



Portrayal of Women in Kalidasa's Play

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Received 09/06/2025	Abstract <i>An eternal Star in the history of secular Sanskrit literature is the great poet Kalidasa. His dramatic Style is extraordinary. The kind of female characters he has introduced in his plays is truly incomparable, even though they were written many years ago; we have found Similarities between the female Characters of today in many cases. We can find both the character of helpless women and intelligent women in his Plays. But in the 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', we found another form of a female character, who did not protest anything. The Character of women that Kalidasa has presented as a daughter, a lover, a mother and a friend is truly incredible. The evidence that some women were independent-minded even in that era is recorded in Kalidasa's writings. Therefore, it must be admitted that Kalidasa is an expert in drawing Successful female characters.</i>
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Introduction

The fifth Veda created by Brahma is Natyaveda. A Special part of this is drama. Drama is a Subject in which both good and bad Stimuli are transmitted to the mind of both the audience and the performer. When one thinks of drama in Sanskrit literature, the first person who comes to mind is the epic poet Kalidasa. He is the son of mother Saraswati. So maybe he has portrayed the female Character through an unprecedented beauty in every field. His three plays are 'Malavikagnimitram', 'Vikramorvashyam' and 'Abhijnanashakuntalam'. Kalidasa says that the words of the poet are reflected in our hearts. He is steadfast, He is unconcerned; He does not burst energy, but radiates energy, he quietly brings floods, makes Juicy the Soul of the earth as well as the Sky, sometimes brings the Sky down to the ground and sometimes transmits the Joy and pain of the earth to the Sky. He inspires the poet to create new creations and makes the common avid reader a poet. He portrays women in his Plays Sometimes as a dutiful daughter, sometimes as a loving lover. Sometimes, as a compassionate mother. In Short, he is perfect in drawing female characters.

Review of Literature

Khanal (2021), this paper aims to oversee the forms and image of women in the play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' written by Kalidasa, a great poet in Sanskrit literature. It is found that most of his works represent two different aspects of woman, one in the form of the poetic and artistic depiction of woman and the other in the form of her status in the prevailing society. The women were able to inspire action and heroes' aspirations with her own nobility and deep human affection which is the typical image for female characters and an endless source of inspiration for contemporary art and literature. Hence, the portrayal of women is with the outer and inner beauty in relation to social issues like religion, caste, marriage, sacrifice etc.

Ghorai (2020), over the course of centuries, Indian great epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata continue to exert its pronounced impact upon shaping philosophic approach to Indian life on religious, 1 cultural and social levels. The innovative and immortal creation of iconic figures like Rama and Krishna imparts striking religious and social stance to consolidate an enduring sense of moral consciousness. The present paper on the country seeks to explore how classical Indian philosophy insists on defining Indian women as historically mute and socially oppressed subaltern subject under the patriarchal supervision. Therefore, the paper shades light in identifying the stereotypical Indian women with Shakuntala whose womanhood is marked by coyness, -submissiveness and susceptibility. The prejudiced and paralytic patriarchal legacy left behind by post Vedic period perpetuates its ideologically galvanized exploitative encounter on the women. Though, neutralized in the wake of the globalization to some extent the partial centralization of patriarchal power and authority does not allow the voiceless a valid and vast space to think independently of men in independent India.

De (2019), Kalidasa was a classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist in the Sanskrit language of India. There are three dramas ascribed to Kalidasa 'Malavikagnimitram', 'Vikramorvashiyam' and 'Abhijnanashakantalam'. This paper discussed on the treatment of women as reflected in the dramas of Kalidasa.

Rozario & Mishra (2019), Sanskrit literature is an ancient heritage of intrinsic value and aesthetic merit not only for India but for the world. It has achieved greatness in religion and philosophy which is largely due to its originality. Kalidasa is regarded as the greatest of all Sanskrit poets and masterpiece. It received an overwhelming response in the west when it was translated into English by William Jones in 1789. The paper attempts to study the character of Shakuntala in 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' in the light of Bharat Muni's description of a heroine in Natya Shastra. Sage Bharata an ancient Indian theatrologist and musicologist in his Natya Shastra which is a treatise on Indian performing arts, describes a heroine in great detail. The role of heroine was generally considered to be subordinate to that of a hero in both Indian and Western classical drama and it is quite extraordinary for Kalidasa to have given centre stage to Shakuntala in his play replacing the hero as the protagonist and naming the play after its heroine. The paper attempts to establish the importance of a heroine in nataka by discussing the commentary in Natya Shastra. The paper also attempts to briefly analyze the heroines of the western classical drama and draw a comparison between Indian and Greek classical heroines.

Devadasan (2018), women are the embodiment of divine virtue and purity blessed with the sweetness of speech and beauty from the gods. There were contradictory dialogues about women. Where some schools of thought represent them to be 'equals of men' and others schools trying to

spread hatred and disrespect by projecting women to be weak-minded and unworthy of trust. The status of women witnessed a steady shift along with the phases of Indian Society from ancient to modern times. The life of women was highly influenced by the social attitudes and practices in light of philosophical ideologies. The ancient epics and literature placed women with the almost respect and integrity. The sacred position granted to women found a shattered steady decay with time leading towards disrespect and injustice. Women started to regain the lost status only in the later part of the nineteenth century. The study on the mobility in the status of women is possible only through a detailed review into the integrated evolutionary process of the social system and practice.

The injustice and deprivation caused due to the shattered status can be compensated only through equity and justice. Equity in status can be attained only through inclusive growth. This paper highlights on the issues connected to the mobility in the status of women throughout the ancient, medieval and modern eras.

Brahmane (2016), This Article is a humble attempt to deal with the state of women in a patriarchal society from the Vedic period to modern contemporary society, on the one hand, a woman is extolled to the heights of heaven by epitomizing her as a goddess, on the other hand, she is damned as on able, a weakling who depends upon man for her existence and sustenance. The article traces the paradigm shift where a woman emerges despite all obstacles to hold her own identity in personal and professional life. Here woman is not put Vis a Vis man, but the woman is no more an accessory to man, rather a companion, a life partner who is equal to him in every respect.

Swain (2015), 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' is a marvellous work of the great poet and playwright Kalidasa, the brightest star in the firmament of Indian poetry. Kalidasa's imagination holds in perfect fusion the two elements of natural beauty and human feelings. Out of three plays of Kalidasa, 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' is generally regarded as a masterpiece. The word "Abhijnana" in the title signifies 'a token of recognition, which is instrumental in bringing about the final recognition of Shakuntala by the King. It is a Nataka in seven Acts based on the love story of King Dushyanta and the maiden Sakuntala. Social values from an important part of the culture of the society. Values account for the stability of social order. They provide the general guidelines for social conduct, values such as fundamental rights, patriotism, respect for human dignity, rafimality, sacrifice, individuality, equality, democracy etc. Guide our behaviour in many ways, values are the criteria people use in assessing their daily lives; arranging their priorities and choosing between alternative courses of action. There are seven Acts in 'Abhijnanashakuntalam'. Each Act of 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' reflects various social values of women which are more beneficial to human society and the present-day world.

Bandyopadhyay (2018), woman Empowerment, a multidimensional concept, is one of the perennially contemporary issues never losing relevance woman's role in decision making and her rights are important dimensions in the discourse. To understand the modern issue of woman empowerment in a traditional context, this paper takes up two ancient Indian landmark texts Kautilya's 'Arthasastra' and Kalidasa's 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' to investigate and examine the status of women in ancient India. This paper makes a firsthand approach to the Sanskrit texts and their renowned translations and interpretations in English through comparative, analytical and critical study. Though the tests are two different genres of human creativity situated several

centuries apart, there is a link between them in matters of discourse. 'Arthashastra' is a text of theory on statecraft and economics, but in actuality, it is a valuable documentation on ancient society, particularly the Post Buddha Phase. 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' is a narrative-literature based on the 'Mahabharatam', 'Sukantala-Duhsanta' narrative; however, it is an important historical documentation of the Gupta Age including the post-Mauryan age. Exploration of both the texts reveals the Empowered woman with all Rights that are nowadays regarded as constitutional rights under the broad frame of Human Rights, with Simultaneous concern with universal morality and ethics. This author believes that this research, other than its interdisciplinary relevance, world open up new vistas of understanding the modern issue of women's empowerment in historical and traditional contexts.

Bich (2020), in Indian Literature, Kalidasa Always Occupies the "monopoly Position of Poetry" and the Sakuntala, a Dramatic poem, is an Exemplary work of the court stage norm. In Sakuntala, poet Kalidasa focuses on praising pure and faithful love. He praises pure Soul and the aspirations of love, Happiness of people in life and uses of love to Criticize the rigid and Paranoid Teachings of Religions, as well as the Strict laws of the caste System that Stifle People's Hearts. Kalidasa pushes the Issue of Caste down to Secondary Positions, lets love become the main theme and makes the characters act and show their Personality in Relationships and highlights the Victory of love.

Objectives of the study

1. To know about kalidasa's drama Style.
2. Accurate portrayal of kalidasa's female character in his Plays.
3. To Present the concept of women's Freedom in Kalidasa's plays.
4. Comparing the position of women in Kalidasa's thought with the current women.
5. To gain an understanding of women duties as 'Duhita', 'Jaya', 'Mata' and 'Sakhi'

Research Questions

1. what kind of dramatic Style, did kalidasa adopt While portraying female Characters?
2. How does Kalidasa Present the female Characters?
3. What ideas about women's freedom can be found in kalidasa Plays?
4. what is the difference between the position of women in kalidasa's thought and the position of women today?
5. What are the duties of women mentioned in Kalidasa's Plays as 'Duhita', 'Jaya', 'Mata' and 'Sakhi'.

Methodology of the Study

The research is mainly historical. This research falls under qualitative research. The research is included in non-numerical work. All the information that I used while doing this research work. It was obtained from two Sources. The primary source is complete plays written by Kalidasa. Secondary sources include Various books, research papers, Google PDF, etc., related to the Subject.

Random Technique is used in Sample Selection. While discussing the features of Kalidasa's Plays, the writings of Specific authors have been discussed through Random Sampling technique. No Statistical or graphical tools were used in the study. The main Method used here

was content Analysis, which followed Descriptive Analysis.

Results

Apart from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, when we talk about Sanskrit literature, the name of Bhas comes first. But the one who has reached the highest level of fame is the poet Kalidasa. When the Selfishness and loneliness of the present age make the mind brutal, then Kalidasa's works, especially his plays, remind people of that primitive life of penance. Then we find peace of mind in describing and explaining his plays.

After Valmiki, Vyasa, Bhas etc. In Sanskrit literature, the poet Kalidasa is one of the most talented poets. The poet's Skill in portraying Characters is extraordinary. The great poet Kalidasa introduced love in 'Malavikagnimitram', it became even more intense in the play 'Vikramorvashi Yam' in the play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', that love gained Purity through various twists and turns. Looking at the Skill of writing in 'Malavikagnimitram', it does not seem that this is Kalidasa's first Play. The character The Plot, the dramatic twists and turns of the play are Kalidasa's own creation. In the play 'Vikramorvashiyam', he beautifully described the love thirst of women's hearts. Just as the yaksha in 'Meghduta' forgot the conscious and unconscious due to Separation from his wife, so kalidasa has done the Same in the case of Pururba. in every act of the Play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', he has brought nature to life. The great play writer Kalidasa skillfully incarnated Durvasha to sharpen, refine and purify love in the fire of Penance and to free Dusyanta and Shakuntala from the taint of the curse through the Purifying teachings. He described the evil of the Mahabharata in a new form in the book 'Abhijnanasakuntalam'. Through the curse Present in the play all Physical love is elevated to the level of pleasure. He showed in his Play that without Penance, restraint and devotion, love within the body cannot become love beyond the body. The saying 'Upama Kalidasasya' easily shows that he is an expert in the use of Similes. In many cases, Kalidasa easily shows that he is an expert in the uses of simile in many cases Kalidasa has been compared to Shakespeare. After reading Kalidasa's work, the minds of the readers are filled with Joy. Therefore, it can be said that Kalidasa's Style of play has opened a new horizon in the history of Sanskrit literature.

Kalidasa presents female characters in various ways in his plays. In the play 'Malavikagnimitram', the Special female characters are Dharini, Iravati and Malavika. Dharini is the first wife of King Agnimitra. She is very wise, kind, and a warrior, A Pioneer, a brave, powerful and Pious woman. Iravati is the second wife of king Agnimitr. She was Jealous, addicted to alcohol. She also has the quality of being suspicious. Malavika is the daughter of the king and the younger Sister of Madhav Sen. She is extremely talented, Skilled in dancing and Agnimitra's new life partner. Additionally, the Presence of Paribrajika, Bakulavali, is particularly noticeable as a guide and companion to Malavika.

The Special female characters in the play 'Vikramorvashiam' are Devi and Urvashi. Devi is the first wife of Pururba and the daughter dough ten of the king of Kashi. Urvashi is a celestial nymph, a lifelong lover and a helpless mother. In addition, Rambha and Chitrlekha are Urvashi's friends and Tapasi is the guardian of Pururva's son. The notable female characters in the Play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' are Shakuntala, Anasuya and Priyamvada. At the beginning of the Play King Dusyanta Praises Shakuntala's beauty. The quality of responsibility it is present in her every moment. Shakuntala was a charming heroine. There is a hint of Simplicity in her eyes and face. Shakuntala always respected the gurus. one of her main characters is that she is a nature-loving woman. Anasuya is Serious, calm, sufficiently wise, does not lose her wits in times of danger, is patient and prompt in determining duties, and possesses insight in analyzing human Character. Priyamvada is sweet-natured, Playful, happy and humorous and has a Simple heart. Her appearance fascinates her more. In addition, only the names of characters Such as Rajmata,

Hansapadika, Menoka etc., are mentioned.

In the play 'Malavikagnimitram', Kalidasa was quite aware of the freedom of women. As the king's Concubine, Dharini's freedom was unlimited. In Some Cases, king Agnimitra would also surrender to his first wife Dharini. In some cases, like in the case of the king's remarriage, she even decided. Therefore, ignoring the opinion of the King's Second wife Iravati, king Agnimitra Married Malavika in the Joy of his son's Victory. Again, the unlimited freedom that women be had proven by Iravati's addiction to alcohol. However, Malavika did not abuse her freedom. Although she was attracted to the king from the heart. She does not exercise her power despite being Be Rajnandini.

In the Play 'Vikramorvashiyam', the freedom of women is not so much highlighted; rather the course of the male god is cast on the apsara, Urvashi and she fulfils the god's wish. Due to her lack of freedom. She is forced to leave her child son Ayu and return to heaven.

In the Play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', Shakuntala's freedom is observed in several cases, Such as she could roam anywhere in the Tapovan at her own will. She took care of the animals and trees. In some cases, this freedom was so unfettered that she chose the people of her choice and met each other in secret according to Gandharva tradition.

'Malavikagnimitra's female character Dharini can be seen as a slight contrast to the current woman. Because nowadays it is rare for a woman to hand over her husband to someone else. on the other side, the Similarity with the current woman can be seen with the freedom of drinking of Iravati. Again, despite being a Princess, Malavika did not abuse her power like most women in the present case. In the Play 'Vikramorvarshiyam', a resemblance between the Character of Urvashi's mother and modern-day women can be seen. In the Play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', along with the issue of women choosing their own husbands, the issue of marriage according to Gandharva has been strongly observed among women today. Such rare love for husbands is also seen in some cases today. Again, exceptions can be observed. However, the contrast between Shakuntala and women today is more noticeable in terms of tolerating deprivation of love.

Among Kalidasa's three plays only in the play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', Shakuntala appears as a daughter. Shakuntala is the adopted daughter of Maharishi Karna. She is ashamed of her father for choosing her husband. Shakuntala takes her father's Permission before going to her husband's house. In the Play 'Malavikagnimitram', the main female character, Dharini, plays an important role. in the form of 'Jaya'. She has given her husband, beloved lover, Malavika, to Agnimitra. on the other hand, Iravati is somewhat disappointed with Malavika. In 'Vikramorvashiam', Urvashi was cursed and could not perform her wifely duties. The best and brightest example of performing her wifely duties is Shakuntala. Despite the extreme insult of love, she did not blame her husband, but rather took care of Bharat, the gift given by her husband.

The main character of the Play 'Malavikagnimitram', Dharini is particularly noteworthy as a mother. She is overwhelmed with Joy at her son's victory. Urvashi could not play the role of a mother. Because on the orders of the Devaraja, she had to abandon her infant son Ayu and return to heaven. In the happy Play 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', the apsara Menoka played the main role as a mother. Menoka rescued the severely humiliated, childless daughter in the form of a radiant light. She took news of Shakuntala through Sanumati at every turn. Shakuntala's importance as a mother is also immense. Despite being by her husband, Shakuntala gave birth a Child in her womb.

In the play 'Malavikagnimitram', Bakulavalika played a particularly important role as Malavika's companion. She was with Malavika at every moment. In the play 'Vikramorvashiyam', Rambha and Chitrlekha took Urvashi a Step forward in her love for King Pururva. In the Play 'Abhijnana-Shakuntalam', Anasuya and Priyamvada crossed all limits of friendship as dear friends. That is why Rabindranath Tagore Said, "Shakuntala alone is one-third of Shakuntala, most of her is Anasuya and Priyamvada, Shakuntala is the least".

Discussion

The poet who has spoken in the face of nature is the great poet Kalidasa. In describing the characters of poetry and drama, he has spoken about the innermost parts of the human heart. The poet's poetic art is clear, beautiful and captivating the 'vaidarvi' Style, the beauty of ornamentation, the rhythm of rhythm, the Significance of thought and language have given distinction to each of his works. In the Play 'Malavikagnimitram', play he has abandoned the traditional tradition of the character of a clown and portrayed a new character. He has shown that even an apsara can leave heaven in the thirst for love. His love for nature is extraordinary. Kalidasa has surpassed all writing in describing nature. Although Kalidasa is a Worshiper of love, his love bond is not lost. In every case, his love has been burned by the pain of Separation and has attained Perfection. Kalidasa's free movement in the use of Similes. The verses used in his works are not that long, the choice of words is also very beautiful, he has given place to the main rhythms of the rhythmic System in his works. In a word, among all the Sanskrit Poets, Kalidasa is very close to the readers. In this world that is currently loveless on incapable of maintaining the devotion of love, this Play by Kalidasa is definitely capable of instilling love in the minds of human beings.

Kalidasa is a master at portraying female characters. The aspects of character are generally controlled by the three qualities. Although the Predominance of the third quality is less in the female characters depicted by him, Kalidasa has portrayed his female characters by creating a common Connection with nature. In some cases, a touch of modernity has been seen in the female characters in his plays. The power of the queen that we see in Dharini is truly unparalleled. Like every woman, a sense of pride can be seen in Iravati. Malavika is very skillful. Urvashi has played the role of a lover more than a mother. In 'Abhijnanashakuntalam' Kalidasa has identified Shakuntala as the daughter of nature. Although the Simple form of nature is present in Shakuntala, the destructive form of nature cannot be seen in Shakuntala. She never claims her night. She only received humiliation and insults. Although Anasuya and Priyamvada were friends, they sometimes played the role of non-parents.

Independent under oneself, when a Person is not under himself, then his freedom is realized. Many years ago, Kalidasa's Idea of women's freedom was reflected in the female characters he wrote. This woman's freedom was not only seen in the upper echelons, that is in the royal family, but also among the girls of the ashram. However, sometimes it remained within the limits and sometimes it exceeded the extreme limits of limits. Therefore, sometimes the abuse of freedom has led to extreme Curses. Although Dharini had unlimited freedom in 'Malavikagnimitram', Iravati's independent opinion never found a Place in the royal palace. In the Play 'Vikramorvashiyam', Urvashi had no freedom. Urvashi was subjugated in every way. Even though she chose her own life partner, let alone external matters, there was interference from others in spending her married life together. Shakuntala had freedom, not only in choosing her husband, but she never even considered deciding to meet him in Private.

No matter how modern a woman is, this modernity can never destroy her femininity. However, even if it is somewhat misguided, misguided, it is not permanent. Just as there are some Similarities between the female character depicted by Kalidasa and the female character of today, there are also Sum differences. In 'Malavikagnimitram', a touch of Modernity is seen in Iravati. In this case, it is seen that she also drinks alcohol. However, the arrogance of women due to their wealth today cannot be seen in Princess Malavika. In Urvashi, the qualities of modern women can be seen in some cases, her every step in controlled by men. In 'Abhijnanashakuntalam', the Similarity of modern women with Shakuntala can be seen in the choice of husband, but this modernity stops here. Like modern women, Shakuntala never demanded her rights. Shakuntala, a worshiper of love, gave Priority to love and not to rights. However, it must be admitted that no matter how much modern women protest for their rights, the essence of Compassion has not disappeared within every woman, without exception.

Although the female character as a daughter is not found in Kalidasa's first two Plays, in Abhijnana, a little touch of her is found in the character of Shakuntala. She takes her father's orders before going to her husband's house. Although Dharini, as 'Jaya', is steadfast in her duty, Urvashi does not follow the wife's religion. Again, Shakuntala as 'Jaya' does not get her rights. Urvashi is also seen leaving all her bonds and rushing to Pururba in the Play 'Vikramorvashiyam'. Dharini as a mother is particularly noteworthy. But in the play 'Vikramorvashiyam', Urvashi has played a rare role as a mother. Perhaps despite her reluctance, she had to leave her son, Ayu. Shakuntala's Character as a mother is unparalleled. The price of the mistake of an immature age was only she had to give. Maybe it is not wrong because there is nothing wrong with pure love, there is only love. That is why she nurtured the tiny sport of pure love with great care and performed her maternal duties with great devotion. Despite being extremely humiliated, she never allowed her son Bharat to express her feelings. That is why; despite doing extremely Shameful things, she did not get any adverse reaction from Bharat. Bharat accepted her father very easily. Although Chitrlekha, Ramva and Bakulabalika played an important role as friends, the friendship of Anasuya and Priyamvada transcended the level of friendship and became Shakuntala's own being. If Anasuya and Priyamvada were not there, Shakuntala would never have become Shakuntala. These two friends not only played the role of friends but also played the role of guardians in some cases. This friendship did not leave her Side even in extreme danger. She tried to do Shakuntala's good at every moment. Therefore, it can be said that the responsibilities of a friend may be known to future generations through the characters of friends in Kalidasa's Plays.

Conclusion

In the age of Science and Progress, Women are not lagging behind. women are always eager to maintain their Self-respect. Today, women are always vocal in demanding their rights; while keeping Pace with the times, they are forgetting their right to exist. women have lost their compassionate form and have become arbitrary. A destructive form can be observed in them. Therefore, the form that Kalidasa portrayed of the female character can be remembered every moment when reading the book. Although Poets of described the various forms of women, Kalidasa has adorned women in his Plays with wonderful glory. There is no play with a wonderful Protesting form of women in his Plays. Kalidasa has compared women to clay, where women have been given various forms. However, it would be wrong to say that the female character depicted by Kalidasa never protested, but such a female character is never desirable today. Today, women are not inferior to men. However, we experience how much this woman's love of affection is today, while protesting, women sometimes reach a point where they lose all their inherent qualities, Power, illusion, and compassion. At this time, Kalidasa reminds us of the female character's nature through his plays. Therefore, even today the female character depicted by Kalidasa reminds us of the thus form of women.

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