

Kanyadaan as a play of idealism versus reality.

OR

Kanyadaan as a play explores the issue of modernity and social changes.(2015)

OR

Kanyadaan with reference to the central issue.(2019)

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the prominent dramatists who emerged in 1960 on the literary horizon of India. Vijay Tendulkar's seminal play 'Kanyadaan' is a ruthless criticism of this caste-ridden Indian society. But what is interesting is that Tendulkar highlights here caste system, rather he pinpoints how all attempts of social amelioration prove fruitless in our progressive post independent society. This article shows the predicament of Nath Devalikar, the protagonist of this drama when he confronts hazards in real life in his effort to abolish caste system. With this 'dalit' and 'elite' issue, this play also shows foolishness of a theorist, Nath Devalikar, who keeps his daughter's life at stake to prove the supremacy of his theory. The play also obliquely hints at the pathetic condition of women in a patriarchal society.

The play opens in Nath Devalikar's house where we meet Nath, an idealist Gandhi supporter and an active social worker as well as an MLA, belong to a Brahmin family, is rebuking the irregular transport system of post-independent India. He is the father of Jyoti and Jayaprakash-who are also nurtured by Nath's idealistic philosophy. Nath hates casteism and he takes an active part to eradicate this social evil and to cause dalit upliftment. Nath's wife Seva is also an active social worker who works for the upliftment of women's causes in society. Nurtured in this situation, when Jyoti expresses her desire to marry Arun Athavale, a dalit boy. Devalikar the idealist-reformist who dreams of changing this caste-ridden society with his daughter Jyoti as a soldier, saying his wife "today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense....Today I have changed." Arun Athavale, as projected from the beginning is a strong fellow both in body and mind. As a dalit boy having a poor financial and so-called backward 'cultural' background, has the poetic self which is the product of his spontaneity.

The dramatist neatly divides the drama in two acts. If the act I is the representation of Nath Devalikar's deep-rooted idealism, his dream of social upliftment and his ignorance, act II shows the disastrous result of his ignorance. It depicts his excruciating pain and it becomes a saga of his failure. In act II, scene I, we see Jyoti no longer a joyous, happy married girl; but an experienced, older woman who bears the burden of his marriage submissively. Jyoti's father is also worried about Jyoti's present situation, but the dreamer in him cannot cast off his long-cherished idealism. Nath the democrat who believes in equality as he says, "The values I uphold in my public I live by in my personal life." Like a responsible father, he offers Jyoti to stay in his home with Arun, only to prevent abuses and physical tortures done to his darling daughter. But Jyoti refuses to stay because when Arun comes to her house and shows love to his wife theatrically before her parents, Jyoti leaves her father's house with Arun. It is not for Arun's love, but to give riddance to her family of this strange bondings between them. Here also Nath fails to understand his own daughter ignorantly shows her happiness because he thinks that his

social experiment of breaking cultural barriers is not going to be failed. This is the reason why elated Nath cries out in joy, "I feel so proud of you. The training I gave you has not been in vain."

In [scenell](#) of [actII](#) we see Nath reading and praising the autobiographical work written by Arun Athavale. To Nath it is a good specimen of dalit literature written in living language. But it has been also shown how Jyoti is being physically and mentally harassed by a sadistic dalit husband. Already Nath's high idealistic notions about social upliftment have begun to get crumbled. Jyoti's pain and suffering makes Nath annoyed and distressed as a father. Very soon, Arun Athavale comes to invite his father-in-law in his book-launching ceremony. The way he invites his father-in-law in boastful manners is highly indicative of Arun's selfishness, his brutality, who wants to be honored on elite sympathy to cater his personal needs. After Arun's departure, Nath becomes enraged and he bursts out against Arun's hypocrisy. What seemed to him true in [actI](#), turned false before his own eyes. His hysterical cry "I was nauseated by his overweening arrogance. And he's the same man who wrote that autobiography....Why did I have to come into contact with a man like this?"

Following his wife's advice, Nath attends the inaugural ceremony of Arun's autobiography and delivers speech which is nothing but hollow, rhetorical outburst. Nath confesses before her wife and son that what he has done, done only to save her daughter's life. Nath goes through tremendous mental anxiety and a hopeless, disillusioned father, makes his son cautious not to follow his father's idealism. But it is not only Nath's mental confusion, his ignorance about dalit mentality but his lack of experience. Nath is an enthusiast, a detached reformist who feels and boasts of his superiority of being a Brahmin and takes it as a social duty to uplift dalit community. His social experimentation as a reformist brings ruin to his family. Even his daughter who has hero-worshipped him turns against her father and finally denounces his naïve, impractical wisdom, saying that "I grew up listening to such talk day in and day out. All false, vicious claptrap." Jyoti accuses her father also as a hypocrite and brings him in the same line as Arun Athavale.

'Kanyadaan' is thus a deeply pessimistic play about the wrong philosophy of an ineffectual dreamer. Being puffed up by false romantic notions and by 'unworldly Gandhian viewpoints on the Harijan', Nath destroys his daughter's life. Jyoti arrives her true womanhood rejecting her father's wrong philosophy and accepting the reality of life as it is. Tendulkar has been awarded Saraswati Samman for this play, because this play extols reality and nothing but reality, however crude it is.

[Info:-](#) 1. The play *Kanyadaan* has the background of the twentieth century history of struggle over the practice of untouchability and the immediate phase of the Dalit movement in

Maharashtra and in the nation as a whole. It is a psychological study of the social tensions caused by castism in India.

2. Don't avoid the quotations as they are very important and significant that's why marked in red. So must include those quotation.

3. Read the red marked line attentively for short questions.