



# SAKHARAM BINDER STUDY GUIDE



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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is meant to be a resource for teachers and students alike. The goal is to both prepare students for seeing the play by contextualizing the piece and to foster a fruitful reflection afterward. It can also be used to reinforce other classroom skills and concepts. The guide includes informational resources as well as activities and discussion questions. Feel free to copy pages from this guide to share with the students.

# FROM: THE SCHOOL OF DRAMA TO: YOU

We are so excited for you to come see our production of ***Sakharam Binder***! The story is about privilege, power, and gender roles, forces which are very prevalent in society today. The play also contains adult language, sexual situations, substance use, and violence, so please let your teacher know if this may upset you. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at [fake.email@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:fake.email@andrew.cmu.edu)!

## SPOILER-FREE SYNOPSIS

Sakharam, a book-binder, takes in women who find themselves without a husband and house for one reason or another. Although he's not rich, he provides them with food, shelter, and clothing as long as they do whatever he asks of them. How does he maintain control? What would happen if he did not hold the power anymore?

# THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Vijay Tendulkar** (1928-2008)

is an Indian playwright, screenwriter, and journalist. He also has written many essays of political commentary and satire. He is known for his radical approach to art and its use for social change.



Vijay Tendulkar from India Today (2015)

The play, without any changes, appeals to [the audience's] sensitivity and penetrates deep enough. Its Indian-ness does not come in the way at all...How will you explain this? What is universality? I am sharing this with you and have not drawn any conclusion.

**VIJAY TENDULKAR**

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAKHARAM BINDER

1972: Premiere in India

Legal battle

1974: Movie adaptation

2004: American premiere

2013: Off-Broadway run

2015: Pakistani premiere

## TRANSLATION

***Sakharam Binder*** has been translated from Marathi into Kannada, Hindi, Bengali and English.

### WRITTEN RESPONSE

How does translation positively or negatively change a work?

What strengths and weaknesses do different languages have?

# CENSORSHIP IN INDIA

Tendulkar applies for a certificate of suitability from the government to produce the play.

The government approves the certificate.

Less than a month later, the government abruptly cancels the certificate.

The next day, the producer petitions the Bombay High Court to allow further performances.

The Bombay High Court grants temporary permission, but withholds a new certificate of suitability.

With many members of the Court still not having seen the play, the court releases a list of 32 edits that must be made to receive the certificate.

All members of the Court watch a closed performance of the play that includes a blue light which turns on during any passages they had deemed offensive.

Tendulkar agrees to the 32 edits, which weakened the thematic strength of the play.

The Court issues the certificate of suitability.

Instead of performing the butchered play, the producer and director challenged the edits, claiming that they were a constitutional violation of free speech.

The Court declares the existing set of restraints void.

The Court establishes a degree of theatrical freedom, but leaves the ruling somewhat vague so that censorship could be enacted in the future if necessary.

Critics of the censorship point out that Western plays with equally sensitive content are allowed to be performed in India.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Is censorship necessary? Why or why not?

Is modern censorship explicit or implicit?

Do you think you have freedom of speech?

What, if anything, should never be censored?

## ACTIVITY

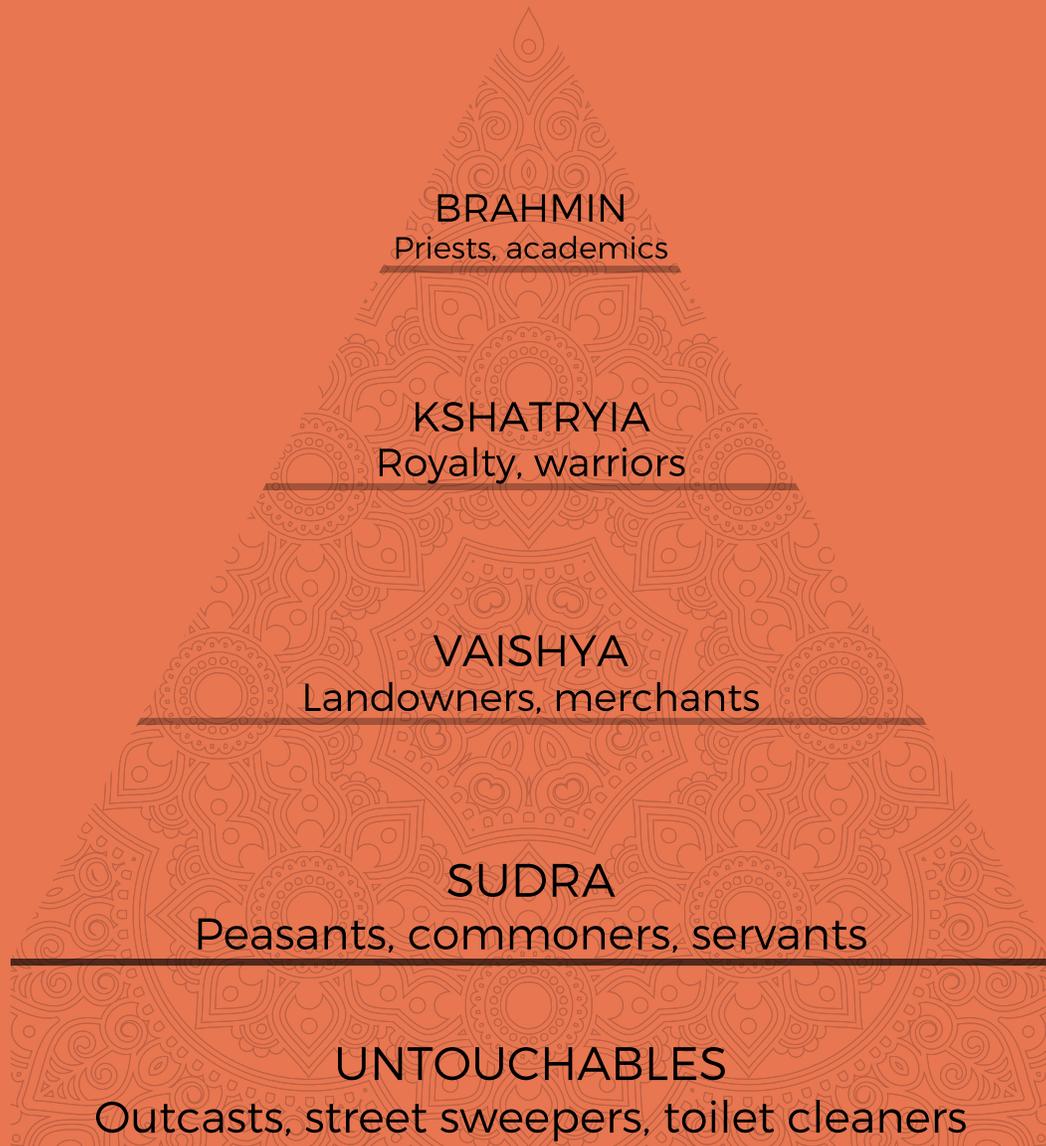
How many banned books have you read?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Handmaid's Tale    | <input type="checkbox"/> Harry Potter series |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Farm            | <input type="checkbox"/> The Great Gatsby    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Catcher in the Rye | <input type="checkbox"/> 1984                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To Kill a Mockingbird  | <input type="checkbox"/> In Cold Blood       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Lord of the Flies  | <input type="checkbox"/> The Color Purple    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catch-22               | <input type="checkbox"/> Beloved             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slaughterhouse Five    | <input type="checkbox"/> Of Mice and Men     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Lord of the Rings  | <input type="checkbox"/> Invisible Man       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Clockwork Orange     | <input type="checkbox"/> Brave New World     |

Group the books you have read by reasons they may have gotten banned.

What do these groups say about the authority they were banned by?

# INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM



## WRITTEN RESPONSE

How does the Indian caste system compare to class structure in the United States? Why might this be the case?

# WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE?

## ACTIVITY

*In groups or individually:*

Brainstorm a unique definition for the word "progressive."

Choose a decade and country to research.

What would this society consider progressive?

Create a poster or advertisement for a progressive movement (theoretical or historical) of that society.

Would this movement be controversial? Why?

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

Why might Sakharam think he is progressive?

In your opinion, is Sakharam progressive?

What about Champa?

Why or why not?

# DAILY LIFE

## A VISUAL DICTIONARY



### **chai**

a traditional Indian tea brewed with various spices served hot

Image from UNESCO

### **bhakri**

a round flat bread used to scoop chutney, vegetables and yogurt



Image from vaya.in



### **chutney**

a popular condiment made with garlic, tomatoes, mango, mint, tamarind, or coconut



**sari**

a traditional Indian garment worn by women hand-draped

Image from utsavfashion.com



**choli**

the blouse of a sari cut above the midriff often short-sleeved

Image from Aryavart

**chappals**

traditionally leather sandals each region has many different styles



Image from StepnStyle India

# FURTHER READING

**Between Two World: Sakharam's Struggle and Its Symbolical Representaiton in Vijay Tendulkar's Sakharam Binder** by Mrs.

Barre Manjula and Dr. Sandhya Katumala

[https://www.rjoe.org.in/Files/v5i1/19.RJOE-SAMBAIH%20SIR\\_\(111-120\).pdf](https://www.rjoe.org.in/Files/v5i1/19.RJOE-SAMBAIH%20SIR_(111-120).pdf)

**Human Relationship Approach in Vijay Tendulkar's Plays: Ghashiram Kotwal, Kamala, Vultures and Sakharam Binder** by

Manisha Khatri and Dr. Arun Kumar

<http://ijmcr.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/09/Paper2679-683.pdf>

**Muffled Voices of Women in Vijay Tendulkar's Sakharam the Book binder** by K. Anuradha

[http://www.hmpenglish.com/site/wp-](http://www.hmpenglish.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/001-M-2013-No.-1-4-Vol-14.pdf#page=50)

[content/uploads/2015/09/001-M-2013-No.-1-4-Vol-14.pdf#page=50](http://www.hmpenglish.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/001-M-2013-No.-1-4-Vol-14.pdf#page=50)

**Vijay Tendulkar Obitruary** by The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/19/india.theatre>

**Sakharam Binder: Tendulkar's Human Zoo** by Dr. Shailaja B.

Wadikar

<http://www.the-criterion.com/V2/n1/Shailaja.pdf>

**A Study of Domestic Violence in Vijay Tendulkar's Sakharam Binder by Dr. Deepak Nanaware**

<https://www.literaryendeavour.org/files/k47b1hebdk6ghwt10oik/2017-04%2001%20Complete%20Issue.pdf#page=88>

**Theatre review: Sakharam Binder** by Purvaja Sawant

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/theatre/Sakharam-Binders-review/articleshow/28896441.cms>

**Censorship and Sakharam Binder** by Ashok H. Desai

[https://www.sahapedia.org/sites/default/files/CENSORSHIP%20AND%20SAKHARAM%20BINDER\\_1.pdf](https://www.sahapedia.org/sites/default/files/CENSORSHIP%20AND%20SAKHARAM%20BINDER_1.pdf)

**Vijay Tendulkar's 7th death anniversary: All you should know about the Indian Playwright** by Indiatoday.in

<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/vijay-tendulkar-7th-death-anniversary-some-facts-253691-2015-05-19>

**The Constitution and Censorship of Plays** by A. G. Noorani

[www.jstor.org/stable/40277226](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40277226)

**Banned Books: A Study of Censorship** by Jennifer Rossuck

[www.jstor.org/stable/819679](http://www.jstor.org/stable/819679)

**Vijay Tendulkar Obituary** by Balwant Bhaneja

[http://www.hotreview.org/articles/vijaytendulkar\\_print.htm](http://www.hotreview.org/articles/vijaytendulkar_print.htm)