talk revolting and she covers her face with her hands. She begins to weep uncontrollably on hearing what Arun says, And you thought of marrying me: Our life is not the socialists' service camp. It is hell, and I mean hell. A hell named life" (18).

Seva enters hiding her displeasure and asks Arun about his education, future prospects etc. The moments she hints at a 'stable career'. Arun burst out saying, "No problem. We shall be brewing illicit liquor" (21). Both Seva and Jayaprakash are shocked. Nath's entry at this juncture eases the situation a little. He is pleased with Arun's appearance. He tells his wife, "Seva, until today, 'Break the caste system' was a mere slogan for us. I've attended many intercaste marriage and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense" (22). After sometime Arun leaves not caring even to touch the tea that Jyoti brings him. On his departure, Seva tells her husband that Arun is someone who cannot fit among them. On being informed, Nath speaks in defence of Arun's vice behaviour, he advises Jyoti to think the matter over. But Jyoti does not want to change her mind and that her decision is 'final'. Nath decides to stand by her, come what may. Therefore he says, "I am Jyoti's side... He (Arun) may not be a gentleman, but neither he is a good scoundrel. As a human being he has intelligence, drive and creativity"(29).

Jyoti gets married to Arun. Scene 1 of Act II opens to show us a Jyoti who has become tired and crashed after a few months of married life with Arun. Arun drinks and beats her. She comes home with the determination not to return to him. To her father's proposal that both of them could stay in his house, she replies in sheer agony, "He ... will not enter this house. Because .... I am not going back to him again...never" (39). All are stunned to hear Jyoti speaking so agitatedly. Nath, however, is firm on his resolution not to break the relationship. Arun enters fully drunk asking for Jyoti's pardon. He says to Nath, "I will see Jyoti and fall at her feet. I will beg her pardon. Don't want anything else (42). To Seva's question why he beat Jyoti he responds in the following manner, "What am I but the son of scavenger. We don't know the non-violent ways of Brahmins like you. We drink and beat our wives... We make love to them...but the beating is what gets publicized" (44). Jyoti, who has been watching all this, leaves the house with Arun, perhaps to prevent further embarrassment to her parents and brother. On seeing this Nath feels proud about the training that he gave Jyoti has not been in vain.

In scene 2, Act II we see Nath immersed in Arun's autobiography which has just been published. Seva reports him that Jyoti is pregnant and advised rest by the doctor. But she has failed in her attempts at persuading her to come home. Nath is all praise for his son-in-law who has shown the world that he is powerful, creative writer through his autobiography. At this juncture, Nath receives a phone call urging him to chair a discussion on his son-in-law's book. But he bluntly refuses to do so, for by now, he has discovered that Arun is a hypocrite and an

avenger. He is now convinced that his son-in-law is not a saviour of society, but a canker eating into its very soul. But Nath does go to the function and deliver a hypocritical speech, under pressure from his wife who thinks that such a gesture would save their pregnant daughter from any misery.

In the last scene we find that Nath's hypocritical action receives a boomeranging reaction from his own daughter, Jyoti, who comes to hear him speak on Arun's autobiography. Jyoti confronts him with question, "Why did you come to the meeting today? (65) Nath tries his best to convince her affirmation that Arun's autobiography is a very good book. But Jyoti continues to batter him saying that it is all a lie, for she knows, "You attend the meeting and made a speech only because you were afraid that if you didn't, Arun would torture me more" (66). Jyoti's words sting Nath. He feels helpless and defenceless. He is pained to see his ideals crumbling. This daughter of his has been a severe critic of his speeches right from the time when she was eleven years old. When Nath asks her who will take care of her during delivery, Jyoti harshly replies:

I have my husband. I am not a widow. Even if I become one I won't knock at your door. I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devlalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. I don't say harijan. I despise the term. I am an untouchable, a scavenger. I one of them. Don't touch me. Fly from my shadows, otherwise my fire scorch your comfortable values. (70)

Saying these words, she leaves the house, obviously, never to return. Nath breaks down and lies on the sofa, a totally defeated idealist-father. The play ends here. The reader-audience is left wondering what could be the future of Jyoti, and, of course her father.

### Works Cited

Banerjee, Arundhati. Introduction. *Five Plays*. By Vijay Tendulkar. Bombay: Oxford UP,

VII-XIX. Print.

*Kanyadaan*. Bombay: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.

Tendulkar, Vijay. *Five Plays*. Bombay: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.



# EARN YOUR MBA

WWW.IIMPS.IN



Accreditation & Ranking



UGC / NCTE Approved.

INFO@IIMPS.IN

☎ 011-41005174

R  
S  
E  
A  
R  
C  
H  
G  
A  
T  
E  
W  
A  
Y

## STOP PLAGIARISM



**Arogyam Ayurveda**  
Holistic Healing through herbs



A  
R  
O  
G  
Y  
A  
M  
O  
N  
L  
I  
N  
E

## PARIVARTAN PSYCHOLOGY CENTER



### COLOR PSYCHOLOGY : HOW COLOR AFFECT YOUR CHILD



- BLUE** Calms your Child's Mind & Body
- YELLOW** Promotes Concentration, Stimulates the Memory
- PINK** Evokes Empathy, makes your Child Calm
- RED** Excites and energizes your Child's body
- GREEN** Improves Reading speed and Comprehension

www.parivartan4u.com



Confuse about your children's future?

**भारतीय भाषा, शिक्षा, साहित्य एवं शोध**

ISSN 2321 – 9726

[WWW.BHARTIYASHODH.COM](http://WWW.BHARTIYASHODH.COM)



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF  
MANAGEMENT SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

ISSN – 2250 – 1959 (O) 2348 – 9367 (P)

[WWW.IRJMST.COM](http://WWW.IRJMST.COM)



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF  
COMMERCE, ARTS AND SCIENCE**

ISSN 2319 – 9202

[WWW.CASIRJ.COM](http://WWW.CASIRJ.COM)



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF  
MANAGEMENT SOCIOLOGY & HUMANITIES**

ISSN 2277 – 9809 (O) 2348 - 9359 (P)

[WWW.IRJMSSH.COM](http://WWW.IRJMSSH.COM)



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF SCIENCE  
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

ISSN 2454-3195 (online)

[WWW.RJSET.COM](http://WWW.RJSET.COM)



**INTEGRATED RESEARCH JOURNAL OF  
MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION**

ISSN 2582-5445

[WWW.IRJMISI.COM](http://WWW.IRJMISI.COM)



**JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES, POLITICS  
AND ECONOMICS RESEARCH**

[WWW.JLPER.COM](http://WWW.JLPER.COM)

**JLPE**