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Monolithic Modes of Oppression: An Intersectional Approach to Class and Gender in Tendulkar's *Kamala*

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ABSTRACT

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The study aims to answer critical issues concerning the nuanced interplay of gender, class, and silence in shaping the experiences of South Asian women, as well as different layers of oppression that become the cause of multilayered identities. Through an in-depth analysis of Vijay Tendulkar's play *Kamala,* the study challenges monolithic conventions regarding Indian womanhood, concentrating on the traditional institution of marriage and illustrating its role in women's enslavement. This study critically evaluates the differential experiences of women of color, illustrating that shared identities do not equate to monolithic realities, by utilizing a methodology of close textual analysis and drawing upon Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality theory. The pronounced disparity between Kamala and Sarita in the play highlights the complex and context-dependent intersections of class and gender that influence various feminine identities. Furthermore, it recognizes the potential of theatrical performance as a tool for empowering underrepresented communities to articulate their lived experiences. This research paper argues for the necessity of an intersectional approach to understand social justice in Pakistan, indicating the limitations of singular frameworks in addressing the interwoven oppressions faced by Pakistani women due to their multiple identities.

Keywords: *Agency, Gender, Indian Drama, Intersectionality, South Asian Women*

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(I)

This research paper examines Vijay Tendulkar's play *Kamala* to challenge monolithic and essentialist conventions controlling and informing Indian women's lives. We have deployed Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality to examine this text. Intersectionality, with its richness and plurality, represents a myriad of interpretations, potentially obscure or even conflicting. Crenshaw (2010) defined it as "the puzzling picture of a yawning asymmetry between the targets of anti-essentialism" (p.187). While anti-essentialism effectively challenges monolithic narratives that oversimplify diverse cultures, it may unwittingly overlook the specific issues faced by persons who are at the intersection of several kinds of oppression. Despite being women of color, all three female characters in Tendulkar's *Kamala* face various problems. Merely classifying them as women of color might undermine the distinctive challenges that each individual encounters because of her class and economic position.

Aurat March provides a good instance to open the argument. According to Baloch (2023), despite official restrictions and a history of violence, almost two thousand women marched through Lahore, Pakistan, for the annual Aurat March 2023. This act of rebellion illustrates the constant battle for gender equality in a patriarchal country. While the present investigation offers a helpful overview of different approaches employed by Indian theater to tackle gender discrimination, it acknowledges the limitations of an exclusively Indian perspective in appreciating the nuances of this issue in a South Asian setting. This research is especially vital when considering the shared cultural past of both India and Pakistan. The research is partly geared towards offering more detailed and practical suggestions for Pakistani playwrights and activists battling gender inequality. Theatre may function as a platform for underrepresented voices, including women, to defy societal norms and fight for their due place within the community.

The primary focus of this study is Vijay Tendulkar's play *Kamala* first performed in 1981. The time of the play has significance in regards to the historical setting, notably in India's sociopolitical atmosphere emphasized by the swearing-in of the country's first female Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in the 1960s. In 2003, Oxford University Press India published English translations of Tendulkar's celebrated Marathi plays, and *Kamala* is included in that collection. Inspired by a true story, *Kamala* is based on an investigation by Ashwin Sarin published in the *Indian Express* in 1981. Ashwin Sarin rescued a woman through an exploitative system and later presented her at a press conference to highlight the grave issue (Gupta, 2013). Similarly, Tendulkar's play, *Kamala*, sheds light on the narrative of a woman (the titular character) rescued from prostitution and contrasts it with the seemingly idyllic existence of a married housewife called Sarita. The depiction of passive acceptance, notably Sarita's silence despite her education and social status, reflects prevalent gender discrimination in Indian and other South Asian societies. It is critical to understand the complexities of societal influences, cultural customs, and psychological coping mechanisms that propel women to remain silent. Tendulkar's *Kamala* is relatable to the Pakistani audience because it explores marital issues. By probing Sarita's mind and examining her silence, this study hopes

to shed light on the ingrained gender disparity and cultural restraints that limit women's agency in Pakistani marriages. Sarita's character represents the difficulties faced by educated women who are restricted by cultural expectations.

In a recent interview with *Times* magazine, Crenshaw has reaffirmed the need to promote intersectional studies. She insists that despite widespread gender-based economic inequities (of black and white women), such as well-documented income and wealth gaps, the addition of race produces a multidimensional and persistent imbalance that current policy frameworks fail to fully address (Steinmetz,2020). In contrast to Spivak's (1994) focus on a singular dimension of marginalization (like the subaltern confronting dominant power), intersectionality explicitly explores how multiple oppressions are experienced simultaneously. Given the complicated interplay of social structures, it is critical to investigate how gender, class, and the strategic use of silence shape the dynamics of oppression and agency endured by South Asian women. Furthermore, exploring how multiple and intersecting layers of oppression manifest within diverse contextual and cultural settings is vital in understanding their notable impact on the formation and negotiation of gender identities. In this regard, we have employed an intersectional theoretical framework our analytical lens to evaluate the central argument.

For our argument, we have adapted Intersectionality theory, originating from Black feminist thinking in the United States, which serves as the foundational framework for applying its principles to international human rights. The idea is that multiple systems of oppression intersect in people's lives and affect different kinds of individuals and groups of people. This creates space for discussion of both intergroup differences (e.g., differences between men and women) and intragroup differences (Bond, 2021). Although its roots may be traced back to Black feminist thought, intersectionality theory emerged in the late 1980s in response to conceptual and practical flaws in feminist legal theory and critical race theory (Crenshaw, 1991, 1997, 2010). It allows for an in-depth investigation of a wide spectrum of independent variables, such as socioeconomic position, cultural norms, gender expectations, gender identities, marital dynamics, and power imbalances. Intersectionality has spread across continents and disciplines, adapting to each setting by redefining its lens on race, gender, and dynamics, or even reframing its primary subjects and categories, demonstrating its incredible resilience and continual change (Cho et al., 2013). By acknowledging intersectionality, the research seeks to unveil the complex mosaic of South Asian women's varied experiences. The goal of this study is to reorient attention towards the plight of Indian women. It demonstrates the relevance of transitioning away from a gender-specific focus on racism to the direction that Crenshaw (2010) regards as an essentialist discourse on race (p. 185).

The extensive corpus of scholarship on Tendulkar's plays provides a solid foundation for examining critical approaches to his work. Researchers have contested that his plays have resulted in the creation of Indian subjectivity (Saini, 2010; Bandyopadhyay, 2016) through its varying presentations across evolving identities (Tapadia, 2011). A comparative analysis of Tendulkar's plays and those of other playwrights, notably Dattani's, shows similarities and differences in their

answers to societal challenges (Agravat 2014). Shifting focus on the aesthetics of violence, the aim has been to delineate the struggle of the common man against gendered violence (Manisha,2012; Champaklal, 2013; Kumar & John, 2018). In the same vein, Pendse (2012) recognizes the thematic commonality between Tendulkar's works and those of other playwrights in their depiction of violence. Through a comparative study of Pakistani and Indian dramas, Mubarak (2015) has depicted the plight of women who struggle against oppressive power structures.

Crenshaw (1991) presents a tripartite constructive definition of intersectionality. The first feature, structural intersectionality, is commonly used in its operationalization. Structural intersectionality refers to how the experiences of women of color with domestic abuse, rape, and remedial reform differ from those of white women (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1245). The second part, political intersectionality, emphasizes the historical coexistence of feminist and antiracist movements in the United States, which marginalizes issues confronting Black women. Representational intersectionality refers to the creation of images of women of color based on sexist and racist narrative tropes, as well as how critiques of these representations marginalize or reinforce the objectification of women of color (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1283). The proponents of intersectionality claim that it provides a more accurate picture of how power and inequality operate in society. Regardless of spectrum of oppression, the essential principle of intersectionality is to investigate how power dynamics play out among different groups in hierarchical systems (Crenshaw, 2010).

In recent times, the tenets of intersectionality have been invoked for research in the domain of Queer studies. Considerable work has been done on intersectional studies of Queer identity formation in both fiction (Lester, 2014; Moulaison et al., 2017; Gray et.al., 2018; Sørnes 2023) and films (Warhol et al.,2015; Mahrouse, 2016). These studies shed light on the changing environment, emphasizing the interconnectedness of queer narratives, where identity formation overlaps with a broader range of elements, and represent a big step forward in understanding the intersectional nature of queer experiences in literature and film. In the field of Linguistics, Kirkham (2015) investigates the social meanings encoded in language variety, revealing how class, ethnicity, and social behaviors interact to shape communication patterns. Ke-Schütte and Babcock (2023) have proposed a non-binary semiotics of intersectionality that broadens our knowledge of identity in linguistic anthropology. Beyond the field of linguistics, intersectional studies involve multidisciplinary connections. Scholarly studies by Adekemi et al. (2020) and Riaz et al. (2021) bring forth intricate associations between race, gender in their stimulating research endeavors. In the realm of literary studies, Vázquez (2017) dives into the postcolonial feminist terrain, deconstructing the intersection of trauma, whiteness, and healing in Michelle Cliff's works. Anna Carastathis (2014) expands the theoretical paradigm by providing a foundational examination of feminist theory, shedding light on its intersectional elements. Postcolonial feminist concerns are further explored in the fiction of Zadie Smith (Bağlama,2020; Rai, 2021). Finally, Ranft's work (2013) delineates the versatility of intersectionality in the multidisciplinary realm of gender and families of color. In the exploration of intersectionality within Indian literature, Kaur's (2021) research is oriented towards

Sikh dramatherapy. Similarly, Wijesiri (2020) examines identity and performance in pre-modern Sinhala theatre. Vyas (2015) contributes to the topic by exploring gender related concerns in Indian fiction for children. These studies shed light on the importance of using an intersectional lens to challenge monolithic narratives and understand the complex nature of lived experiences of diverse Indian population.

This paper employs a methodological approach that blends textual analysis and critical theory, utilizing an intersectional approach to examine the selected text. The drama portrays the narrative of a woman (Kamala) forced into prostitution, stressing the vulnerabilities of individuals cooped up in such exploitative settings. Tendulkar reiterates the relevance of recognizing how various social constructs, like as class and gender, may interact to create varied experiences of marginalization and privilege. This investigation seeks to highlight the parallel predicaments experienced by these women, as well as the shared challenges in their lived experiences within the convoluted mosaic of South Asian social dynamics.

(II)

The narrative unfolds in a modest bungalow in Delhi's luxurious Neetibagh neighborhood, the home of Jaisingh Jadav, a well-known journalist who writes for a major English-language newspaper. The first Act presents Sarita, Jaisingh's wife, and her uncle, Kakasaheb, a publisher affiliated with a regional vernacular newspaper who is currently in Delhi to supervise the allocation of printing material for his magazine. Act I begins with an early morning scene that features Jaisingh's wife, Sarita. Jaisingh's work as an investigative journalist entails periodic trips outside of the city. In the absence of her husband, she oversees answering the phone. Sarita's limited agency within the marriage becomes apparent. Her principal function involves keeping track of phone calls for her absent spouse, Jaisingh. This confines her to a domestic role, depriving her of control over information about his location and travel plans. This lack of awareness generates a feeling of powerlessness, especially if the calls are potentially intimidating. Her uncle is horrified to see her receiving threatening calls. Being engulfed in her husband's problems exposes her to violence, leaving her afraid and vulnerable.

The imposition of gendered expectations on Sarita is indisputable in the opening scene and aligns with Crenshaw's (1991) notion of "structural intersectionality". The society she lives in has created an illusion of safety by swiftly overlooking the actual challenges that Sarita faces, inevitably depriving her of autonomy and agency through intended manipulation. This methodology challenges one-dimensional approaches for evaluating modes of oppression, which frequently stress peculiar axes like race or gender in isolation. Instead, it emphasizes the cumulative and synergistic consequences of overlapping systems of domination on the experiences of individuals and communities. While social norms frequently assign responsibility for dealing with risky and potentially alarming situations to men, Sarita, as Jaisingh Jadhav's wife, feels forced to take charge. The analysis of the overlapping structures of subordination highlighted how specific groups of women were made particularly vulnerable to abuse and vulnerable to

ineffective methods that failed to consider the underlying framework of the setting (Crenshaw 1991; Richie 2012).

With domestic help in the form of Kamala Bai around the house, much of Sarita's time is spent doing a few errands for her husband. She has been reduced to the role of a mere adjunct who must always do her husband's bidding. In Act I, she helplessly shares her woes with her uncle, "I have to hear some terrible things. Often, the husband isn't at home. And I wouldn't know where to look for him." Later she adds that "I get upset sometimes, but it doesn't bother him" (Tendulkar, 2003, p. 7). When she confides in her uncle, she acknowledges that she is angry, but her husband's apathy demonstrates their unequal power dynamics. This vulnerability accentuates the intersectionality of her dire situation. While her socioeconomic situation offers some privilege, it does not shield her from the constraints imposed by a patriarchal social system (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1243).

Later in Act I, following conversation happens between Sarita and her uncle when she utters, "But you did give me away, didn't you?" Kakasaheb, her maternal uncle, is distraught at her situation and replies, "We didn't give you back to him, to take you back as a widow" (p.7). Later, Sarita adds, "Do you think he's going to change, just because you tell him to? I tried that once — I got so fed up. I said I was going back to Phaltan. What was the result? He started booking my ticket" (p.7).

Sarita's pointed question about being "given away" in marriage as if she were an object demonstrates her growing awareness of being treated as less than equal. Sarita's animosity, as well as her uncle's limited comprehension, illustrate her isolation and lack of support when it comes to fighting unequal power dynamics. Even while her uncle attempts to cajole her, he does not fully understand the challenges she has as a woman in her situation. Crenshaw rightly notes, "The discourses are often inadequate even to the discrete tasks of articulating the full dimensions of . . . sexism. Because women of color experience [sex]ism in ways not always the same as those experienced by men of color" (1991, p.1252).

Structural intersectionality is apparent in some crucial scenes of the play. Traditional gender roles constrain Sarita to household tasks such as serving her husband, which is exacerbated by socioeconomic disparities visible in the presence of domestic help, Kamala Bai. Secondly, her husband's profession as a journalist adds another layer. The conversation with Kakasaheb illustrates another point of intersection: familial expectations and social norms. The analysis reveals how several social categories (gender, socioeconomic status, and familial obligations) interact and reinforce one another. According to Crenshaw (1991), individuals are marginalized as a result of the combined impact of many social identities, such as race, class, and gender (p.1293). Having domestic help (because of Sarita's socioeconomic status) promotes traditional gender roles (like serving), whereas societal norms (via Kakasaheb) limit her agency inside the marriage.

Later, Kakasaheb questions Jaisingh in Act I and reprimands him for leaving Sarita alone in the city to fend for herself, especially when people make threatening phone calls at a journalist's residence. The following dialogue is important in this regard:

KAKASAHEB: Don't tell me anything about Delhi! But tell me this, what are you planning to do with this girl? (Sarita)

JAISINGH (surprised) this girl? Why?

SARITA I haven't said anything to him. He's been saying that since morning.

KAKASAHEB. You go off anywhere –you come back any odd time don't say where you're going, I came here this time and asked her, she said, I don't know

JAISINGH Oh. That she seems to have told you quite a lot.

SARITA. It is he who asked me.

JAISINGH. Why don't you admit that you told him? (Tendulkar, 2003, p.8).

The Intersectionality framework highlights how, even within privilege, women face patriarchal subjugation, as exemplified by Sarita. Misra (2018) asserts that intersectionality, though influenced by poststructuralism, prioritizes understanding structural inequalities like economic, political, and social power disparities. In fact, it specifies, "how gender is structured differently over time, place, and across groups, [as] intersectional theory identifies important variations in gendered structures and outcomes, creating more accurate understanding of how these processes work, and how they can be altered" (p.112). Kakasaheb asserts control over Sarita and questions her actions as if she were a minor. Despite being viewed as a 'protector', his actions endorse the conventional family structure in which male relatives exert authority over younger females, overlapping and reinforcing existing gendered power dynamics. Kamala's story is one good example.

On his return home, Jaisingh Jadhav comes home with a "village woman draped in a dirty white sari, her face hidden behind it" (Tendulkar, 2003, p. 8). He pays Rs 250 for the woman named Kamala, from the Luhardanga bazaar in Bihar, with the plan to introduce her at a press conference to draw attention to women trafficking. His decision to present Kamala for self-promotion reveals his ultimate concern: earning prominent status for scrupulous reporting as a journalist. Jaisingh Jadhav's actions reinforce social conventions that oppress Kamala and Sarita, albeit in different ways. Kamala's direct mistreatment for his personal gain stands in stark contrast to Sarita's indirect servitude as a result of her husband's actions. This twofold oppression indicates how intersectional vulnerabilities and patriarchal dominance operate in tandem to perpetuate gender inequality and limit women's autonomy and agency.

Act II begins in the evening when Kamala returns after being forced to attend a press conference by Jaisingh Jadhav. Before they leave for the press conference, Jaisingh prepares Kamala for the event. She is hesitant and does not feel comfortable. However, he forces her to do his bidding when he says, "I order you to come there with me today" (Tendulkar, 2003, p.20). He instructs her on how to reply to queries from the assembled crowd. Jaisingh's approach of preparing Kamala's

responses for the audience raises concerns about coercion. This move indicates an attempt to control the narrative, which may limit Kamala's power to express herself freely.

Kakasaheb, Jaisingh, and his friend Jain discuss the happenings of the night (after the press conference) as the wife (Sarita) serves tea. The debate centers on the press conference, revealing that reporters interrogated Kamala. Witnessing Kamala's mistreatment, Sarita expresses her discontentment, displaying a shift in her growing consciousness. She was aghast and retorts, "So while they were asking those terrible questions, and making fun of her – you just sat and watched, did you?" (Tendulkar, 2003, p. 30). Sarita's reaction to Jaisingh's passivity during the press conference demonstrates her growing awareness of Kamala's plight. Sarita's exclusion from the male-dominated discourse emphasizes her marginalized voice and perspective. Witnessing Kamala's neglect, her role as a tea server frames her as an observer rather than an active participant. Sarita's frustration reflects an increasing awareness of power inequality. Her response, whether silent observation or discreet engagement attempts, exposes how cultural expectations limit her agency. This becomes the turning point in Sarita's life. She distances herself from Jaisingh and refuses to come close to him. He has become a mere stranger, "a gentleman" for her (Tendulkar,2003, p.45). The analysis reveals that Kamala's objectification exposes cultural standards that allow strong men to marginalize women, whilst Sarita's exclusion highlights her lack of autonomy.

At one moment in the play, all three female characters appear at the same time on the stage. Kamalabai (the domestic help) is seen interrogating Kamala about her murky past:

> Kamala: I've been bought, haven't I?
>
> Kamalabai: [thunderstruck] What?
>
> Kamala: He-he bought me. In the bazaar.
>
> Kamalabai. Bought you? Who did?
>
> Kamala. He… the gentleman…
>
> [Kamala can understand nothing of this. The phone rings and Kamalabai receives the call] In the meanwhile, Sarita enters the room. (The Stage directions tell us that). She (Kamalabai) has not recovered herself and rather absentmindedly replies: "phone? Oh. Yes. Who knows? They didn't speak" (Tendulkar, 2003, p.13).

It is critical to see that women have been robbed of their abilities to articulate their concerns. The economic disparity that has given vent to class exploitation and the prevalence of patriarchal norms all lead to these women's integrating oppressions. By recognizing the interconnectedness of these systems, people can move beyond individual narratives and advocate for dismantling the mechanisms that enable and sustain such inequities. Subtle yet potent power disparities emerge. Tendulkar's choice of phrases and stage directions effectively demonstrates these dynamics. Sarita's lack of awareness of the exchange between

Kamala (rescued woman) and Kamalabai (domestic help underscores the limitations caused by her privileged orientation. Despite being a woman, her class and marital status create a stark contrast with the lives of other women. Crenshaw observes to the same effect: "Where systems of race, gender, and class domination converge, as they do in the experiences of battered women of color, intervention strategies based solely on the experiences of women who do not share the same class or race backgrounds will be of limited help" (1991, p.1246).

Kamala, a lower caste member, suffers from caste and class discrimination. She is robbed of agency, and personality, and silenced as a commodity "bought" by her employer, unable to speak out against her servitude. Kamaalbai, a lower-class domestic servant, has relative influence over Kamala, allowing her to investigate Kamala's background while adhering to patriarchal conventions. However, Kamalabai is bound by the patriarchal rules that bind Sarita and, as Crenshaw avers, "the failure of feminism to interrogate race implies that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of color, and the failure of antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently reproduce the subordination of women" (1991, p. 1252).

Kamala very innocently suggests to Sarita "The master bought you, he bought me, too. He spent a lot of money on the two of us. . . . We'll keep the master happy. . . . The master will have children. I'll do the hard work, and I'll bring forth the children. . . . You keep account" (Tendulkar, 2003, p.42). It is Kamals's insights into their shared predicament that expose how both of them are effectively enslaved, devoid of genuine freedom. The situation is highly ironic. Sarita embodies the perfect wife, trapped in a domestic cage without realising it. This conversation indicates a transactional and potentially exploitative association, stressing the complicated intersections of power, gender, and class.

Tendulkar's play *Kamala* also exemplifies several essential characteristics of political intersectionality, in which policies are formed by competing interests among diverse identity groups. Jaisingh Jadhav, the patriarch, serves as the de facto policymaker. His decisions have a major effect on Sarita and Kamala's lives, affecting their decision-making abilities. This is similar to how policymakers in a larger political system exert power over resource distribution and shape the lives of various groups. After the press conference, Jaisingh makes an aggressive move to get rid of Kamala from his residence. He cites a probable legal issue to rationalize his hasty decision and dismisses Sarita's reservations. Asserting his power with the remark, "It's I who takes decisions in this house, and no one else," he gives Kamala a direct order, "Chalo" (Let's go), (Tendulkar, 2003, p. 48), displaying a patriarchal mindset and disregard for her autonomy.

Later in the play, Jain (Jaisingh Jadhav's friend) arrives with the distressing news of Jaisingh's termination. The official letter is expected the following day. Jaisingh, in a state of agitation, considers phoning the editor, but he is out of Delhi. Here, the roles are reversed. Faced with this predicament, Sarita encourages Jaisingh to sit and eat something. The ending scene of Act II presents a different Sarita. Her confidence stems from an informed consciousness of her rights and the critical insight that her husband, positioned as her protector, was nonetheless a

flawed man marked by significant weakness. Consequently, Kamala emerges as a pivotal catalyst, fundamentally altering Sarita's perception of her decade-long marital existence and exposing the bitter reality that both women function as mere objects in Jaisingh's life. No more is Sarita a docile and meek being. Instead, she has become a force to be reckoned with, as she says: "Kakasaheb, when I will stop being a slave, I'll no longer be an object to be used and thrown away. I'll do what I wish and no one will rule over me" (Tendulkar,2003, p.52). Sarita's narrative emphasizes the limitations of existing frameworks in identifying the various layers of prejudice she encounters, stressing the necessity for a more thorough understanding of the interspersed oppressions endured by women of color. The play alludes to a potential breakdown of this internal power dynamic. Sarita's underlying irritation, visible in the above-mentioned extract, and subsequent disobedience, as demonstrated by her pointed words, hint at a potential challenge to the established system. This cyclical nature of power dynamics is addressed in political intersectionality, which allows marginalized groups to resist dominant forces.

(III)

Tendulkar's play *Kamala* crosses geographical bounds, depicting an apt portrayal of female enslavement that is particularly relevant in Pakistan. The play's greatness stems from its intersectional lens, which echoes Crenshaw's (1991) study of intersectionality. Tendulkar interweaves the narratives of Sarita, Kamala, and Kamalabai to demonstrate how class and caste intersect to generate the multiple realities associated with women's servitude in India and Pakistan. Sarita, finds herself imprisoned in the gilded cage of upper-middle-class marriage. Despite her relative privilege, she has limited autonomy and voice due to patriarchal norms. This resonates with the persisting obstacles experienced by many Pakistani women, who, despite societal development, continue to face similar constraints within established familial frameworks. Kamala's position as a "bought" commodity shows structural intersectionality, which occurs when oppressive systems such as class and caste reinforce one another. Her exploitation parallels the experiences of many vulnerable women in Pakistan who are stuck in cycles of exploitation because of their intersecting identities. Even Kamalabai, with her limited influence over Kamala, exemplifies the concept of intersectionality. Despite having limited authority within the home, she is nevertheless confined by the same patriarchal and socioeconomic institutions, demonstrating how oppression may emerge within power dynamics. This paper also sheds light on the corruption within the newspaper's organizational framework. Newspapers are usually considered catalysts for social change, but the play implies that they may be co-opted to be utilized for the personal advantage of journalists and editors. Jaisingh Jadhav's procurement of Kamala at auction is not prompted by an honest need to support her or eliminate the exploitative practice of human trafficking; instead, it is fueled by a strategic calculation, the potential of increased popularity and job enhancements.

This study demonstrates the limitations of Pakistan's judicial system. To dismantle these interwoven oppressions, one must move beyond fragmented narratives and recognize the problems faced by Indian, Pakistani, or South Asian

women at large based on their numerous levels of identity. *Kamala* serves as a powerful call to action, not just for India but for Pakistan as well. By undoing monolithic categories of oppression and championing an intersectional perspective, one can work towards dismantling the very structures that silence and subjugate individuals based on their multifaceted identities. Only then can we strive for a more just and equitable future where Pakistani women, like their counterparts across the border, *as in Kamala*, can reclaim their voices, chart their destinies, and fully participate in shaping a more just society.

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