

Silence! The Court is in Session

by Vijay Tendulkar

□ Introduction

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar, born in 1928 in Mumbai, was a leading Indian playwright, television writer, literary essayist, journalist, and social commentator primarily in Marathi. He is best known for his plays *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe*.

Silence! The Court is in Session is a play written by Vijay Tendulkar in 1963. The play was originally written in Marathi language titled “Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe.” The play was first performed in 1967. The play considered to be written with the real life incidents of the playwright Vijay Tendulkar. The story of the play revolves around the theme of gender discrimination and the courtier system of India.

□ Theme of The Play

It seems that the play is based on the theme of Gender Discrimination. Women are the real architects of society, she has the power to create, nourish and transform. The society around her always had been a challenging. The women in India have never been able to live in a circumstance where they are treated equally. Tendulkar’s “Silence! The Court is in Session is a critique of gender discrimination in patriarchy and the women’s fight against the injustice done to her. He represents the problems faced by independent women in India.

□ Characters in The Play

[1] Miss Leena

Benare

Miss Benare is the chief protagonist and heroine of the play. She is thirty four years old, self – dependent successful unmarried school teacher. Tendulkar has presented her as an intelligent and matured lady with her own conviction.

[2] Mrs. Kashikar

Mrs. Kashikar is the wife of Mr. Kashikar who represents typical Indian housewife dependent on her husband for everything.

[3] Sukhatme

Sukhatme plays an important role in the prosecution of Benare. He is a lawyer – cum – actor and is unsuccessful in his own career. Sukhatme upholds the principle that woman is not fit for independence.

[4] Mr. Kashikar

Mr. Kashikar becomes the judge in the mock trial in the play. He is a disgruntled sadist figure like other men in the play except Samante. He belongs to the category of urban character.

[5] Samante

Samante is a rustic uneducated villager in a galaxy of educated urban characters. He is pure at heart and stands for justice. He is not a professional, but he is honest, helpful and compassionate.

[6] Prof. Damle

Professor Damle is a married man live with family. He leaves Benare pregnant and disowned responsibility.

[7] Other Characters

There are some other characters such as Ponkshe, Karnik and Rokde.

Satirical Attack in The Title

Tendulkar satirically attacks on the society with the title “Silence! The Court is in Session.” There is no silence or discipline in the court, and even the wife of the judge Mrs. Kashikar disturbs the court all the time. Thus, in this way, the word “Silence” seems more impactful.

The title, “Silence! The Court is in Session” is a powerful satire on modern society. The famous critic N. S. Dharan points out that –It is the imposed silence on Benare that gives the title its uniqueness and tells us about the mockery in the title. So, here, the title can be justified as a satirical attack on the people of modern society.

□ **Judicial Register: The First Title**

Vijay Tendulkar chooses Judicial Register as the title of his play to make a powerful comment on a society with a heavy patriarchal bias that makes justice impossible. A Judicial court is supposed to be a seat of justice seriousness and decorum. Throughout the play, he makes a review of the present day court procedures, and points out the problem of the court. Ideally justice can be provided only if the judge and the judicial system are objectively detached. But the same objective detachment can become the face of a very repressive and dehumanized system if the people involved in the process of justice are themselves devoid of human value and compassion. As for all these, the title “Judicial Register” suits perfectly; but at last, “Silence! The Court is in Session” remains for the play.

□ **Significance of The Title**

Silence! The Court is in Session is originally a Marathi play. So, the original title of the play is “Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe.” The title indicates absolute authority of the judge in the court where the judges pronounce such words to bring back manners or discipline of the people.

In the present play, we find how Benare becomes the victim of sadism of his male counterparts. The audience is made to witness a mere enactment of what is a rehearsal of sorts of a mock-trial to be staged later in the day. But what begins

as a harmless game begins to assume a grim aspect before long. When Benare wants to protest she is ordered to be silent because the court is in session. Again when she keeps silent she is ordered to break the silence in the name of law and threatened with contempt of court. She is driven to despair and attempts suicide. In such a grim scenario, every word of the title SILENCE THE COURT IS IN SESSION assumes symbolic significance. The word "Silence" symbolizes the patriarchal conspiracy to silence the voice of a woman in the name of social justice and ideology. And therefore, the title is appropriate for the play.

□ **Conclusion**

Vijay Tendulkar's "Silence! The Court is in Session" is an effective play with a very impressive language and style. It is just another play presenting the picture of Indian society. The play exposes the social hypocrisy and its dubious double standards. The play is well constructed that presents the realistic picture of current situation of India's modern society.

