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## **Portrayal of the ill-fated society in Vijay Tendulkar's plays Silence! The Court is in Session**

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### ***Abstract:***

*Tendulkar's first play is Silence! The Court is now in session which is preoccupied with a variety of subjects and issues, but the overall theme is gender consciousness. This play criticizes male-controlled values and society. It also demonstrates how social norms use women as a tactic for censoring female voice. "Silence" is a*

*word which has many connotations and allusions. Actually, it refers to the judge's order to maintain silence in the courtroom, but metaphorically, it symbolizes officially silencing the weaker gender's plea for justice.*

***Keywords:*** *Male Chauvinism, Slavery, Search for Identity, Oppression, Women Empowerment*



Vijay Tendulkar is ranked extremely high because of his significant contribution to the creation of Indian English drama. As a Marathi dramatist, he demonstrates how society contributes to the degradation of women as human beings by removing their social rights. He shows how ladies are tormented, tortured, and subjugated. Tendulkar conducted in-depth research on human nature. His dramas delve deeply into the realities of life in today's society. As a keen observer of society, he notes women's marginalization and aboriginal position. He feels sorry for them and says, "As a social being, I am against all exploitation and passionately believe that all exploitation must end." Tendulkar in his play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1967), which is split into three acts, introduces a theatrical company that focuses on a societal issue, divides it, and finally disrupts it for its rejection via stage plays. The primary issue now is that an unmarried woman, Leela Benare, is charged with infanticide. Prof. Damle impregnates her. A case has been filed against Benare in a court, which pretends to be legitimate. The dramatist must choose the play's title carefully. The dramatist's title, *Silence!*, is derived from the accused's imposed silence throughout the mock trial. *The Court is in Session* is a humorous proclamation about the current situation of legal proceedings. Imposing severe claims and vile comments on Benare, who was caught in the cage of a bogus trial, became accustomed to this forced quiet. Kashikar's abrupt interrogative declaration at the start of the fake trial, "Prisoner Ms. Benare, under section No: 302 of the Indian Penal Code you are accused of the crime of infanticide," might be seen as the result of gender consciousness. Are you guilty or not guilty of the aforementioned offense?

Benare got astounded. She explains, "I simply got quite serious to set the correct mood. That is all that matters to the court. Why should I be concerned about a trial like this?" (*Silence*, p 75). Even the humorous relief provided by the 'pan-spitting' competition helps her regain her self-control for a limited period of time, and whatever she gains during that time is fleeting. Miss. Benare gradually adjusts her self-imposed silence as the fake trial resumes. However,



these efforts were futile due to Kashikar, the mock-judge's enforcement of silence.' In such a harsh environment, abandoned Benare has no alternative but to remain mute, because no words can lead to her liberation. In *Silence!* The court is in session, Tendulkar wants to bring up a lot of issues around marriage, sex, love, and the socially acceptable values that are prevalent in the culture while the court is in session. The dramatist masterfully employed sarcasm, irony, despair, and even mockery to highlight the hollowness of middle class ideals and symbolize gender consciousness. Here, gender consciousness emerged as a result of the trial's terrible effects on Benare. According to Arundhati Banerjee, it is evident that the accusation made against Benare at the beginning of the trial becomes the outcome in the end. The author argues that current Indian culture, which has its roots firmly rooted in discriminatory beliefs, is incapable of permitting a woman to become pregnant without marriage or permitting males to impregnate women. It illustrates how men have been granted authority by society to oppress women. Gender awareness is plainly shown. It is a significant problem in the play *Silence!* The court is in session, and it has revealed a great deal about Miss Benare's personal life. It is being said that she is a dishonest lady. In this instance, Tendulkar demonstrates gender awareness by portraying a female character that is both indigent and emotional. As a consequence, Kashikar, the judge, accepted the tradition of child marriage after learning that Benare was an unmarried lady. This illustrates how women's desires are repressed in essentially traditional society. Every step they take, women are interrupted to perform tasks dictated by social conventions. She is unable to joke around, speak, move, or live freely. Miss Benare, who attempted to go above societal conventions, was found guilty of infanticide. Prof. Damle and Miss Leela Benare are both equally culpable, yet the trial cannot be held against him. Miss Benare is the one facing accusations and the verdict. The whole situation becomes murky when Ponkshe reveals that Benare lives solely for the kid she is carrying and will give birth to. The prosecution's attorney, Sukhatme,



now states: "The woman has left a hideous stain on the holy forehead of motherhood.... Our faith and customs have long regarded motherhood outside marriage as a grave sin. Moreover, if the accused's intention of bringing up the offspring of this unlawful maternity is carried to accomplishment, I have a dreadful fear that the very existence of society will be in danger. . . Milord, infanticide is a dreadful act. But bringing up the child of an illegal union is certainly more horrifying. . . "Woman is not fit for independence". . . That is the rule laid down for us by tradition. Abiding by this rule, I make a powerful plea. "Miss Benare is not fit for independence". (Silence p.115) This shows gender discrimination and gender consciousness. clearly where woman is the sole responsible for her miserable condition. The co - participants attempt to determine their own personal outlooks and blame.

Benare, due to her insolent and dissipated behaviors, sets aside the primary accusation throughout the trial. The play's mock trial begins as a joke, but it ends up being Benare's misery. Benare is destroyed beyond repair. She parted politely and in public, much like a confined animal. When Benare says, "Life is a poisonous snake that bites itself," following her breakup with her maternal uncle, gender consciousness is evident. A life of treachery. The life we lead is a lie. Life is a euphoric. Life is a bore. "Life is an extremely terrible thing." (Page 74, Silence).She wanted to die, but she was unable to. The entire feminine race has been persecuted; Miss Benare is not a victim of this kind of tyranny. Women have historically been treated like slaves and animals. The feminist Virginia Woolf described the same state of gender consciousness in society that Tendulkar has depicted. Gender awareness is also evident in the fact that males never pass up the opportunity to condemn women for sharing their pasts... As Benare heads to the private room to wash her face, Ponkshe and Karnik, who are aware of her background, conspire to harm her. Sukhatme proposes, and others concur, that she be included as an accused in the fictitious trial; Mrs. Kashikar is in favor of the notion. One lady opposes another as a result. It's now time for Kashikar to deliver his verdict:



"The crimes you have committed are most terrible." Forgiveness is not available to them. I have to atone for your sin. Irresponsibility needs to be restrained. Social norms are, after all, quite significant. The stability of our society is based on marriage. Motherhood needs to be clean and holy. This court considers your plan to blow everything up very seriously. There's no way that a reminder of your transgression should be carried down to future generations. I must admit that school administrators did a commendable job in terminating you. You will thus live, as this court has decreed. Yet, the unborn kid inside of you will perish. (Silence, pages 118–119).

Benare declares that she will never allow this to occur since she cannot tolerate this verdict. She can't take the fake trial anymore. She loses consciousness, distraught. Other figures assemble around her, telling her that she has taken the game too seriously and that it is only a game. This is all untrue, and the real show has to begin now. The victimization of a young lady is shown in this drama. Though it began as a lighthearted game, it turned into a grave indictment of her.

Conclusion: To summarize, Tendulkar's Silence! The court is in session, raises important questions about gender awareness. Miss Leela Benare is a severely oppressed woman who endures a great deal of hardship due to her gender. Social conventions have made women victims of society. Miss Leela Benare endured hardships during the entire performance. She suffers from all of this simply because she is a woman. This makes the study paper's title relevant and reasonable.



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