



Acculturative Stress: A socio-Psychological Approach In Vijay Tendulkar's Kanyadaan

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Abstract:

The present paper titled Acculturative Stress: A socio-Psychological Approach In Vijay Tendulkar's Kanyadaan tries to explore the issue of castesim in our Indian society. Indian Hindu Society is well known for its social hierarchy and separation based on caste. Kanyadaan addresses the acculturation of substantial attributes as inherited from ancestors to the status quo. It portrays the psyche of an educated young dalit Arun who is a victim of caste system. He is a manifestation of hopeless tradition and culture of his community and casts violence on his wife after marriage. Man being a social animal cannot deny his birth and status in the society.

He accepts or denies he is born with the tag of caste, culture. Sarat Babu rightly opines: “While playing their roles men and women are acting according to their psychology and according to the conditions around them. The world of culture and civilization influences a man in his personality development. Our personality is a complex product of the interaction of various roles that one has to play. People are trained on playing this culturally programmed role from their birth. They grow deformed and dehumanized as they learn playing their roles.” Tendulkar confesses that, As an individual or rather as a social being he felt deeply involved in the existing state of his society. He was awarded the Saraswati Samman for Kanyadaan, a two-act five – scene play, with only seven characters. Bentley says in Tendulkar play “We move beyond a character's personality to his humanity”. His plays mirror the complexities of human relationships and social problems.

GERALD D RIGHTLY OPINES:

“The issues and challenges with caste system in India have been, and are currently no different than religion, gender, ethnic or race-based social stratification and discrimination system anywhere else in the world.” Traditional caste system in Hinduism is undergoing changes radically off course it exists as a main pawn for the political power game. Dalit's status in Hindu society as predicted in Anand's untouchable was very cruel and is fluctuating in Tendulkar's Kanyadaan. Earlier it was a sort of emptiness, confusion but now when there is a chance of merge with the cultural entity unfortunately Arun fails to mingle and remains aloof. Arun appears to be a victim of schizophrenia and fails to give up his ideals. He is an amalgamation of crudeness and rudeness which he forcefully keeps intact as his cultural community. Without giving a try he comes to a conclusion that Dalit cannot fit into the Brahmins “unwrinkled world”. Its very unfortunate that his education won't help him to be a civilized person and he falls from human dignity. Education should enhance the 'self'. A community's development depends on the enhancement of the soul, in its broad mind, understanding friendship and care. A new focus should be laid on the construction of the society leaving

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traditional thoughts is the motto of the play Kanyadaan. Tendulkar agrees that “Nath Deolalikar the protagonist of Kanyadaan is me and many other liberals of my generation whom I understand completely. The pain of these people today, the defeat they have suffered, the fundamental mental confusion and naiveté that has led to their pain and defeat, there form the theme of Kanyadaan and I wrote about it because it came so close to me” (315). There is need for an egalitarian society. During Rig Vedic age there was no prohibition on inter marriage among different caste. Manu, the law giver who had opined the principle of caste as a universal law of life, had explained that the classification of castes based on profession, does not disqualify the members to inter marry. He quoted anuloma type of marriages (in the descending order) according to which a man belonging to the higher order may marry a woman belonging to the lower order. The wretched birth based caste system is the reason for all the hindrance for the prosperity India is still a developing country in spite of its intellectual treasure. A 2003 report claims inter caste marriage is on the rise in Urban India. Indian societal relationships are changing because of female literacy and education, women at work, urbanization need for two income families and influences from the media. (The Dollar Brides). Some critics call literature the psychological history of a writer as the writer has created is based on actual experiences and that he himself is speaking through his characters. Tendulkar is able to cast magic of Shakespeare through his characters that resemble real human beings in their psychological makeup.

Noble life demands a noble architecture for noble men.
Lack of Culture means what it always meant: ignoble
civilization and therefore imminent downfall.

- Frank Lloyd Wright

Indian Hindu Society is well known for its social hierarchy and separation based on caste. Kanyadaan addresses the acculturation of substantial attributes as inherited from ancestors to the status quo. It portrays the psyche of an educated young dalit Arun who is a victim of caste system. He is a manifestation of hopeless tradition and culture of his community and casts violence on his wife after marriage. Man being a social animal cannot deny his birth and status in the society. He accepts or denies he is born with the tag of caste, culture. Sarat Babu rightly opines: “While playing their roles men and women are acting according to their psychology and according to the conditions around them. The world of culture and civilization influences a man in his personality development. Our personality is a complex product of the interaction of various roles that one has to play. People are trained on playing this culturally programmed role from their birth. They grow deformed and dehumanized as they learn playing their roles.” Tendulkar confesses that, As an individual or rather as a social being he felt deeply involved in the existing state of his society. He was awarded the Saraswati Samman for Kanyadaan, a two-act five – scene play, with only seven characters. Bentley says in Tendulkar play “We move beyond a character's personality to his humanity”. His plays mirror the complexities of human relationships and social problems. On the honour of the prestigious award Tendulkar said “I have written about my own experiences and about what I have seen in others around me. I have been true to all this and have not cheated my generation. Sometimes my plays jolted society out of its stupor and I was punished. I found this without regrets. My plays could not have been about anything else. They contain my perception of society and its values and I cannot write what I do not perceive.

Traditional caste system in Hinduism undergoing changes radically off course but it still exists as a main pawn for the political power game. India is well described as a 'caste society'. Dr. Susan Bayly says: “Caste is not the essence of Indian culture and civilization. It is rather a contingent and variable response to the enormous changes that occurred in the subcontinent's political landscape both before and after the colonial conquest. The birth of the caste system was on the basis of their occupation, namely Brahmin, the priests (scholarly caste), Kshatriya; Warriors and nobility (loyal caste) Vaisya; traders and actions (Merchant caste) and Shudra; tenant farmers and servants (labor caste). It is evident that there was no such rigidity in caste divisions in ancient times but in the course of time the scenario got totally changed. The two segments Jati (caste by birth) and 'Varna' (caste by Profession) the prior got dominated over the later. Indian society in middle ages was based on the caste by birth or jati. This led to the discrimination among the people in the name of caste individuals were distinguished as superior or inferior. According to B.R. Ambedkar, the caste system was irrational Ambedkar listed these evils of the caste system: it isolated people, infused a sense of inferiority into lower-caste individuals, and divided humanity. The caste system was not merely a social problem, he argued: it traumatized India's people, its economy, and the discourse between its people, preventing India from developing and sharing knowledge, and wrecking its ability to create and enjoy the fruits of freedom. The philosophy supporting the social stratification system in India had discouraged critical thinking and cooperative effort, encouraging instead treatises that were full of

absurd conceits, quaint fancies, and chaotic speculations. The lack of social mobility, notes Ambedkar, had prevented India from developing technology which can aid man in his effort to make a bare living, and a life better than that of the brute. Ambedkar stated that the resultant absence of scientific and technical progress, combine with all the transcendentalism and submission to one's fate. Perpetrated famines, desolated the land, and degraded the consciousness from respecting the civic rights of every fellow human being.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is a unique achievement in Indian English Fiction. It's a realistic novel which portrays an untouchable Bhaka's incidents of humiliation in the span of a single day. According to B.R. Ambedkar "The caste system stamped an individual as untouchable from birth. Thereafter, observed Ambedkar, his social status was fixed, and his economic condition was permanently set. The tragic part was that the Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians shunned and avoided the Untouchables, as well as the Hindus. Ambedkar acknowledged that the caste system wasn't universally absolute in his time; it was true, he wrote, that some Untouchables had risen in Indian society above their usually low status, but the majority had limited mobility, or none, during Britain's colonial rule." When a man who is polluted by Bakha's touch slaps him on the face. Bakha says: "They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt". The most agonizing episode is the molestation of his sister Sohini by Pandit Kalinath. Bakha is deprived to take revenge on the upper caste priest who is Miscurs easily in the name of caste. Bakha is unable to reach a conclusion as he fails to choose from among the three options suggested at the end. Change is not that easy to take place. Anand has voiced against the social reality and is successfully in depicting the struggle and changes going on in the society. The change is not that easy to over and likewise Tendulkar has tried decades later Anand to voice the social changes in *Kanyadaan*.

This play deals with unusual marriage of Jyoti, a Brahmin lady with Arun, a dalit. Jyoti's father Nath Devalikar, an ideologist is highly influenced by the leaders Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Narendra Dev, Yusuf Meherali and Sane Guruji. He believes in democracy and had dreamt about India before independence and had vision of the future of India as caste free. Jayaprakash his son calls him 'the repairers of the world' for his desire to set right the things. Jyothi brought up by socialist parents is much inspired and motivated by their ideals. She is fascinated by Arun's poetry and is impressed by his writings and makes up her mind to marry him. Nath becomes very happy on knowing that his daughter has selected a boy from Dalit community. Seva as a mother is much worried about her decision and tries to make her daughter understand that she is taking hasty decision. Jyothi has known Arun from two months and did not know much about him or his family. Learning that there was no 'intense feelings' in her heart or 'storm of hidden passions'. Seva tries to persuade her daughter to reconsider her marriage in the means of stability and compatibility as it is a matter of life long relationship. Seva is apprehensive about her daughter's future and makes her understand that her anxiety is not over his being a Dalit and says "you know very well that Nath and I have been fighting untouchability tooth and nail, God knows since when. So that's not the issue. But your life has been patterned in a certain manner. You have been brought up in a specific culture. To erase or change all this over night is just not possible. He is different in every way. You may not be able to handle it"(509). Jyothi is confident that she would manage her life with Arun but Seva is precautions and warns her daughter that later there is no chance for a woman to hide or run away.

Arun Athavale, a dark complexed man represents the Dalits. When he comes to Jyoti's house he is very uncomfortable, a sort of weight on his mind. Jyoti is unable to understand this and asks him to accompany her in kitchen. He denies by saying "Men who sit and chat in the kitchen are pansies". Arun shows his scavenger's manner and says about his grand fathers and great grandfather's ugly life of a sweeper. Ruthlessly he says "Generation after generation, their stomachs used to the stale, stinking bread they have begged! our tongue always tasting the flesh of dead animals, and with relish ! surely we cant fit into your unwrinkled Tinopal world. How can there be any give and take between our ways and your fragrant, ghee spread, wheat bread culture? (513). Jyoti is in tears when there is harshness in his tone. Arun behaves like a psychopath and accepts that its common symptoms to him but new to her. He blurts: "At times a fire blazes – I want to set fire to the whole world, strangle throats, rape and kill. Drink up the blood of the beasts, your high caste society". The beast in him comes out when he is challenged by Jyoti that he can't beat his wife. He twists her arm, Jyoti is choked more by shock than the hurt. Seva enters in this tense moment and she is very clever in her talk and is successful in bringing out the real man out of Arun. When Arun is questioned about his education, career and future plans gesticulates restless and shows his true colour by saying brewing illicit liquor in a very bad language. Seva is shocked by his mannerisms. Nath comes into the scene and changes the whole atmosphere without understanding or sensing the trouble. He is thrilled and in his excitement fails to notice the warnings given by Seva and Jayaprakash. Unaware of the future consequences takes the side of Arun and neglects his mistake. Nath happily says "Seva Until today, 'Break the caste system' was a mere slogan for us. I've attended many inter caste marriages and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense. My home has become Indian in the real sense of the term. I am happy today, very happy" (512). Nath finds Arun a good man and asks Seva if "Manners and

Culture, are they your ancestral property? Can anyone be that without culture?" Nath is so deaf to the truth that he thinks Arun might have joked about brewing illicit liquor. Even the usage of his obscene language was not taken seriously by him. Arun who is a Dalit is brought up in the midst of poverty and hatred was a tough guy to understand. Nath agrees that "These people's psychological make-up is altogether different". Seva is against the marriage she can't accept him as her son in law after witnessing Arun's savageness. Nath is determined to marry his daughter and says "look Seva, society cannot be transformed through words alone. We have to act as catalyst in this transformation. The old social reformers did not stop with making speeches and writing articles on widow remarriage. Many of them actually married widows. Why did they do it...? That was also an experiment, a difficult experiment. But they dared to risk it." (524)

Nath was ready for the experimentation but as a mother Seva's heart was burning out of anxiety. Jyoti is in dilemma about Arun's complex nature but determined to marry him as she is committed to her words and now she can't run away from it. After Jyoti's marriage everybody is worried about her who behaves strangely and Nath is more distressed by this. After few months of their marriage Jyoti is determined not to return to Arun she is fed up with his barbarous nature of beating. But Nath wants her to be with him. Jyoti after marriage has realized that she made a wrong choice as she was disillusioned by misery. But Nath wants to save their marriage and his ideals. "Seva let not this wonderful experimental fail. This dream which is struggling to turn real let it not crumble into dust before our eyes. This experiment is a very precious one" (537).

Arun comes to Jyoti and begs for her apology Seva is not convinced by his apologies for such a callous act of wife beating. When questioned by her he says Jyoti was aware of his nature before marriage and she had willfully married him. Arun justifies his act by saying that "From childhood I have seen my father come home drunk every day, and beat my mother half dead, seen her cry her heart out even I hear the echoes of her broken sobs. What am I but the son of scavengers. We don't know the non violent ways of brahmins like you we drink and beat of our wives..." (54). If his father had beaten his wife there was no reason for him to follow his father's footsteps being an educated man. Finally Jyoti goes with him. Nath feels proud and prays for her. Nath praises his son-in-law after reading his autobiography but totally shattered when he comes to know that Jyoti is six months pregnant and suffering from internal wound in the stomach due to Arun's kicks to her. Nath shockingly says "such behavior towards a pregnant wife! what happens if she dies? Such heinous behavior by someone who wrote this beautiful biography how can he? here in these pages he describes the humiliations he has undergone with extraordinary sensitivity...and the kicks his pregnant wife on her belly? How? Seva replies "Doesn't his wife belong to the high caste? In this way he is returning all the kicks aimed at generations of his ancestors by men of high caste. It appears that this is the monumental mission he has set out to fulfill" (544). Jayaprakash substantiates her words with the example of Jews who were once persecuted have now become the merciless murderers of Palestinians. He quotes "Yesterday's victim is today's victimizer" (547).

Arun comes to Nath's house with his friends. He requests him to speak in the meeting organized in honour of his Autobiography. Nath is not interested in Arun after knowing about his daughter's conditions and politely refuses his request. But Arun blackmails him by saying that his name is included in the list of speakers, and the people will say, "the rise of the Dalit son in law caused heart burn to the upper caste socialist father-in-law". (551). Nath was determined not to go and was angry by Arun's way of talking but Seva changes his mind as his denial may lead more woes to her daughter. Nath who was embodiment of ideals is finally a broken man. Now he scolds himself for his social commitments and testing revolutionary method. He says "I had this maniacal urge to uproot casteism and caste distinctions from our society. As a result I pushed my own daughter into a sea of misery...If she has committed any crime it is this: she took her father's words for gospel truth. She adopted her father's values. She was guided by her father's humanism and liberalism" (558).

Jyoti is disturbed by her father's false, deceitful speech and says her father. I was deeply offended by your hypocrisy. I thought why did this man have to inject and drug us every day with truth and goodness? And if he can get away from it at will, what right had he to close all our options?" In fact Nath had given a good speech but Jyoti was able to understand what he has not said. She knew why her father avoided his son-in-law after showering goodness in the autobiography. Jyoti identifies his hatred toward Arun. Nath says he doesn't hate Arun but only those tendencies. Jyoti burst out: "Hatred not for the man, but for his tendencies. No man is fundamentally evil, he is good. He has certain propensities towards evil. They must be transformed. Completely uprooted and destroyed. And then the earth will become heaven. It is essential to awaken the god slumbering within man...". Jyoti wants to accept Arun as he is. She has understood being with him that bestiality is something which cannot be separated from him. With her experience she has learnt that putting man's beastliness to sleep, and awakening the godhead within is an absurd notion. She continues: "Arun is both the beast, and the lover. Arun is the demon, and also the poet. Both are bound together, one within the other, they are one. So closely bound that at times it is not possible to distinguish the

demon from the poet”.

At this juncture the contrasting character Usha of SANKRANTI by P.Lankesh is apt to be remembered. Sankranti is a heart rendering story on castesim. It clearly depicts the confusion that had prevailed in the 12th cy when the great social reformer and revolutionist Basavanna was in the scenario. Usha a Brahmin girl has an affair with the low caste dalit Rudra. Though Rudra was brought up in a foul atmosphere he changes as sharana and had desire to reform his whole community. But Usha doesn't like these good changes and says, “That Rudra is different, This Rudra is different. Who talked with me was different. He fell on me. He was wanted by me; but when I stood he was not there. There was sharana Rudra. Is it not rape?” (74). Rudra faces death sentence for his no crime. Usha liked his roughshod and always tried to bring out the animal in him. When he transforms himself she rejects him. Jyoti is ready to face and endure the torture by Arun. Usha is a selfish woman who used Rudra for her carnal desires and killed him and his ethics at the end. Jyoti emerges as a tragic heroine who sacrifices her identity and home for the sake of morals and ideals. She can't reject Arun as she is taught by her father that one must not turn one's back upon the battle field and its cowardly to bow down to circumstances. She just wants to live in the Arun's world and never wants to come to her parents even for her delivery. She rejects her natal house and identity by telling “I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devlalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger”(566).

At the end of the play the reader is in the turmoil as there is no solution given by the writer. We sympathize for Jyoti who is fighting all alone against society and morality. Though she started with the spirit of hopes and idealisms her father had ingrained in her later she accepts her failure to change Arun so she fits herself to his mould. Arun is to be blamed as he is not ready to change and clings to his culture. He would have set a new way for his children but his education, as a poet, writer had not made a difference he is a shame as a human to the society. Tendulkar is a realistic writer but his ending does not have optimistic outlook. The history of human culture has taken very complex twist and turns. Yet, even today, my inspirational strength lies in the hope with which I look forward to tomorrow. I have consistently depleted the indomitability and grit of the human spirit in my writings. But I have never allowed that to lead me into drawing unreal, comforting conclusions. (Vijay Tendulkar pp. 79-80). More than 1000 honour killing in India every year honour killing is evident that the caste system continues to be at its rigid best this heinous crime though rooted in rural areas has recently spread to Metropolitan cities like Delhi. The mentality has to change. According to Ambedkar, castes divided people, only to disintegrate and cause myriad divisions which isolated people and caused confusion. Even the upper caste, the Brahmin, divided itself and disintegrated. The curse of caste, according to Ambedkar, split the Brahmin priest class into well love 1400 sub-castes. This is supported by census data collected by colonial ethnographers in British India (now South Asia). Gandhiji acknowledged that the caste system in India spiritually blinded some Indians, then added that this did not mean that every Indian or even most Indians blindly followed the caste system, or everything from ancient Indian scriptures of doubtful authenticity and value. India, like any other society, cannot be judged by a caricature of its worst specimens. Gandhi stated that one must consider the best it produced as well, along with the vast majority in impoverished Indian villages struggling to make ends meet, with woes of which there was little knowledge. On December 27, 2006 Manmohan Singh became the first Indian Prime Minister to openly acknowledge the parallel between the practices of untouchability and the crime of apartheid. Dr. Singh described “Untouchability as a blot on humanity adding that even after 60 years of constitutional and legal protection and state support, there is still social discrimination against Dalits in many parts of our country”. Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), ratified by India in 1968. It guarantees rights of non-discrimination on the basis of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. Skill caste motivated killings, rapes, and other abuses are part of daily life. Statistically between 2001 and 2002 nearly 58,000 cases were registered under prevention of Atrocities act by Dalits. A 2005 government report says that a crime is committed against a Dalit every 20 minutes.

Gerald D rightly opines:

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enhance the 'self'. A community's development depends on the enhancement of the soul, in its broad mind, understanding friendship and care. A new focus should be laid on the construction of the society leaving traditional thoughts is the motto of the play Kanyadaan. Tendulkar agrees that "Nath Deolalikar the protagonist of Kanyadaan is me and many other liberals of my generation whom I understand completely. The pain of these people today, the defeat they have suffered, the fundamental mental confusion and naiveté that has led to their pain and defeat, there form the theme of Kanyadaan and I wrote about it because it came so close to me" (315). There is need for a egalitarian society. During Rig vedic age there was no prohibition on inter marriage among different caste. Manu, the law giver who had opined the principle of caste as a universal law of life, had explained that the classification of castes based on profession, does not disqualify the members to inter marry. He quote anuloma type of marriages (in the descending order) according to which a man belonging to the higher order may marry a woman belonging to the lower order. The wretched birth based caste system is the reason for all the hindrance for the prosperity India is skill a developing country inspite of its intellectual treasure. A 2003 report claims inter caste marriage is on the rise in Urban India. Indian societal relationship are changing because of female literacy and education, women at work, urbanization need for two income families and influences from the media.(The Dollar Brides). Some critics call literature the psychological history of a writer as the writer has created is based on actual experiences and that he himself is speaking through his characters. Tendulkar is able to cast magic of Shakespeare through his characters that resemble real human beings in their psychological makeup.

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