

# Portrayal of Female Characters in a Patriarchal Set-up

Dr Pritika Sharma

*Dr B. R. Ambedkar University, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India*

**Abstract---**The present paper describes how the females struggle in a patriarchal setup for their survival by dealing with in-depth study of two renowned plays. The analysis of the plays in shows how the patriarchy plays a great role in suppressing the woman and how the woman struggle to live their own life by trying to be free from the shackles of the patriarchy. It also presents some of the remedies though the plays have been limited to the portrayal of the horrible conditions only.

**Index -Term: Dead End, Shakti, Devdasi, Sisterhood, X-ray.**

Patriarchy, the oldest system which was beneficial in its earlier stage, deteriorated with the passage of time. In the present time we find this set-up in its ugliest form. It is disintegrating the family and the society. The drastic consequences of this system are painted in a skillful manner by Partap Sharma and Vijay Tendulkar.

The ugliest form is:

Jane: - "Why have we run out of bread?"

Gill:- "Because of Patriarchy"

(www.urbandictionary.com quoted by Jizzy Spunkbubbles August 25,2013)

Feminists are of the view that 'Patriarchy' is the root of all the problems caused by males in the lives of females. It is a social system of male power exercised not only through domination but also through benevolence and protection, even love. In a family, Father or Husband holds primary power and predominates in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. In the society also, every head of the family commands his supremacy. Patriarchy is the cultural system affecting and assailing the female psyche in our society. A girl right from her birth is taught to learn the submission of the male in her life as if that is the only right way. Almost in every Indian Society, we find the woman largely ignored as human being. She is denied her individual distinctive identity.

The notion that women are fickle and faithless is an invention of males. Men can express themselves

freely. Women are unable to do so. Their voice is throttled. (Chatterjee, 2013, 55)

And again-

A Woman is regarded as goddess, representative of and synonymous with man's glory, epitome of purity and good conduct but is, at the same time, victimized, oppressed and suppressed in the patriarchy of our country. (Chaturvedi, 57)

Patriarchy has made women a secondary citizen. "Nevertheless it is wishful thinking to assume that a system that effectively stifled the female voice for centuries – and had the dubious credit women themselves endorsing and ensuring its survival- can be erased by a few social activists and militant feminists." (Thankamma, 80)

Prostitution has been one of the oldest professions since the ancient times. We find celestial demigods in the Indralok like Rambha, Menaka, Thilothamma etc. Kautilya's famous *Arthashastra* written around 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC contains even rules for prostitutes. In his time, the prostitutes enjoyed some prerogatives rights and duties. The present day Devdasi system in South as also the Mukhies system in the North were reconsidered pious at the initial stage but due to laxity in moral values among priests, these systems were misused later on. Thus prostitution in India may be called as Ancient Vice in Modern Garb. Both Vijay Tendulkar in *Sakharam Binder* and Partap Sharma in *A Touch of Brightness*, talk about paid prostitution (which exists due to patriarchy only). Ironical it is that patriarchy, which projects woman as 'SHAKTI', is also responsible to offer that 'SHAKTI' as a helpless sacrificial animal in the very temple of 'SHAKTI'. Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder* is an epitome of patriarchy in rural India and personifies the ugliest form of prostitution existing in India, especially in rural India. Tendulkar was the first playwright to have the courage to present it on the stage to the open view of the public as well as the intelligencia.

A modern playwright is the conscience keeper of the people. He visualizes the thoughts and aspirations of

the people and tries to give them shape in words through various literary genres. Vijay Tendulkar and Partap Sharma both are enlightened writers who have a strong faith in making full use of their dramatic skills in improving society by giving them a new vision of their own. They were conscious of this burning issue which has been prevalent since the ancient days and has not ended but has changed its form and pattern. The society is still not very eager to do away with this evil. The plays of these two playwrights not only entertain but also make the society aware of their responsibilities. They have objectively presented the harsh reality and want to leave a strong message for the people. To get their message, we have to make an in-depth study of their plays. Very cautiously but powerfully they have depicted the harsh social realities in order to give a heavy jerk to the society lost in the complacent deep sleep. Having deep sense of responsibility towards society, they have shown the courage to present the ugly truth before the audience. The motive of both these great playwrights is “to persistently probe the operations of power, the hidden seams of violence in Indian History and the obstacles that stand in the way of social change and modernization.” (Rai, 102)

*A Touch of Brightness* is the story of Prema, the daughter of a Devdasi living in Mysore. It appears as if she wants to get rid of the Devdasi life so she comes to Mumbai in search of a job. She is a little educated and wants to live a dignified life. In Mumbai she meets with a young boy, named Pidku who finds himself mesmerized with the religious views of Prema who can speak of Krishna, can talk about the Upanishads. Pidku lives on the footpath with Benarasi Baba, who seems to be his illegitimate father. Unfortunately, she falls in the hands of villainous Banarsi Baba who sells her to a brothel keeper for just four hundred rupees. There she lives with Basanti, Vatsala, Suraksha and Bhabhi Rani, the owner. Her name is changed to Rukmini. Partap Sharma presents a very lively and harsh picture of the plight of prostitutes. Pidku comes to rescue Rukmini but he finds himself helpless due to scarcity of money. Bhabhi Rani refuses to set Rukmini free until she gets money paid to Benarasi Baba. Sri Bhartendra, a sadhu meets Rukmini as her customer. Both are fascinated with each other due to their similar interest in religious books. Partap Sharma presents another

side of the brothel life- when customers stop coming to them, they are all forced to go hungry. We see Suraksha suffering from some mysterious disease. Vatsala dies as her saree catches fire while trying to repair the stove. After spending days in prison Pidku comes forth to rescue Rukmini as he has learnt how to make toys in jail and by that time he has earned enough money to give to Bhabhi Rani to free Rukmini but it is too late as Bhabhi Rani is too clever to set her free now. Moreover, Rukmini has, by now, become totally pessimistic; she herself does not want to leave the brothel house. She develops venereal disease. Moreover, she is pregnant and the baby is in premature stage. Dr Dariwalla tries to cure her but Bhabhi Rani and Benarsi bribe him to kill her. Ultimately she dies. Thus the story shows how prostitution goes on and on because of male domination.

Vijay Tendulkar in *Sakharam Binder* talks in the same tone but in a different way. Sakharam, a book binder, in spite of being a Brahmin, leads a very low life – much below the cultural level of a Brahmin and brings home women who have been thrown out either by their husbands or by their in-laws because their husbands had died in order to satisfy their animal desires. Tendulkar very aptly suggests that it is always the patriarchal system of the society, either in the form of their in-laws or husband, which compels the woman to live the life much below even that of a prostitute. Sakharam brings Lakshmi home as the seventh woman. Lakshmi is loyal, docile, religious, hardworking tender hearted and self-effacing. She leaves Sakharam's house as she is fed up of his lust and violence. Sakharam brings Champa, 'a new bird' (*Sakharam Binder*) in his house as soon as Lakshmi is ousted. Champa is totally different from Lakshmi. Sakharam is not able to dominate Champa as he did his previous women though he adopts the same tactics and uses the same male dominated phraseology:

I'm hot headed....I have a foul mouth. There's always *bidior* an oath on my lips-that's what the whole town says about me. I'm not rich but I pull on. I'm the master here. I don't care if they treat me like dirt outside. (*Sakharam Binder*, 125)

Lakshmi, who has gone to reside with her relative, comes back to Sakharam as soon as she is thrown out by her relative. As there is no other shelter she can find, she has to return to Sakharam. Champa at the

request of Lakshmi and for serving her own interest (as she thinks that Lakshmi will do the domestic chores for her) readily agrees and defies Sakharam who is unwilling to keep Lakshmi. Is it not ironical that Champa behaves like a dominant male and uses Lakshmi as her servant throughout her presence in the house! The presence of both the women at the same time had a strange effect on Sakharam. Champa develops physical relationship with Dawood and Lakshmi develops asexual relationship with Shinde, husband of Champa who frequently visits Sakharam's house. She turns out to be wily and vicious when her survival is threatened by Champa. Lakshmi tells about Champa's affair with Dawood which is unbearable to Sakharam. At last, at the instigation of Lakshmi, Sakharam throttles Champa.

Both the plays show how badly women are exploited in the patriarchal society. In *A touch of Brightness*, Prema is forced to be Rukmini. Banarsi clutches the wrist of Prema; Prema tries hard to defend herself but is frightened to see Bedker, the policeman:

Banarsi Baba and Prema stop struggling. The old man is obviously not upset since he does not release her wrist. If anything he is glad that the policeman has arrived to frighten her into submission. And she is frightened. A policeman is an ogre not to be disturbed, a judge who hears no defense. See how Sakharam himself speaks to Lakshmi:

You're going to live here now. This house is like me. .... You'll find out what he's like. No free and easy ways here, see? I'm hot-headed. When I lose my temper, I beat the life out of people.... I won't hear any complaints later. If you're careless, I'll show you the door. Don't ask any pity then.

(*Sakharam Binder*, 125)

Both the plays remind us that the woman is equated with a drum which is meant for beating and Sakharam thinks that he can get meaning/music from a woman only by treating and beating as if she were a pleasant DRUM. But there is always yearning in a woman to get rid of this system. To quote Kamla Das:

I shall some day  
Leave the cocoon  
You build around me with morning tea  
Love-words flung from doorway  
(I shall Some Day)

But she is continuously asked,  
Be embroiderer, be a cook  
Be a quarrelling with servants  
Belong, cried the categories.

(Summer in Calcutta)

*Sakharam Binder* paints the plight of women in all its wretchedness. Even as Lakshmi steps in the house, she is asked to look after the house at the daytime and satisfy him at night. Just observe the patriarchal tone of Sakharam:

Come in. Have a good look around. .... 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 is all right, put down your bundle and stay. Otherwise you can clear out. ... I'm the master here. I don't care if they treat me like dirt outside. But a house must be a home, you understand? (125)

She must have to keep the whole house in order. There is a well at the back of the house. The lavatory is further down. The well dries up in summer. Then she will have to fetch water from the river which is a mile away. During rainy season scorpions move around. She can't look up and talk to anybody except Sakharam. She has to keep her head covered. She can't complain. She can't blame. For all this she will get simple food and two common Saris initially and after that one in a year. Vasant Palshikar observes:

Actually, the play *Sakharam Binder* is not about Sakharam. Initially, the playwright may have intended to make Sakharam the protagonist. But the play slips from his hand; it becomes the play that focuses on the character of Lakshmi, and at this point, she becomes the Protagonist of the play.

(Palshikar, 73)

But I find it difficult to agree with him because it is Lakshmi who highlights the character of Sakharam and Sakharam remains the protagonist from the beginning to the end. Both the dramatists adopt a biting satirical tone to attack the patriarchal set up of the society. Female sexuality is a taboo and sexual dependence is regarded as dangerous and destabilizing. In fact, the icon of womanhood is built around the virtues of sexual fidelity and sacrifice.

(Basak, 91)

When Champa goes to Dawood, we see the irony that a male having slept with so many woman, can not tolerate Champa, a woman should sleep with another man though he happens to be his fast friend. In his book *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet argues that patriarchy rules over women and constructs a type for woman but the irony is that males themselves do not allow women to maintain, retain and preserve that dignified image in order to satisfy their lust and that is a very clever ploy employed by the MALE in order to keep women ever under their thumb. The builders of socio-cultural norms themselves break the socio-cultural norms for fulfilling their animal passion. Rukmini is fascinated by Bhartendra as he is a sadhu but soon she realized that 'he's just a spineless snake'. (ATOB, 48). How ironical is it that the playwright shows the irony that males adopt all the hypocritical masks to exploit the woman! Males can go to the extent of even cheating GOD in the guise of asadhu to trap a simple girl like Prema/Rukmini to feed their lust.

Prema, Basanti, Suraksha, Vatsala in *A Touch Of Brightness* and Lakshmi & Champa in *Sakharam Binder* are all women badly dependent on their male counterparts with servile submission. Basanti, Suraksha, Vatsala, metaphorically silent due to their circumstances construed, connived and imposed upon them by patriarchy. All of them resist but at last surrender ---- The reason behind their submission in the end can be summarized in one rather cryptic phrase – lack of economic independence. If they had economic independence, they would have succeeded in shaking off the constraints of the patriarchal set up. They would have remained emancipated, if they had been free from the yoke of patriarchy thrust upon them. The patriarchal set-up which sings of the woman as Shakti, shamelessly demolish and crack that holy image just to fulfill their physical needs. In the view of Partap Sharma, Patriarchy is a cage that hinders the soaring of the females in the open they called life and each brothel house is a cage where patriarchy system is stripped off. He blurts out, quite rightly so:

Every cage is like one of those machines in hospitals—an X-ray—it uncovers the sins of the heart and mind. (ATOB, 11)

The author states that males themselves have created the pleasure cages in the form of brothels but these cages strip their minds and hearts every time they go

there. Partap Sharma's Prema is a prostitute in body not in mind as she is in search of a job in Mumbai so that she might live with dignity. Her purity is evident when she says, "In Mysore, My mother used to tell me to have nothing to do with men." ( ATOB,11)

As far as Basanti, Vatsala and Suraksha (Other characters of ATOB) are concerned, are they not an ugly comment on the dubious patriarchal set-up of the society! The shocking fact is that ATOB was written in 1964 and Sakharam Binder was written in 1974 (27 years ....more than a quarter of a century after independence)but nothing has changed for dependent women in the patriarchal set- up. They are being abused, used harassed and raped even after 60 years of independence. The glaring example of 'NIRBHAYA KAND' is still ringing in the years of Indian women. Sakharam and Banarsi Baba are still active in their old saintly guise and shatter her all HOPES for emancipation.

Tendulkar has ferretted on the whole oscillograph of man and woman relationship. He has highlighted the male hypocrisy when Sakharam appears to be a conformist and non-conformist as per his own needs depending upon the situation. Sakharam expresses his contempt for the society:

People! What do I owe them or their bloody fathers? Did they feed me when I went hungry?.....every single one of those damned fellows is soiled, filthy. Trying to look clean outside. Stuffed with dirt inside. (173)

Little does Sakharam realize that he himself is not different from them. V. M. Madge comments that the very words in which he condemns people's hypocrisy strongly apply to him also (126).

Lakshmi shows a woman's extreme submission in hostile patriarchal set-up when she comes back to Sakharam's house again and regards him as her husband even after being cruelly molested by him. At the end of the play Tendulkar very aptly changes the roles of Champa and Sakharam – Champa in a male role and Sakharam in the docile female role. Sharma and Tendulkar both agreed with Simon De Beauvoir when she says that Women are made, not born.

Women by the man-made cultural system are taught to play the subordinate role. They are surrounded by male sovereignty right from their birth. They play a second fiddle first to the father and then to the husband and in between they experience the male dominance of other male relatives. Not even for a

single moment they realize that they have, in the words of Virginia Woolf, *A ROOM OF THEIR OWN* (*A Room of One's Own*) as a human being. Mrinal Pandey opined that for ruling over women, patriarchal society adopted the British policy of Divide and Rule. Women are divided. This is very obvious in our society. From the birth of a girl child, she is taught to be submissive and asks others to be submissive. Daughter is subordinate to mother and daughter-in-law is subordinate to mother-in-law. (Bahu remains under the dominance of SAAS and NANAD) Even the younger sis-in-law rules over the Bhabi. Females never think about the progress of females. When their sister suffers from patriarchal rules, they remain either silent or support the patriarchy. Not a single woman in the whole village raises her voice against the plight of Lakshmi. She regularly goes to the well in order to fetch the water. The well is a place of ladies' assembly gossips but no rebel is shown there by Tendulkar. It seems as if Tendulkar purposefully avoided this scene because his primary focus was on male domination. Culture bound mental set-up is clearly shown when Lakshmi comes back to Sakharam and discovers that Champa is having an affair with Dawood.

....the whole of the last week. Where does she go every afternoon? I went for his sake. My misfortune. I couldn't keep the man I married. For me this was my husband. I worshipped him. Even when I was away, I'd worship him in silence everyday....if I have to die, let me die on his lap- in full glory like a married woman.....oh, God, he doesn't know. The thought of it makes me sick.  
(187-88)

Sisterhood is the key to end this dominance and hostile patriarchy. Bonding between Lakshmi and Champa puts a break to the supremacy of Sakharam. Sakharam is in a strange situation to see both the women so friendly and united. As Arundhati Banerjee remarks, ".....two different strands in his character come into direct confrontation creating a psychological turmoil in him" (Introduction: XIV) Sakharam's strange situation leads him to the murder of Champa. We think that sisterhood may end the domination of women.

In both of the plays the women are trying to find out their own identity. They try to fit themselves in varied frames or we may say that they are trying to

find out a fit frame for themselves. When Champa goes to Dawood, she is trying to find a fit alternate for herself not only because of her physical needs but also for economic sustenance. Of course, a relationship between two illiterate persons may start with physical attraction. She presents herself as the strong woman as she sees that she had deserted her husband, not the husband. Domination will end as soon as equality is there. Modern woman is searching for identity, pining for equality which is shown in both the plays. In *A touch of Brightness*, we see the main character Prema struggling to find a job  
Prema:- I said I am looking for a job. (ATOB, 9)

Both of the dramatists use ironical names. The name 'Lakshmi' symbolises wealth i. e. richness and Tendulkar's Lakshmi has no money at all, not even food to eat and house to live in. When she comes back to Sakharam and persuades Champa to live with her in the house, Champa boldly asks Sakharam to let her live. In the persuasion Lakshmi accepts her helplessness:

Where can I go? Can't go back to my nephew? Or to my husband either. (*Sakharam Binder* 180)  
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All I want is a roof over my head. I'll do what you want. (181)

Champa, the name of a flower, has an extremely heady fragrance but is not very showy with just a few yellowish white petals. Its fragrance has made it very popular and has been a part of the Indian culture from time immemorial; it is not so with Tendulkar's Champa. She is so much frank and open that she praises Dawood in the very presence of Sakharam and Dawood too shows undue interest in Champa. With the result that Sakharam is too bewildered to allow Dawood to visit his house. His thinking at the moment is remarkable:

**Dawood** [punctuating Sakharam's remarks with the following words while he himself is absorbed in watching Champa]. Oh yes....Quite....Absolutely....[and then, involuntarily] Wow!

**Sakharam** [now even more conscious]. What is the matter?

**Dawood**. Terr-i-fic! [then recollecting himself] Sakharam, I'm off.

[Hesitates] I'll....I'll come back later.

Sakharam. No, no, I will come to see you.

Champa seems to be fetid rather than fragrant and especially when we see her drunk and engaged in fierce carnal activities but here also we see her own suppression in a hostile patriarchal set-up of the society:

Lakshmi. How are you getting along here?

Champa. Getting Along? Once you drink, you get along fine. But your Sakharam, he really takes his money's worth out of a woman. I've managed to last out here.

What else can I do? Go out in the street?

Face half a dozen animals every day! Easier to put up with this one.

The name 'Prema' means love but ironically there is no love in her life. As soon as she becomes Rukmini, which means 'adorned with gold' she is lacking even good clothes to wear. The name 'Vatsala' means loving but again she (Vatsala) is not getting love even from her own illegitimate child—Pidku who even does not know that she is his mother. The name 'Suraksha' which means safety, but Suraksha is able neither to defend herself nor to provide safety to others who are living with her. She could not do anything except watching Vatsala screaming when fire catches her. Lakshmi surrenders but only to get food and shelter for herself but Rukmini has to die because she is in the strong clutches of patriarchy.

Both Tendulkar and Partap Sharma do not give any explicit message. They just depict the hard realities. They present the extreme hostility of male power. In *ATOB*, we find that Rukmini is callously left to die: males of the society facilitate her death:

Dr. Dariwalla: There is no need for that now. She is under sedation. She won't know the difference. She will sleep through the night.

Bhabhi Rani: And then?

Dr. Dariwalla: (looks away) It...it depends.

She may never awake.

In *Sakharam Binder*, Champa is murdered by Sakharam. A true picture of a hostile patriarchal set-up is clearly drawn by Vijay Tendulkar. A man may have sexual relationship with as many women as he wants but a woman can't do so in any case. Lakshmi has internalized the patriarchal value system and can not cope with the situation which threatens the 'natural establishment. Sakharam is a man of several women, so also Champa, a woman if not of several, clearly of three men- her husband, Sakharam and

Dawood. But the value standard is different in case of Champa and so not to be tolerated.

(Basak 95). She is always allowed to live and act as the male society decides. Lakshmi and Champa both are illiterate but they don't try to save themselves. They have submitted themselves to their fate.

All the characters appear to be independent decision-maker but their decisions are strongly influenced by patriarchy. Rukmini, in *A Touch Of Brightness*, decides to take a job but ultimately surrenders to her fate decided by a male like Banarsi Baba. Lakshmi herself decides to come back to Sakharam but her decision also results in her oppression and she finds no other better alternative than to save herself from males. Champa too decides to leave her husband and to live with Sakharam, and develops relationship with Dawood. Both the playwrights make a dissecting analysis of the whole patriarchal society. In *Sakharam Binder*, no one in the whole village questions the living pattern of Sakharam because most of them, directly or indirectly, follow him and support patriarchal set-up of society. Sakharam blatantly tells:

In this bloody place the men are all the same.

They slink out at night, on the sly. And they put on an act all the time. They'd like us to believe that they're an innocent lot!

(Sakharam Binder, 126)

Tendulkar in his *His Fifth Woman* also presents the same picture of Patriarchal set-up the society:

Sakharam: She is not my kept woman. That is the habit of those of this Town who are married and keep another woman somewhere

else to fuck at will. They keep it secret, the hypocrites. I don't. Everyone sees with whom I live. (His Fifth Women, 50)

In the same play he delineates the miserable lot of women in a patriarchal set up:

Dawood:.....What a life! Sold in marriage to a man older to her by Thirty years and who already had a wife of her mother's age. Than not even six months have passed and he dies in an accident. The first wife throws the unfortunate girl out with only the clothes she is wearing and nothing else. Her parents refuse to take her back.....(His Fifth Woman, 51)

When one reflects on the causes of the sufferings of women in this way, one finds that orthodoxy and ignorance due to illiteracy are, mainly, responsible for their sufferings. The heroine of *A Touch of Brightness* does not know about the Bombay Devdasi Act 1934. Had she been educated, she would have been able to defend herself in Mysore itself. She is searching for a job in Mumbai to get rid of evil Devdasi system. She says to herself:

But nobody will give me a job. And I am not trained for anything. I can read and write.....I tried very hard in Mysore.

(ATOB, 9)

All the male Characters in *A Touch of Brightness* are prototypes of Sakharam. They are from different religions and professions. In *A Touch of Brightness*, a doctor (Dariwalla), a sadhu (Sri), a policeman (Bedkar), Banarsi Baba (an elderly person) symbolically represent the strata of entire society and in *Sakharam Binder* Sakharam alone is the icon of the whole patriarchy. Of course, there are other secondary characters who reflect the various shades of Patriarchy. There are the policeman Shinde (Champa's husband), Dawood, a Muslim, a Munshif (Lakshmi's father. The vision of the plight of a Munsif's Daughter (Lakshmi) and an inspector's wife (Champa) is not only surprising but also shocking. An inspector and a judge are supposed to be the champions of justice but being males they can not provide justice to the females of their own house. The playwrights, have selected the characters from many professions (Doctor, Judge, Police, Sadhu) to reveal the inner picture of patriarchal set-up. They clearly show of what the society is made of. They forcefully state the view that the problem lies not with the females alone but with the whole society and its patriarchal set-up. In order to reveal the depth of the malady they have adopted the technique used by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*. There too Chaucer presents a vivid picture of the society by introducing characters from almost all the major professions. Incidentally we observe both the sides of the coin- Partap Sharma showing the high Urban society while Tendulkar placing the story in rural India. The picture of the two sides of the coin makes the problem all the more solid and palpable like a coin. Sakharam, Banarsi Baba, Bedker, Dariwalla and Sri are an integral part of the art of the patriarchal set-up even in our own times. Tendulkar ends his play *The Fifth*

*Woman* with the fateful remark, "The one and only Sakharam, is at his game again." (*The Fifth Woman*, 75)

The endings of both the plays are significant. Both the women who seem to be identity conscious are being metaphorically silenced. No sign of hope can be traced. But we can assume that there is a strong need for women empowerment especially their economic-empowerment. We see that the poor and illiterate women are being exploited the most.

Dr Dariwalla: Well, when currency notes are

no longer fit for use they are taken out of circulation. So are the women. And new ones are brought in. (ATOB, 38)

In *Sakharam Binder*, the hero Sakharam changes women like dresses as soon as he finds them unusable. Lakshmi, the seventh woman is not the end- there is Champa, the eighth and who knows Sakharam may manage for the ninth because the state powers like the Munsif and the Policeman are there to help him.

Partap Sharma talks about the prostitution Houses as 'Dead End' (Pidku ATOB, 43) A 'dead end' in the sense that there is no life for a girl who once entered in the prostitution profession. How sarcastically Partap Sharma makes Sri remark:

.....She'll still be the same girl. And you can buy her out even cheaper. (ATOB, 47)

when Pidku is trying to have money to save Prema. The same happens with Sakharam who keeps deserted woman for his animal passion. Both the playwrights are highly realistic in the delineation of characters and human relationships and in the depiction of the setting in which the characters enact the drama of their lives.

The golden era is gone, now the life of new age so called Devdasis/prostitutes have a very tough life which is clearly depicted in both of the plays. *A Touch of Brightness* deals with the higher class society/ urban society in the sense that high class people visit prostitutes while *Sakharam Binder* deals with the lower class society. The setting of *A Touch of Brightness* is Mumbai while the setting of *Sakharam Binder* is a village. we can assert that *A Touch of Brightness* deals with paid prostitution in open while *Sakharam Binder* deals the same in closed doors.

The two playwrights differ in their technique of presentation of the women characters. Lakshmi gains strength at the dead end while Rukmini has strength at the initial stage but loses it in the end and is left to die. Lakshmi is dormant initially but becomes active towards the end. She makes Sakharam to look very weak at the close of the play. If we can visualize a New Woman out of the initial strength of Rukmini and Champa and the later strength of Lakshmi, we can get a hopeful picture of a very strong woman. Perfect example of gender stereotyping is seen in the characters of Lakshmi and Champa. Champa is a figure of revolt while Lakshmi is a figure of submission. Two polarities of feminine response to patriarchy are seen in Lakshmi and Champa. The worst thing Patriarchy does is that woman herself is trained to safeguard and perpetuate the system. From the birth of a girl child, she is trained to be submissive and tolerant, ironically by the female part of the society. Lakshmi is pessimistic at the initial level but emerges highly optimistic at last and Rukmini is optimistic at the initial stage but emerges highly pessimistic at the end which leads to her doom. She says, "Though I never began the world, I would end it. (ATOB, 85)

An interesting point of the difference between the two playwrights is that Tendulkar presents the problem in the backdrop of a family i. e. Sakharam's House while Partap highlights it in the background of a brothel (The Red Light Area of Mumbai).

Both the playwrights show women searching for their identity but the patriarchal set-up has such a crushing influence on them that they are not able to find their true identity. They are confined to the identity which Patriarchal set-up allows them. Lakshmi and Champa settle their fate in the patriarchal set-up according to its rules. Rukmini also tries to search for her own identity but she too finds herself succumbing to the hostile patriarchal set up.

Tendulkar and Partap both have, of course, put the frightening truth before us but their plays fail to suggest any remedy to get over the malady. They seem to say that there is no escape from this frightening reality. We are left to surmise that it is the inevitable consequence of the middle class social context within which both the plays are rooted. Thus the dark picture is there without any hint at the bright solution. One only wishes that they had the daring vision and craftsmanship of Shaw and Ibsen or

Galsworthy to prick the conscience of the society and the law-makers and thereby awaken them to act for the solution of the problem and the salvation of the woman

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