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Sahitya Akademi

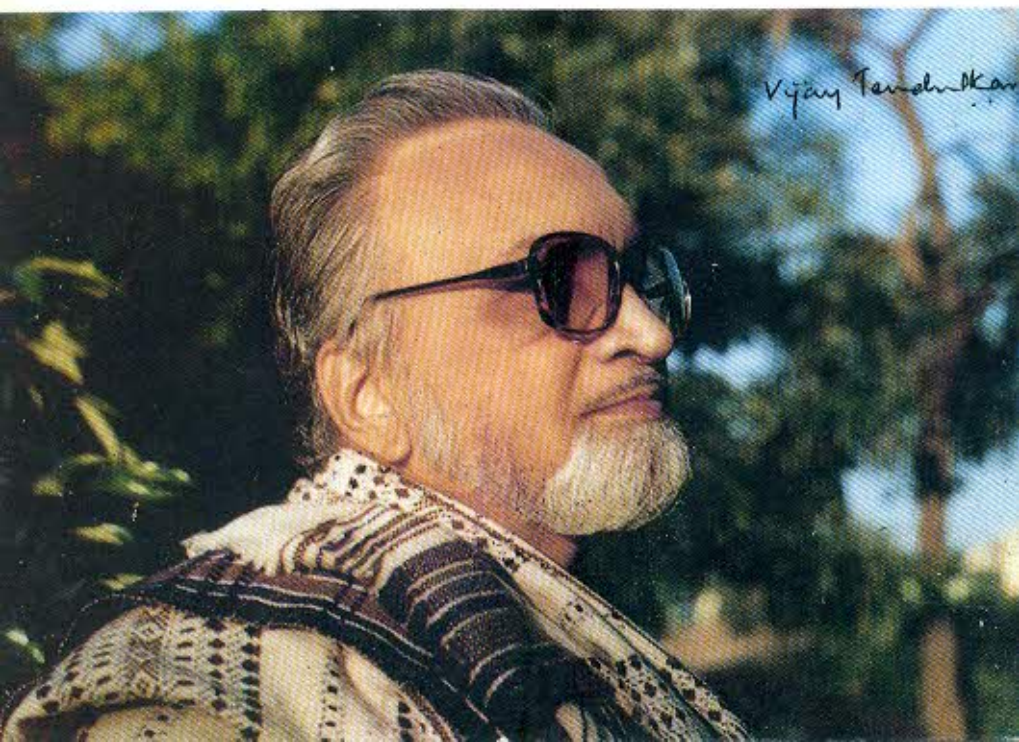


India International Centre

invite you to

meet the author

Vijay Tendulkar





“CREATIVE writing has never been my first love; my primary interest has always been life itself. I would rather play with a child or meet an interesting person or learn a new skill than write. Writing to me is like talking and I am not the one to fall in love with my own voice. I am more interested in other people's voices,” said Vijay Tendulkar, to whom theatre came naturally.

Twenty-seven plays, seven one-act, five plays for children, five anthologies of short stories, a biography, T.V. serials, eight screenplays in Marathi, eleven in Hindi, are a remarkable achievement for one who had started as an apprentice in a bookshop. Tendulkar had read proofs, risen to manage a printing press, done a stint as an assistant editor for three Marathi dailies *Naubharat*, *Maratha* and *Loksatta*. He edited special issues of Marathi periodicals and managed public relations for a business house.

Tendulkar's creative writing has its roots in journalism. He began with a short story 'Amachywar Kon Prem Karnar' and drifted into one-act play, 'Olakh'. Many of his one-act plays have been staged by stalwarts like Baban Prabhu, Vijaya Mehta, etc.

Tendulkar wrote his first full-length play *Grihastha* in 1955, at the instance of his friend Damu Kenkre, a debut-making joint venture for both of them, a playwright and a director. It was, however, a flop. Tendulkar swore never to write a play again! But fortunately he did.

Only a few years later his *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* (1968) won him world-wide recognition. A caustic satire on power politics and male chauvinism, the play assumes the form of a mock trial of a school teacher, Sulabha Benare, tearing the moral fabric apart. The play has been translated into some sixteen languages in India and abroad, and filmed in Marathi and Hindi. It was telecast from B.B.C.

Girish Kamad, himself a distinguished playwright who rose to be the Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, has hailed Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder* (1972) as "the best play written in the last thousand years." The play raised a controversy for obscenity, violence and merciless satire on contemporary values. A dissolute, crude, domineering figure Sakharam mocks at the hypocrisy of the middle-class.

Refreshingly different is the structure of *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1973). A musical-historical set against the Peshwa rule in Maharashtra, its concerns are universal



With wife Meena

The action revolves round the power-game played by the legendary politician Nana Phadnavis and Ghashiram Kotwal. The play draws on different forms of Marathi folk theatre, *bhajan*, *bharud*, *lalit*, dramatising the lewd exploits of Nana Phadnavis, the rise and fall of Ghashiram Kotwal at the cost of his young daughter.

Gidhade (1971) stages a family feud, exposing morbidity and the resultant savagery in human nature through gruesome actions.

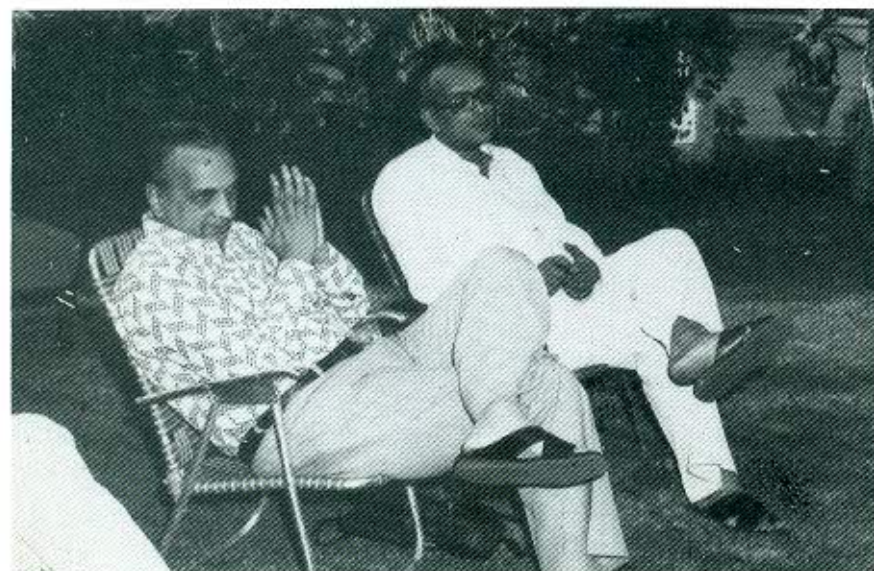
Answering the accusation of liberal use of sex and violence to titillate and shock the audience, Tendulkar said: "Violence cannot be a spectacle. If it is a recurring factor, it is so because violence is around us, it is within us, our times happen to be violent times. It is bound to reflect in any creative work in some form or the other even if it is ugly and unpleasant." He was awarded the Nehru Fellowship for the study of emerging patterns of violence.

Among his other well known plays is *Baby* (1975), a mix of sadism and pessimism;

Mitrachi Goshta (1982) shocks with lesbianism and complex pattern of relationships; *Kamala* (1982) exposes flesh trade scoop and its aftermath. *Kanyadan* (1983) tells the moving story of a well-meaning sensitive Brahmin girl who falls in love with a Dalit poet, activist. After a brief euphoria, deeprooted cultural and ideological differences surface.

Tendulkar is equally at ease in the medium of films. Among his well known screenplays are *Nishant* (1975), a sardonic satire on rural feudalism, *Manthan* (1977), a film on rural cooperatives ending on an optimistic note, *Samna* (1985), an attack on petty power politics; *Akrosh* (1980) and *Ardhasatya* (1983) mark the isolation of individual and his alienation from the power-brokers of the society. Tendulkar believes in posing the problem in its proper perspective, but no stance is taken, no solution is offered.

The same social awareness encompasses his short stories collected in five volumes: *Kachpatre* (1958), *Meshpatre*, *Dwandwa* (1961),



With actor-friend Arvind Deshpande

Gane (1966) and *Phulapakharu* (1970). His journalistic writings on people and events collected in *Raatrani* (1971) and *Phuge Sabanache* (1974) show him as a popular writer, so very different from the celebrated dramatist.

Amidst his multifarious activities, Tendulkar found time to enrich Marathi literature by

translating into Marathi works of Mark Van Doren, Tennessee Williams, Henry James, Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh.

Widely honoured, Vijay Tendulkar enjoys the unique distinction of receiving the Maharashtra State Government Award nine times.



A scene from *Ghashiram Kotwal* directed by Jabbar Patel

A Select Bibliography

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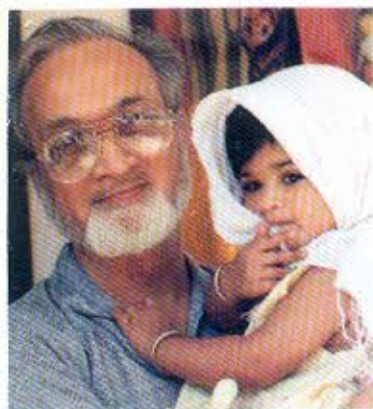
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With grandson Aditya

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 KAMALAKAR SARANG, BINDERACHE DIWAS. Bombay: Granthali, 1984. 251p. 21 cm.

A Chronology

- 1928 Birth
- 1944 Started working in printing presses
- 1948 Sub-editor, *Naubharat*
- 1949 First short story 'Amachyavar Kon Prem Kamar'
- 1950 Executive Editor, *Vasudha* and *Deepavali*
- 1951 Joined Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
- 1955 First play, *Grihasta*
- 1956 Maharashtra State Government Award for *Shrimant*
- 1959 Vice President, Rangayan
- 1961 Sub-editor, *Maratha*
- 1967 Public Relations Manager Chowgule Industries; Freelancing for *Manoos* and *Maharashtra Times*
- 1968 Assistant Editor, *Loksatta*
- 1969 Maharashtra State Govt. Award to *Ajagar Ani Gandharva*
- 1970 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Award for *Shantatal Court Chalu Ahe*; Member, New Bombay Planning Team
- 1971 Sangeet Natak Akademi Award; President, Avishkar
- 1973 Maharashtra State Govt. Award to *Kouali Unhe*; Nehru Fellowship
- 1976 Chairman, Granthali
- 1977 National Best Film Award for *Manthan*; Member, General Council, Sangeet Natak Akademi
- 1978 Member, General Council, Sahitya Akademi; Visiting Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences
- 1979 Vice President, National School of Drama
- 1980 Filmfare Award for the screenplay and dialogues of *Aakrosh*; President, Council for Preservation of Democratic Rights
- 1983 Filmfare Award for the screenplay of *Arthasatya*
- 1984 Padmabhushan
- 1986 Professor Emeritus, Akashvani and Doordarshan
- 1988 Member, Council for National Integration



Receiving Sangeet Natak Akademi Award from President V.V. Giri (1971)