

Violence: The Outcome of Aggression in Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal*

G. Sankar^{[a],*}; V. Saravanan^[b]; Adaikalam Arunasalam^[c]

^[a] Assistant Professor, Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India.

^[b] Assistant Professor senior, Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India.

^[c] Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India.

*Corresponding author.

Received 12 September 2022; accepted 29 October 2022

Published online 26 December 2022

Abstract

Indian Literature has captured a special place in the world of literature. It has described many themes including sex, love, power, cruelty, violence etc. Violence plays a major role in almost every novel written by Indian writers in English. The use of power, physical force on other human beings or animals can be considered as violence. Violence in many forms has been used in Indian writing in English plays and drama. It is commonly described by the Indian dramatist Vijay Tendulkar in his plays in a admirable manner. He uses violence as a main tool to describe the mentality of people in his plays. One of his famous play *Ghashiram Kotwal* is considered as a political satire. Ghashiram, the chief of police in the city, in many places has been attacked on unimportant matters only in the place of primary assumptions. Through this play the dramatist talks about the inborn nature of a man who has violence hidden towards his friends and relatives. Whichever position he acquires, the reality is that there is an urge of violence when situations arise.

Key words: Literature; Violence; Indian writing; Physical force

Sankar, G., Saravanan, V., & Arunasalam, A. (2022). Violence: The Outcome of Aggression in Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal*. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 23(2), 122-124. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/12777>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12777>

VIOLENCE: OUTCOME OF AGGRESSION IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S *GHASHIRAM KOTWAL*

Indian English Literature is the collection of works done by the Indians in English Language. It describes the culture and voice of India in various aspects. Recent Indian writers who write in English, especially poets, novelist, dramatists have lifted the literature into a global level. Wide range of themes has been dealt in it. Many emotions like anger, hatred, violence, love, sex and many more have been used in their works. They brought the full impact of these emotions in their writings.

The use of power, physical force on other human beings or animals can be considered as violence. This may cause injury, death or mental harm. Sometimes this will affect the growth of the individual. Violence can be categorised into many types. Physical violence is nothing but using force upon other making them injured or even death. Pushing, grabbing, slapping, punching can be considered as violence and using a weapon and hurting others come under this category. Sexual violence is the once torturing others sexually. Not only this but there is another violence, self-directed violence, where one hurts oneself without hurting others. Self-abuse and suicidal behaviour becomes self-directed violence. Many writers tried to exhibit this theme in their writings. Renowned Indian writer Vijay Tendulkar's play reveals this concept in many of his plays. He uses violence as a main tool to describe the mentality of people in his plays.

Tendulkar was born in Kolhapur in Maharashtra in 1928. He was born in a well reputed Brahmin family. Since he was surrounded by many learned people, he had literature atmosphere since childhood. His father who was basically a clerk ran a small publishing company. Since his house was surrounded by books which inspired him made him to write at the age of six. His only entertainment became books and nothing else. Slowly at

the age of fourteen he had an opportunity to participate in Indian Freedom Movement. When his father put a hurdle for this, he lost interest in studies and started spending money lavishly which was given for his educational expenditures. To avoid his loneliness, he started writing again. In 1966 he started to write one act plays. His *Ajagar Ani Gandharva*, the one act plays collection got the Maharashtra Country Government Award. He got married to Nirmala Sakhalkar and has 4 kids. In a slow phase his controversial plays started gaining popularity. His play *Shantata! Court ChaluAhe (Silence! The Court is in Session)* was considered his finest piece of work. Apart from other plays his *Sakharam Binder* in 1972, talks about traditional marriage, social codes etc. The gender violence and political violence in *Sakharam Binder* led him to the next play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. It is considered as a political satire. This play won him a universal recognition and also universal criticism. Tendulkar can be considered as a practical level writer. The hardships he faced when he was young and the issues, he encountered in his surroundings reflected in his plays. His works included sixteen plays for children, five anthologies of short stories, two novels, and five volumes of literary essays and social complaint and a biography. All of this overall has contributed to a first-rate transformation of the contemporary literary landscape of Maharashtra and of India.

One of his most famous play *Ghashiram Kotwal* is taken into consideration. This play describes the characters mentality in many situations and how they face hardships and how they react violently to their fellow beings. *Ghashiram Kotwal* is a Marathi play which is based on the life of Nana Phadnavis, who was a leading minister then in the court of Peshwa of Pune and Ghashiram Kotwal, the protagonist is the police chief of the city. It deals with the theme how men when in power fix their ideologies and later fail to follow it when they become useless. Nana Phadnavis tries to exploit Ghashiram's knowing well about his thirst for power and revenge. Finally, when everything is achieved, he handovers Ghashiram to the Brahmins of Poona and makes them to stone him to death.

In the play it can be noted that Ghashiram in many places is attacked on unimportant matters only in the place of primary assumptions without clarifications. This suppression makes him to react violently in the later stages. Through this play the dramatist talks about the inborn nature of a man who has violence hidden deep inside and whenever opportunity arises it bursts out towards his friends and relatives. Due to this suppression previously he encountered, beyond the position he acquires, in reality he has an urge of violence which he exhibits in every situation.

Ghashiram is a Brahman of Kanauj, who was born during those days when the caste system was being followed ruthlessly. At one instance people make a fake

claim upon him of stealing money. Without any enquiry the soldiers of Poona catch hold of him and torture him. Ghashiram till the end wanted to prove that he is innocent. But he is not given a chance to prove himself. Out of enmity, anger and violence which is hidden in them they refuse to hear him and imprison him. He is tortured not only by the soldiers of Poona but also by the Brahmins. At one instance he couldn't bear the torture and he shouts back. He shouts that once he is proved innocent, he will become a revengeful monster. Here Tendulkar depicts that not the soldiers or the other people show violence but even Ghashiram tries to return it back. It is understood that all the human beings have violent attitude buried deep inside and when their aggression is induced by others it tend to come out. He warns them:

I'll be a devil. I'll make pigs of all of you. I will make this Poona a kingdom of pigs. Then I will be Ghashiram again, the son of Salvadas once more. (GK 377).

In between a character named Nana is being introduced by the dramatist. Ghashiram wanted to utilize Nana's weakness. Nana is found of women, that too those are beautiful and attractive. Nana is a person who is in a leading position in the city. Ghashiram wanted to play a game having Nana in his hand. He tries to hand over his daughter, Lalita Gauri, in the name of marriage to Nana. Using the lust Nana has upon his daughter he plays very well that finally he can be made the Kotwal of the city. Here Tendulkar clearly exhibits about the attitude of Ghashiram who makes his daughter a victim to gain power and superiority. Nana remarks: "Bastard. You have got me in a narrow pass" (GK 384). Ghashiram accepts his cunning approach, "Yes, the narrow pass of my only daughter". (GK 384)

Once Ghashiram captures his trump card, he begins to victimize his offenders. Using his power, he thinks that it is his duty to clean Poona. He takes laws in his hand without delay, with no hesitation on the Brahmins of Poona. He even strictly informs that there is no wrong doings, and if some is caught hold of any issues they are punished immediately. Like a watch dog he roams everywhere and tries to find out fault to catch people and torture them. Due to this over imposing of violence he forgets some common experiences. Ghashiram loses his wits and even fails to understand common questions. Since he was punished by the soldiers earlier, to take revenge he in turn tortures them violently. He even feels happy when those poor helpless Brahmins scream out of pain. His violence makes the thieves straight. His attitude about controlling Poona through Nana shatters when his daughter dies. He believed that everything can be bought through money and power. But he couldn't raise his voice against Nana since he has power in his arms and superior to Ghashiram. This shock makes him to imagine things and has hallucinations. He thinks he is a failure and couldn't manage things. Due to this he imagines that everybody is laughing at him and making fun of him. To overcome this, he arrests every Brahmin and puts them in jail. At one instance the

jail becomes full. This act of violence not only causes great damage to the city Poona but to Ghashiram himself. To hide his failure and disappointment he becomes violent to himself.

Nana out fear that Ghashiram will kill him because of losing his daughter, he make the people of Poona to revolt against him. When people ask Ghashiram's death to him he happily signs in the order. He even starts dancing and feels proud of using the mob against Ghashiram.

Use a thorn to take out a thorn. That's great.
The disease has been stopped. Any way, he was no use anymore
(*Dances a little as he moves off stage*). (GK 413)

While the angry crowd surrounds Ghashiram, Nana expects them to kill him. When they stoness him violently to kill him, Nana gives a sigh of remedy. He thinks that a danger which encountered him, and the city Poona will come to an end that day. As per his instructions, the people of Poona have a good time with the death of Ghashiram. Once Ghashiram took revenge on the Brahmins of Poona for humiliating him. But later he punishes himself for

destroying his daughter's life. Hence his violence becomes the outcome of aggression.

REFERENCES

- Archer, J., & Browne, K. (Eds.) (1989). *Human aggression: Naturalistic approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Baron, R. A., & Bryne, D. (1988). Aggression: Its nature causes and control. *Social Psychology: Understanding Human Interaction*.
- Mastud, S. (2019). Deputation of power in Vijay Tendulkar's play. *IJELLH*, 7(9).
- Pandey, P. (2011). Vijay Tendulkar as a prolific and creative Marathi writer. *Language in India*, 11.
- Prasad, A. N., & Satish, B. (2008). *Vijay Tendulkar's Ghashiram Kotwal: A Critical Study*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot.
- Rani, S. S., & Padma, P. (2019). Ghashiram Kotwal: A study on victimization of women in power politics. *RJOE*, 4(3).
- Tendulkar, V. (2004). "Ghashiram Kotwal." *collected plays in translation* (J. Karve and E. Zelliott, Trans., pp.359-416). New Delhi: Oxford UP.