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INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S SAKHARAM BINDER



Abstract:-

In the present paper, the scholar concentrated on the interpersonal relationship between man and woman. Vijay Tendulkar throws light on typical person, Sakharam Binder. How he crosses boundaries of family life and social codes and norms. He used woman as a tool for satisfying animal passions. The paper deals with various relationships existed in the society. As the main character, Sakharam Binder rejects all types of traditional Indian Family customs. Sakharam Binder seeks interest in sexual enjoyment and drinking.

Keywords:

Sex, Lusty, Drunkard, Co-habitation, Eccentric, Religious, Dutiful, Etc.

INTRODUCTION-

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the best Marathi play writers in India. Tendulkar's Marathi play, '*Sakharam Binder*' is translated into English by Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhale. There is an amazing portrayal of the enormous capacity of lust and violence inherent in human beings through the character, Sakharam. He is a binder by profession. He is a self-made man who lives life according to his own beliefs. He was born in a Brahmin family. He had run away from his house due to the always beatings by his father. He does not believe in the institution of marriage. He has discovered an economical method of fulfilling his sexual needs as well as managing his home. He gives shelter to women who have been divorced by their husbands. Such woman has to perform all the wifely duties in his house. He used woman as a tool for satisfying animal passions. The paper deals with various relationships existed in the society. As the main character, Sakharam Binder rejects all types of traditional Indian Family customs. Sakharam Binder seeks interest in sexual enjoyment and drinking.

Aims and Objectives:

- To present interpersonal relationship
- To show the typical characters like Sakharam Binder
- To show how socio-cultural norms are violated
- To show the eccentric figures
- To show the suppression and exploitation of women

Interpersonal Relationship in Vijay Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder*

The play opens with Sakharam bringing his seventh woman, Lakshmi, in the home and explaining to her his system of contractual co-habitation. Lakshmi was divorced by her husband because she could not bear a child to him. Lakshmi appears to be just like an average Indian woman who is religious and dutiful. She is quite simple and timid and appears completely in awe of Sakharam. She can be quite adamant when it comes to her beliefs and convictions. She is in the habit of conversing with ants and crows. Her religious rituals seem to offer her the strength to face the hardships of life.

Sakharam's habit of referring to himself in the third person indicates his exalted opinion of himself. He is a middle-aged and strong but impressive looking man. He makes all the details regarding himself and his house clear at the beginning and warns Lakshmi not to make any complaints later.

The traditional aspect hidden beneath the outward unconventional personality of Sakharam comes out through the following instructions he gives to Lakshmi: **"If someone calls, you're not supposed to look up and talk. If it's a stranger, you'll have to cover your head and answer him briefly"**¹ Thus it is plain that he expects Lakshmi to behave like a typical traditional Indian housewife though it is only a contractual co-habitation. The deceitful nature of Sakharam becomes evident through the tirades that he launches against the people in society. His favourite spare time activity appears to be lashing out at people for ill-treating their wives and making an outward show of being religious. He likes to display his virility. While asking Lakshmi to be prepared to satisfy his physical needs, he brags:

"Mine is no ordinary appetite. And I won't hear any complaints later."²

There is a vicious vein in his nature. He does not mind beating Lakshmi if she rejects to satisfy him. He forces himself on her when Lakshmi complains that her body is throbbing with pain. Sakharam denounces those who believe in the institution of marriage in the following words: **"Beat her, kick her every single minute of the day. They're an impotent lot! For them the woman's just dirt, that's all."**³

It is satirical that his behaviour with Lakshmi turns out to be no different.

When Sakharam decides to bring Lord Ganapati to his house, his friend Dawood assists him. Lakshmi objects to Dawood's presence in the worship and is beaten severely by Sakharam in consequence. Both Sakharam and Lakshmi start losing their tolerance with each other. Lakshmi complains that she is fed up with the hard physical labour that she has done in the house. Moreover, Sakharam is always beating and cursing her. Sakharam defends himself saying that he has tried to change his behaviour according to Lakshmi's wishes. He has reduced his intake of opium and wine a little. He even performs prayer daily in time. He gets rid of Lakshmi by sending her to her nephew.

He has not given same treatment to his other wife, Champa. She has left her husband, Fauzdar Shinde, because of his impotency. He is a drinker and has been dismissed from the job. Sakharam comes under the spell of her physical beauty and is unable to dominate her. It is clear that Sakharam is unable, as is his usual way, to dominate Champa right from the starting of their relationship. While Sakharam is explaining to her the rules of their co-habitation, she goes on breaking them one by one. She shows total coldness to Sakharam's threats. While he tells her that she will have to see the kitchen. She asks him to give her something to eat because she is hungry.

She openly shows her admiration for Dawood neglecting Sakharam's instruction about how to face the outsiders. So great is Sakharam's passion with her that he tolerates all this.

At first she repulses his sexual advances. Sakharam reminds her that she will find it extremely difficult in the world outside if he turns her out. Champa finally agrees to his wish on the condition that he will get her dead drunk every time. Their drunken lovemaking continues even on the day of Dassera. Sakharam flies into a rage on seeing Champa drinking on the day of Dassera. He says: **“On a holy day the woman of the house should look all clean and tidy. What will people say? ... Damn her. Not right for a woman to behave like this.”**⁴

One fails to understand why a man like Sakharam who is a non-conformist in all other matters wants his mistress to follow the conventions of a traditional festival. He appears to be a hypocrite who poses as a conformist or a non-conformist as per his own needs depending upon the situation. Arundhati Banerjee is full of praise for Sakharam who exposes the hypocrisy of the middle class through his honesty and frankness. According to her, **Sakharam ridicules the double standards of the society.**⁵

But it appears that Sakharam is not free from the faults for which he rails at the society. Sakharam gets a glance of Champa's gross and bold nature when her husband Fauzdar Shinde visits them. Shinde claims to have visited only to know about the well-being of Champa who is not at home at that time. Sakharam's abusing and threatening cannot drive him out. When Champa saw him, she got angry with him. She starts raining blows and kicks on him. Shinde threatens that he will commit suicide. Champa dares him to do so. Finally, Sakharam and Dawood have to hold her back forcibly in order to save Shinde from serious physical wound. Dawood warns Sakharam that Champa is totally different from the other women whom he has given shelter in the past. Sakharam, however, does not pay any heed to this sensible advice.

Completely struck by Champa's charm, Sakharam begins forgetting his work and sinks deeper and deeper into the mud of lust. Dawood tries to inform him by telling how he has become the topic of discussion for people. Sakharam expresses his contempt for society in the following words: **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.**⁶

Little does Sakharam realise that he himself is no different. **V.M. Madge aptly comments that the very words in which he condemns people's hypocrisy strongly apply to him also.**⁷

One day Lakshmi comes back to Sakharam's home. She has been thrown out of the house by her nephew and his wife on the charge of thieving. Lakshmi thinks that she has no other house to go. After her husband had left her she had accepted Sakharam as her partner. Though Sakharam had driven her out of his house she had not forgotten him. Sakharam does not see any place for her in his life. He allows Lakshmi to live because of **Champa's insistence. Arundhati Banerjee observes: Champa shows kindness and generosity when she convinces Sakharam to give shelter to Lakshmi, a potential rival.**⁸

But this does not seem to be the reality. When Lakshmi asks for Champa's permission to live with Sakharam, she expresses her readiness for hard work. Champa answers: **“Stay. You look after the house, I'll look after him. Anyway, I can't cope with both. You stay alive, and I'll stay alive, too.”**⁹

Thus it is quite clear that Champa has her own vested interest in Lakshmi's stay in the house. She looks calmly while Sakharam is beating Lakshmi. She gets in the ways only when she feels that Sakharam may kill Lakshmi. She is worried about her own prospects in that case. Champa has a selfish motive in Lakshmi's stay. She clearly tells Sakharam that doing all the household work during the day and then satisfying his physical appetite during the night makes her intolerably tired. If Lakshmi is allowed to stay in the house, she will look after the household work. Sakharam agrees to this suggestion.

Lakshmi detects that Champa goes out somewhere every afternoon without telling her anything. She becomes suspicious and chases her one-day. To her shock she finds out that Champa is having a love affair with Dawood. Instead of telling this to Sakharam she only harbours a secret hatred for Champa. She becomes friendly with Shinde, Champa's husband who keeps visiting Champa and gets beaten her every time. Lakshmi finds this highly objectionable. Once Champa resists the physical advances of Sakharam and tells him that he has become impotent since Lakshmi's arrival in the house. This gives him an inferiority complex. He is furious and orders Lakshmi to leave his house at once. Lakshmi realises that she can restart her life with Sakharam if she discloses the fact of Champa's disloyalty to him. On hearing about it Sakharam kills Champa in a rage as his ego is immensely hurt.

Once his anger cools and he realizes what he has done, he becomes unhappy. He loses his self-balance and his cowardly self comes out. At this juncture Lakshmi offers him emotional support. She tells Sakharam that Champa deserved to die, as she was a sinner. She asks Sakharam to dig a hole in the kitchen to bury Champa's dead body so that he can escape from sentence at the hands of the law. Seeing that Sakharam is unable even to move, she begins digging the hole herself. Terribly frightened, Sakharam stands stunned and speechless.

Thus the play, *Sakharam Binder*, harshly brings out the baser aspects of human nature. Tendulkar portrays the enormous capacity of lust and violence in human beings through the character, Sakharam.

Through Lakshmi's character he brings out the hypocrisy and selfishness in human nature. Both Sakharam and Lakshmi are not what they plan themselves to be. Lakshmi brings out the religious side of Sakharam's character whereas Champa transforms him into a sensuous and lewd drunkard. Their simultaneous presence in his house probably results in Sakharam's impotency.

There is a touch of abnormality in all the three central characters. Sakharam takes wine and opium and wallows in lust of sex and violence. Lakshmi's religious obstinacy leads her to hypocrisy and inhuman behaviour. Champa's searching physical pleasure with Dawood after Sakharam's becoming impotent is a proof of her promiscuity. Sakharam is in a constant conflict with the society due to his complete forgetting about social customs and traditions. Sakharam has had a horrendous childhood full of beatings and scolding which has made him rebellious in nature. He is a hypocrite. He is highly critical of the heartless treatment given to the wives by their husbands. However, he acts in a most brutal and inhuman manner with the women whom he gives house.

He even criticizes Champa for beating her husband. He teases at women for showing devotion to their cruel and uncaring husbands. As for himself he expects complete loyalty from his women and kills Champa for her disloyalty towards him. He is a masochist who takes delight in torturing his partners. He is totally oblivious to his partner's pain and pleasure. According to M. Sarat Babu, Lakshmi **who shows a great compassion while dealing with birds and insects fails to communicate with human beings properly.**¹⁰

She wastes no time in denouncing Champa for her love affair with Dawood but shows no consideration for the fact that it was Champa who had helped her in living in Sakharam's residence against his wish. She heartlessly advises Sakharam to bury Champa's dead body secretly.

She wants to spend the rest of her life with Sakharam as her husband. So his offense of killing Champa is acceptable to her. She sees it as an opportunity to live securely with Sakharam, as she has no another place to go. It is interesting to note that she reveals the fact of Champa's disloyalty to Sakharam only when her own existence in his house is threatened. In spite of Champa's kindness towards her, she looks upon Champa as her opponent and seizes the opportunity to defame her. Herself a victim of Sakharam's cruelty, she becomes a persecutor of Champa. According to Arundhati Banerjee:

Lakshmi who appears to be god-fearing and tenderhearted turns out to be wily and vicious when her survival is threatened by the presence of Champa. She shows great ruthlessness and presence of mind in hiding Champa's murder. Though Lakshmi 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 Lakshmi for Champa.¹¹

Our society looks down upon women who have been divorced by their husbands. That's why Lakshmi has suffered a lot in her life. While persecuting Champa, she becomes a delegate of the same society, which had ill-treated her. M. Sarat Babu rightly observes that Lakshmi **"Believes that the patriarchal tradition which has been in vogue for ages is right and sacred though it has caused immense suffering to all the women since its emergence."**¹²

Champa is an unlucky victim of her husband Fauzdar Shinde's sadism. He had forcibly married her at a young age. Due to his sexual tortures she has become cold. She prefers emotionless sex with Sakharam under the influence of wine rather than becoming a prostitute, which will be the only alternative left to her if Sakharam leaves her. Her realistic approach towards life and her selfishness become evident when she persuades Sakharam to let Lakshmi live in the house. She is shrewd enough to realize that Lakshmi will be quite cooperative in the domestic works. Her relationship with Sakharam cures her coldness. When Sakharam grows impotent after Lakshmi's coming in the house, she ends up having a physical relationship with Dawood. It results in her becoming a victim of Sakharam's anger. Arundhati Banerjee has declared:

Tendulkar, in his play Sakharam Binder, has demonstrated the basic and essential complexity of human nature, which is neither black nor white, but varying shades of grey.¹³

Banerjee praises Sakharam who exposes the hypocrisy of the middle class through his honesty and frankness. According to her, **Sakharam ridicules the double standards of the society. But this same man is capable of shocking cruelty towards his women. Sakharam Binder is an intensely naturalistic play which contains ... when the opportunities present themselves. Such behaviour is indeed unconventional and Sakharam takes pride in his unconventionality.**¹⁴

The source of his rough and violent nature can be traced back to his childhood. The cruel treatment that he got from his own father in the childhood seems to have left permanent scars on his mind. He had to run away from home in order to escape from his father's beating and has been treating rebelliously in every aspect of his life since then. Sakharam's character is full of inconsistency. He denounces his father for having thrashed him in a heartless manner in the childhood. He himself regularly beats the life out of Lakshmi. He is always letting out a tirade against the people who follow the ethnicity and traditions related to the institution of marriage. In his contractual cohabitation with Lakshmi and Champa, he behaves exactly like a possessive and egoistical husband. He makes fun of the loyalty women display towards their heartless husbands.

But he expects complete loyalty to him from his partner and Champa's love affair with Dawood

leads to his strangling her to death. Thus there is a big schism between his words and deeds. When Sakharam demands physical pleasure from Champa, she opposes his attempts at first time. She plainly tells him that she detests sex. The reasons of her refusal lie in her past experiences with her husband Shinde. Champa used to sell wine and tobacco with her mother's company. During a police raid, Shinde had spotted her. After forcing her to marry him, he had tortured her like hell. Fed up with his behaviour, she had left him. Sakharam keeps harassment her and seeing no other substitute she finally yields to him. Sakharam doesn't mind her drinking as long as his lust is satisfied. He can think of nothing beyond his sexual enjoyment. He sinks deeper and deeper into the mud of lust in Champa's company. According to N.S. Dharan, **Sakharam falls because of his 'appetite, to satisfy which he goes to any extreme. His ill treatment of Laxmi, and his helpless slavery to Champa are proofs of this fact. Inwardly, he is a coward.**¹⁵

CONCLUSION:

To conclude the paper, I come to the point, how man like Sakharam Binder keeps interpersonal relationships. He is totally drunkard fellow having no emotions. He has violated all types of traditional Indian customs. Wine and woman is the destination of his life. He used woman as a tool for satisfying animal passions. He becomes habitual to suppress and exploit women.

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