

Social Inequality in Vijai Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal*

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Abstract

Tendulkar has dedication to the society and the concept of social justice, which form the instrument of a political system in his plays. Particularly his play *Ghashiram Kotwal* is a best political satire. It shows a socio-political fabric in past as well as contemporary society. He presents unusual sympathy and truthfulness dealing with social issues. The lack of moralizing gives his plays a very open-ended feel and leaves room for individual understanding and response. The present topics describe the plight of the individual, his loneliness and separation in an urban and developed society as expressed in his play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. He describes the isolation of the individual from the society and culture environment to which he belongs forms an important theme here. Here, alienation is the unifying theme that runs through the play.

In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Tendulkar presents the case of an unfamiliar Brahmin, who has come in search of live hood in Poona and due to the atrocities of the Brahmin of Poona he turns himself into a monster and feels separation from the society and in the end murdered by the people of Poona. Ghashiram, a Brahmin from Kanauj is not accepted by the Brahmins of Poona and so hurt by them for his daily life. When he was eagerly looking at the sacred *Dakshina* ritual that was taking place at the bottom of Parvati hill, he was pulled out from the place. The soldiers and police officials corner him as a thief. People also called him as thief; he was taken by the police and was treated less than a human being. Police also filed a complaint.

Ghashiram feels totally helpless. He tries to explain them that he was not a thief but a Brahmin from Kanauj, but people turned unable to hear to his words. At that time, he thought how his daughter and his wife would respond for such untruth exposure. Also, his mind was impatient about it, on the other hand he also removed his sash to the ground. He threatens the Brahmins of Poona violently that he would come back and avenge on them. He would show his power.

Ghashiram is left in this world only with the one desire that is of punish on the Brahmins of Poona at any cost. He goes away and with a plan comes back to the city of Poona in the cover up of a servant. After that he witnesses Nana, a man who married nine times and was still wandering as a sensualist. He finds pleasure at his lechery that has no bounds of time and place. Ghashiram makes profit of Nana, he does not hesitate to use his own daughter, Lalita Gauri as tempt. He goes to Nana and appears before him as a servant. He himself takes his daughter to Nana, without letting him know the fact. In order to avenge himself on the Brahmins of Poona he plays a game with Nana by sending her own daughter before Nana. The meeting of Nana and Lalita Gauri produced a spark between them because of the beauty of Lalita. Nana accuses him of charter the pray flee. This shows how he encourages Nana, at cost of his own daughter. Ghashiram is no more a Brahmin, he has become a Shudra now and hence says to Nana,

Whoever she is, if the order is given, this servant will bring her.

Nana- Would you? We'll be grateful. We will give more than enough in return. But- When?

Servant- Tomorrow. Or the day after or the days after that.

Nana- May be tonight, eh! (GK 351, 352)

Knowing full well, Nana's shameless nature, he does not worry about the future of his own daughter and her feelings. He is blinded by the feelings of avenging on Brahmins. To him, his own daughter is no more than an instrument to finish his act of revenge and getting power.

Thus, Ghashiram gains his superiority through his manipulating Kotwal not bothering about his daughter's life. He clearly says that he will give his only daughter to Nana to satisfy his desire on the condition that he should be made the Kotwal of the city.

Because of his skillful position as the head of Poona, he becomes both unkind and a person of bad manner that is mixed with his revenge. He wears the inspiring clothes of Kotwal also adds a beautiful turban upon his head. He has got his trump card of power in hand and becomes a forceful ruler to wash Poona that is filled with its corruption and descent. He brings in new rules and regulations to the Brahmins of Poona:

No whoring without a permit.

No cremation without permit.

Whoever does wrong will be punished?

Severely. Will not be pitied (GK 359)

These rules and regulations were new and unaccustomed to the Brahmins of Poona. This made Ghashiram Kotwal roam around the city, even during mid-nights. It is explained,

... the eleven O'clock cannon,
Started ruling in person.
Accosted anyone he met in the streets, whipped people.
Arrested people. Demanded people's permits. Imprisoned People. Sued people (GK 360)

All these instances prove that Ghashiram turn to be revenge filled animal. More than his behaviour, he lost his humanness and common sense of treating people. He behaves with people in a cruel manner. He insults them and crushes them. He tortures and torments physically as well as mentally. His behaviour becomes totally ridiculous and it seems at times as if he has, lost control over himself. He comes out of his home during nights even for a slight noise and would enquire with those men and women on the roads if they were really husband and wife. His act doesn't even spare his neighbours that he would often wake them up and made sure if they were husband and wife. His behaviour becomes totally strange and it seems at times as if he has, lost control over himself. He comes out of his home during nights even for a slight noise and would enquire with those men and women on the roads if they were really husband and wife. His act doesn't even spare his neighbours that he would often wake them up and made sure if they were husband and wife. His behaviour with Sutradhar is a best example of his ridiculous behaviour. When Sutradhar goes to fetch his midwife, he demands

Sutradhar : sir, I was going to fetch the midwife.

Ghashiram : Midwife. Who's delivering?

Sutradhar : My wife.

Ghashiram : Why does she deliver in the middle of the night? (slap him) Speak up.

Sutradhar : Her time had come!

Ghashiram : Have you got a permit? Speak

Sutradhar : No, Sir

Ghashiram : Why not? You got out on the road at night without a permit and you'll get whipped.

Sutradhar : Have Pity, Sir

Ghashiram : (hits him) Why didn't know when your wife would deliver? She's your wife, isn't she? (GK 376)

Ghashiram loses his wits completely after the murder of his daughter. He loses his conscience and as a blood seeker he preys upon people. This attitude of his, turned earned Poona a name called land of cruelty. This resulted in murdering more people and also imprisoning people for their mistakes. The prison lost its capacity to hold more people, and people also died due to suffocation. People go to Nana and Nana orders for the execution of Ghashiram Kotwal. Ghashiram is stoned to death. He dies with a heavy heart realizing that he has spoiled the life of his own daughter in taking revenge.

Ghashiram, a common man who becomes a giant, is a by-product of his society. It is the behaviour of society that is responsible for Ghashiram turning into a devil and his being stoned to death. Through, this character, Tendulkar expresses the social and political ideology. He offers a theory that explains how politics works in a society; and to provide a thoughtful insight into the forces that shape a new society. In other words, he tries to build and change the concepts of the contemporary Indian English literature by making a protest against power.

Works Cited

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