

## Vijaya Tendulkar's Kamala: A Feminist Play

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### Abstract

Kamala is a naturalistic play by Vijaya Tendulkar, crafted in 1981. It was inspired by a real life incident exposed by Indian Express exposé Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from rural flesh trade and presented her at a press conference. Using this Vijaya Tendulkar crafted a play called 'Kamala', that questions a modern successful society about the role of women. In all the plays of Vijaya Tendulkar females are the protagonists and they played a very important role in the plays. Kamala is an innocent girl, she does not know what is going to be happen with her at the evening. Jaisingh Jadhav asked Sarita to call Kamala, she answered him that she is sleeping but he ordered Sarita to wake her up and send here. Some how Kamala enters and stand modestly in a corner. Her veil is over her face and Jaisingh Jadhav told her to sit down, She sits modestly.

**Keywords:** Flesh Trade, Prostitution, Slave.

Kamala is a naturalistic play by Vijaya Tendulkar, crafted in 1981. It was inspired by a real life incident exposed by Indian Express exposé Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from rural flesh trade and presented her at a press conference. Using this incident as a tool, Vijaya Tendulkar crafted a play called 'Kamala', that questions a modern successful society about the role of women. The play 'Kamala' staged for 150 tomes in 32 cities and 7 languages. Basically it is the story of an unfortunate woman who sold in the flesh market and bought by the journalist Ashwin Sarin. He went to investigate a flesh trade in Madhya Pradesh, and bought a woman, then he wrote a series of articles to expose the prostitution trade and involvement of big political as well as police hands in it. Article printed on 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> April 1981 and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1981.

In all the plays of Vijaya Tendulkar females are the protagonists and they played a very important role in the plays. Leela Banare in 'Silence the court is in session' and Sarita in the play 'Kamala' both are educated woman and do not wish to bow in front of the male society. The play 'Kamala' crafted in 1981 and made it into film in 1985. Deepti Naval played Kamal's character with Shabhana Azmi, Marc Zuber and A.K. Hangal in Hindi.

Basically it is Two-act play and Flesh Trade is the main theme. It is the story of Jaisingh Jadhav's account who wish to be successful journalist in his profession. The writer use this play as a plat-form to show that unending suffering of the middle class females in the modern society. The setting place of the play is New-Delhi, and the whole play revolves

around the female character named Kamala, to whom Jaisingh Jadhav bought from flesh trade. Sarita, another female complex character and wife of Jaisingh Jadhav.

Delhi based journalist Jaisingh Jadhav finds that even this date the flesh trade exist in the Madhya Pradesh, and the victims are being girls who belong to Bahil Tribe. Hence he travels to Madhya Pradesh, and buying a girl Kamala in auction for 250rs he returns to his delhi Residence. He managed to put Kamala secretly until he presented her in a press conference, and where he wish to revel about the flesh trade in Madhya Pradesh.

Play begins with the presence of Kakasaheb, who is journalist and uncle to Sarita, he is strong follower of Gandhian doctrines. At the beginning of the play itself the ringing of the hectic phone calls shows the atmosphere of the work and neds to complete it with care. If it fails, that shows the dishonour to Jaisingh Jadhav. From these hectic calls Kakasaheb made Kmalabai, the servant to sit there to receive the calls make note of the noumbers. The account of calls which they had received in that there are some calls of threatening to murder the Jaisingh Jadhav. Then onwards Jaisingh Jadhav's safty is more concern for Sarita as well as her uncle, because of journalist job.

When Jaisingh Jadhav comes from his journey, he inquired Sarita about the account of phone calls, then he came to know there were some phone calls of threatening. He simply ignored those calls. Along with him he took one girl named Kamala, he bought her in an auction in Madhya Pradesh for 250rs. His main aim is to present her in press conference that is going to be held at Delhi to get prominent in his profession as a journalist, and as a proof of flesh trade.

Sarita, being a wife of Jaisingh Jadhav she is also like a salve under four walls. Jaisingh used her to attend his calls as well as for his physical needs. She is too worried to here the news that Jaisingh Jadhav bought Kamala for 250rs in auction of Luhardaga Bazar and presenting her in the press conference at the same evening.

Jaisingh: I bought her in the Luhardaga Bazar in Bihar.

Sarita: Huh? Bought her?

Jaisingh: Yes, For two hundred and fifty rupees. Even a bullock costs more than that. They sell human beings at this bazaar at Luhardaga beyond Ranchi. Human beings. They have an open auction for women of all sort of ages. People come from long distance to make their bids.

Sarita: They auction women?

Jaisingh: Yes, women. Can't belive it, can you? The men who want to bid handle the women to inspect them. Whether they are firm or flabby. Young or old. Healthy or diseased. How they feel in the breast, in their waist, in their thighs and.....

Sarita: Enough.

Jaisingh: This upsets you, perhaps. This Kamala had no customers at all. She was sitting to one side with her head down. I said, chalo, let's buy her. I bought her dirt cheap.

Sarita: What for? Why did you go there?

Jaisingh: To prove that such auctions are taking place in this country now at this very moment.

Kamala is an innocent girl, she does not know what is going to be happen with her at evening. Jaisingh Jadhav asked Sarita to call Kamala, she answered him that she is sleeping but he ordered Sarita to wake her up and send here. Some how Kamala enters and stand modestly in a corner. Her veil is over her face and Jaisingh Jadhav told her to sit down, She sits modestly. He told her about the press conference where they are going to attend at the evening but she refused to go with him it is only because of her dirty clothes. Finally Jaisingh Jadhav ordered Kamala to come with him.

Jaisingh: How do you like it here, Kamala?

Kamala: Very much, Sahib.

Jaisingh: Kamala, this evening we're going out together.

Kamala: Oh! I'll see Bombay! They say it's a very big city.

Jaisingh: There's going to be abig feast where we are going.

Kamala: Why, is there a Krishna temple there?

Jaisingh: No.

Kamala: Then a Rama temple?

Jaisingh: No, it's a place where big feasts take place veery important people will be coming. There

Kamala: You go master. What will I do there?

Jaisingh: Those people will want to meet you!

Kamala: Hai dayya! And me in this mess. Look at my clothes! I won't go there.

Jaisingh: But it's all in honour of you.

Kamala: Tell them, she's had a long journey. She's ill. Really, tell them that.

Jaisingh: You will have to come, Kamala.

Kamala, except her world she does not know others. She thought that all the womens life is like her, and they also bought by there masters and husbands. Here in Jaisingh Jadhav's house Kamala asked first Kamalabai, that she also bought by her master, that is Jaisingh Jadhav. It shows that the lack of the knowledge of the other people except her. By hearing this Kamalabai shocked and goes to complain Sarita.

Kamalabai: What is this you have bought into the house?

Sarita; What are you talking about?

Kamalabai: Her. That creature. The one Sahib bought here this morning.

Sarita: What about her?

Kamalabai: She asks me, were you bought or were you hired? And that was not all. She asks me, How much did they hire you for? What work do you have to do?

At once the press conference is over Jaisingh Jadhav already planed for Kamala to send to the women's house, if it is not happened he will suerly for it. Because buying and selling of people is crime according to Indian penal code. But Sarita refused to send Kamala to a womens house and requested Jaisingh Jadhav to not send her, he did not listened her appeal and goes from the house to attend press conference.

Act two also begins in Jaisingh Jadhav's house, when door bell rungs sarita opens the door. Jaisingh enters the house along with him one of his friend colleague Jain also enters, after these two Kamala also comes in. Both Jaisingh and Jain are in good mood it is only

because of the success of the press conference. Before the conference Jain does not know that Jaisingh had brought women, but after the conference for this Jain made some healthy argument with him. Kakasaheb also joins with them to discuss and finally they revealed that Kamala did not understand anything what and why press conference happened there at the evening. After the discussion Jain went to his house and others goes to sleep.

Sarita is in a room, one can't see clearly whether she is awake or asleep. An outline peers into the room from off-stage. Then, thinking there is no one in the room, comes in slowly and gently. It is Kamala. By asking excuse she asks sarita, how much Jaisingh had paid for her to buy. She got gentle answer from the Sarita, and Kamala thought that is expensive buy and got the message Sarita does not have any children. Finally Kamala revealed that she is ready to give birth to children as much as master wants, and she is ready to toil for him.

Kamala: Can I ask you something? You won't be angry?

Sarita: No. Go on.

Kamala: how much did he buy you for?

Sarita: What?

Kamala: I said, how much did he buy you for?

Sarita: Me? Look here, Kamala. For seven hundred..

Kamala: My god! Seven hundred?

Sarita : Why? Was it too little?

Kamala: It was an expensive bargain, memsahib. If you pay seven hundred and there are no children. Then he has to pay for clothes, and for food. He must be very unhappy really.

Sarita: How many children do you have, Kamala?

Kamala: I'll have as many as you want. And work as hard as you want. I can work hard from morning to evening.

Finally Kamala prepares mentally and speak very seriously with Sarita that Memsahib, if you won't misunderstand , I'll tell you one thing. The master bought both of us and he spent lot of money too, it is not easy to earn money he laboured lot to earn it. So she told Sarita, both are stay together like sisters and keep the master happy and make him prosperous. I'll give birth children for master, I'll bring them up and she told Sarita to just handle the account because she is educated women. Lastly she told that, for Fifteen days Sarita has to sleep with master and other fifteen days Kamala, Sarita with hard hearted agreed for it to tell infront of master.

In the morning, the next day of the conference Jaisingh Jadhav is ready to send Kamala to the women's house, he has already got a call from Niti Bhag police station and he doubts that they might have take Kamala under there custody. But Sarita and Kakasaheb refused to send Kamala, and argued with Jaisingh Jadhav. Finally Kamala also gets redy to go with him and she wears one of Sarita's sari. He takes Kamala to womens house.

Sarita: You are taking her to the orphanage, aren't you? How can it be nicer than here?

Jaisingh: I am telling her that so she will feel better.

Sarita: You are deceiving her?

Jaisingh: It's not so bad there. She will like it.

Sarita: How do you know?

Jaisingh: I don't have time to argue with you. Kamala, bring your luggage at once.

At the evening Jaisingh Jadhav alone enters the house and asked Sarita to get ready to go for party. But Sarita does not replay, after some time she asked about Kamala. Jaisingh Jadhav gently replies to kamala that she is in womens house, the police will put there case before the court tomorrow and lawyer will look after it. Once again he asked Sarita to come to party but she never wished to go for it and she replies harshly that she is acting according to her will. She told him that he had never asked her to come to party now he is only dominating her. Finaly Jaisingh goes alone by the car. Sarita, felt bad that Jaisingh Jadhav is playing chess game in the life of Kamala and she thiks that her husband is using Sarita only as the object of sex, not more than that, she felt like a slave to him. By the result of what was happened with Kamala from Jaisingh Jadhav, Sheth Singhanian the press baron dismisses Jadhav from the job. There is pressure on the proprietor as some big people got involved in the flesh trade. After listening this news, Sarita requested her husband to come home from the party. Jadhav is shocked to hear this news and he curses his boss. Finaly Sarita decides to forget what happened in her life and become an independent and confident woman.

Sarita resembles Kamala being an Indian woman trapped in a male-dominated society. But still, Kamala considers Jadhav as his love. In the course of time, Sarita undergoes radical changes in her like Nora in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's house. She becomes an independent woman and it is the true story of a woman who discovers her actual identity. Sarita finally says that a man has bought a slave to home and exploits her. We can see in the Vijaya Tendulkar's plays, that he though not a self-acknowledged feminist, treats his women characters with understanding manner. So these plays can justifiably defined as feminist plays.

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