

GREED FOR MONEY IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S *THE VULTURES*

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Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar is one of India's most influential playwrights. He is the most prolific and controversial dramatist among the Post-Independence Indian playwrights. The Vultures (Gidhade) was first published in Marathi in 1971. It was translated into English by Priya Adarkar as The Vultures and first published in 1974. The present research paper analyzes greed for money as it emerges in The Vultures. It also concentrates on different aspects of the human character and complexity of man-woman relationship. The play depicts male oriented society in which women are mere slaves for the achievement of men. It exposes the inhuman violence in its verbal form of the patriarchal society against women. The themes of the play are based on the present socio-economic situation, family and marital relations, exploitation of women and male domination.

Key Words: Exploitation, greed, violence, family degeneration, etc.

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) is a leading contemporary Indian playwright who writes in Marathi about emerging issues in globalization. His prolific writing over a period of five decades includes thirty full-length plays, twenty-three one-act plays, eleven children's dramas, four collections of short stories, two novels and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism. His female characters are mainly from the lower and middle class families such as housewives, teachers, mistresses, daughters, slaves and servants. The issues of gender discrimination, greed for money, sexual norms, violence, man-woman relationship, social issues, power and morality have been featured prominently in his plays.

The Vultures (Gidhade) was actually written fourteen years before it was produced in 1970 and published in 1971. It is a two-act play. It displays greed for money, exploitation of women and immorality. It also portrays the cunningness, cruelty and greediness. It depicts the

economic and moral degeneration of a family. Originally *Gidhade* was written before *Shantata !CourtChaluAhe*. It was faced censorship hurdles and remained shelved for several years. When SatyadevDubey and Dr. ShriramLagoo wanted to produce it for Theatre Group, Tendulkar found the manuscript of it, and then he had rewritten the entire play. In this play, the human vultures are against a defenseless female character, Rama. Rajaninath at the end of his first monologue conjures the 'Vultures' into existence. According to DnyaneshwarNadkarni, "The plays *Gidhade*, *Sakharam Binder* and *GhashiramKotwal* may be considered a trilogy in the sense that they share a preoccupation with sex and the spirit of violence." (1990:10)

Violence and greed for money are the main themes of the play. In the introduction of the play, SamikBandyopadhyay says, "Violence in *The Vultures* operates in a series of axes-sons against fathers, brother against sister, brother against brother, each leading to an exile from home, followed by a series of returns/ reversal, the exiles attempting to avenge themselves." (Tendulkar, *Collected Plays in Translation*. 2003:1). The play also depicts the brutal lust for money. It reveals inherent tendencies to violence, selfishness, sensuality, wickedness and greed for money. The decadence and degeneration of human individuals exposed through the interactions among the members of a family. It depicts Ramakant and Umakant's greed for money, their father's degenerate nature, their sister, Manik's vulgar sexuality, Rama's quest for love and Rajaninath's loneliness. In the article "Domestic Violence in Vijay Tendulkar's *The Vultures*", I.K. Hemilaa rightly argues:

The Vultures Tendulkar stresses the importance of a range of individualistic representations drawing an idea of violence, greed, lust and spiritual and cultural decadence. He seems to be conforming to the Marxian theory that the economic aspect of society is the ultimate determinant of other aspects. (139)

Tendulkar depicts that the value of life has degraded in the family. Greed for money has dominated human life and ethics. All characters except Rama and Rajaninath in the play are so conscious of evil. They have lost social consciousness. The play dramatizes stubborn unruliness and greed for money in the extremely hungry members of the family. In this play, the family consists HariPitale (Pappa), his elder son (Ramakant), his daughter (Manik), his second son (Umakant), his illegitimate son (Rajaninath), his daughter-in-law (Rama, wife of Ramakant). Almost all characters except Rama and Rajaninath are corrupted and greedy.

Being greedy means one wants more and more of something, especially money. The origin of greed in the play is Pappa (HariPitale). He and his brother, Sakharam build up a huge business firm called "The HariSakharm Company." It is a construction firm. It was established with hard work and honesty. In short period, they achieved the success in the business. As days passed by, Pappa captured the company from his brother by means of treachery and false law. As a result Sakharam finds himself on the street and becomes cashless. No doubt, both the brothers had taken hard efforts to establish the firm, but greed

for money motivate Pappa to forget brother's love. Pappa becomes selfish and instead of sharing a business with his brother, he grabs it. It shows that greed for money wins over the love for brother.

Once Sakharam arrives at the house of Pappa to demand money that time Ramakant and Umakant abuses him and they come to know that their father might have more money. Afterwards they torture their father for money. In that sense they forget the father-son relationship. Actually they got inheritance of greed for money from their father. Instead of love and respect for Pappa, they beat him many times. It shows that there is no cordial relationship between them as a father-son relationship. As a father, HariPitale doesn't have any respect for his sons, Ramakant and Umakant. In this context, Pappa says: “

If I die, it'll be a release! They're all waiting for it. But I'm your own father. After all! If I die, I'll become a ghost. I'll sit on your chest! I won't let you enjoy a rupee of it. I earned it all. Now, these wolves, these bullies! (2003:209).

It shows that Pappa expresses disgust for his selfish sons. One can witness the regret of Pappa about his sons when Sakharam came to their house. Ramakant and Umakant tortured their uncle, Sakharam. They abuse him badly. They drag his body down to the floor and frighten him. Sakharam runs out to save himself. In that occasion, Pappa praises his sons for it. Ramakant, Umakant and Manik become suspicious that Pappa might have more money. So they give drink to Pappa to reveal the truth about money. They pretend to fight between them and hurt their father during their fight. They torture him and ask about the name of bank. Ramakant says, “Which bank? In which bank, Pappa? Speak up. Or this bloody Umya here may murder you for nothing The bloody bastard! Tell me, In which bank is the money Pappa?” (2003:230). Ultimately, Pappa gave them a cheque to save himself from these monsters. By looking at the behavior of all these character, one comes to know whatever we sow you will get it.

In fifth scene, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik make Pappa drink to find out the truth about the money. Ramakant and Umakant pretend to fight with each other because father should get trapped between them. It leads them to make a plot against their own father. It shows how children behave with their father to get money. At once when their gardener came to ask for salary of last two months that time Ramakant and Umakant beat him badly though he hadn't paid his salary since two months back. It shows that they want money, but don't want to pay money.

Ramakant, Umakant and Manik quarrel for money and equal share of the property. Umakant always demands the jewels of his mother which was in custody of Ramakant. He always blames Ramakant for double mortgage of house and losing office as well as clearing Pappa's account and Manik's shares. Ramakant also tries to convince Umakant that he should leave his claim over the property as he is earning well, but Umakant can't tolerate this. He wants his share from the property.

Umakant: First settle our account! Then I'll move! Pappa's hidden hoard.

Manik's money. Mother's jewels....

Ramakant: Ask from outside! Then you'll get them! All after you've got out!
Out!

Umakant: Go on. Wait. As if I'm all ready to leave. I'll quit when I've got every single paisa, you bastard! I won't let you get away with it. I'll sit on your neck. I'll make you puke it out! Bloody animal! Swindler! I'll see you in the gutter. (2003:250)

The quarrel was not between two brothers, yet it is not over. They also harass their sister, Manik. They both wanted whole property and don't want share it with Manik. They also blackmailed Manik's lover- the Raja of Hondur for money and create hindrance in their relationship. They broke the leg of Manik so that she can't meet her lover. When all were playing cards, Umakant tried to choke Manik to death. When they come to know that Manik's lover, Raja of Hondur died due to heart attack, they shocked that their plan to blackmailing him failed. They crossed all levels of brutality to fulfill their need of money. They kicked Manik's belly hard as she was pregnant by Raja of Hondur, because they wanted that Manik should abort this child. It shows their vulgarity and greed for money. It is the heartless relationship of Ramakant and Umakant with their own sister.

One can also notice that Manik is also greedy than Ramakant and Umakant. She was addicted by smoking and drinking. She was living luxurious lifestyle. She wants to fulfill her desires and involves herself in the plan of her brothers, in which they pretend to fight and indirectly injured their father, Hari Pitale. In this scene, she pretends to save Pappa, but actually she was also involved in the conspiracy of her brothers. She plays the role of modern and free woman. She wants to live her life in her own ways without compromise. She was one of the vultures in her family. She lives only for money. Immorality in her character rises when she becomes pregnant without marriage. She was also involved to torture her father. She fought with her brothers for property shares. She wanted equal share of the property.

The brothers do not hesitate to kill each other for money. They are greedy. Manik has a fear of being killed. She does not believe them. She was blaming her brothers for mixing poison in her medicine when she was suffering by typhoid. In this context, she says: "...When I had typhoid last years, far from looking after me, you'd all plotted to put poison in my medicine" (2003:206). It reflects that these two brothers can go any level to grab money. There is no value for blood relations. It shows that they want money to succeed in getting the bank balance.

Manik was totally opposite character to Rama, wife of Ramakant. Rama and Manik are only two female characters in the play, but both are contrast to each other. In one scene, it was morning and Manik was drinking wine and smoking cigarette, on the contrary Rama was worshipping Tulsi and lightening the candles. Rama is kind, merciful and loving character

and Manik is greedy, merciless and careless character who always fights with her brothers and father for money. It reveals her hysteric personality.

In the Act II, Rama pleads her husband, Ramakant to leave the house because nobody can be happy in such a haunted house. Umakant wants his share and possession of the mortgaged house, but Ramakant refuses to help him to pay his debt. Thus Umakant takes revenge on his brother by telling him that Rajaninath is the real father of Rama's child. On hearing it, Ramakant becomes restless. He broods over it and decides to abort. The play ends with Rajaninath's soliloquy about human destiny:

The tale of the five vultures

Had this end.

The story of men accursed.

Or else of vultures cursed

To live their live as men.

.....

The burning-ground and its ghat

Where the sinful soul

Burns off its being,

Takes its first free breath. (2003:265)

To conclude, *The Vultures* depicts greed for money, exploitation and frustration of middle class family in the play. The whole family of HariPitale indulges in the conspiracy to cheat each other. They can reach to any level to grab money from others. There is no value for relations and love in the family. Even today also people are so merciless and materialistic that there is no bonding between father and son, brother and brother, brother and sister, father and daughter. They are becoming so greedy for money and property. Today many Pappa like HariPitale hesitate to transfer their property to their children, because they feel insecure. Once the property is transferred that he has to see hell on this earth and many sons are waiting for it. Once the property is transferred, they will take revenge on their parents. It reflects in many joint families of Maharashtra. Many brothers and sisters live happily together, but when time comes to divide property, all stands opposite to each other. All search chances to grab money and property from their parents.

In this play, Pappa is responsible for greediness. He sows the seed of greed and unknowingly that legacy of greed passes to his children and find himself as a slave and stupid. The play dissects the morality of human life. It deals with the greed for money in the capitalistic society which makes people cruel, inhuman, loveless, vulgar, and impassionate. Vijay Tendulkar depicts the sexual degeneration and moral collapse of a family. The play portrays the evil consequence of man's greed for money. For it, they behave aggressively, dominantly and rudely with their family members.

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