

Chapter – I

Life and Works of Bhasa

*LIFE OF BHASA

We know little about Bhasa's life authentically. Generally, the fact can be applied to all literary figures whose birth place, birth time, family and facts of bringing up are not authentically achieved. It creates controversy of facts. We have little facts about Bhasa, in fact, we didn't have any play of Bhasa up to 1912 A.D. In fact, we knew that Bhasa had been a great poet. He wrote many plays as a dramalist and his most famous play was Swapnavasavadattam. Since ancient time, the writers have simply made use of allusions to decide facts of information about one's life.

The most ancient allusion about Bhasa is found in Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitram. In the preface to Malavikagnimitram, the stage manager announces to enact Kalidasa's play. His servant asks प्रथितयशसांभासकविपुत्रसौमिल्लकादीनां प्रबन्धानतिक्रम्य वर्तमान कवेःकालिदासस्य क्रियामिमां द्रष्टुं कथं परिषदो बहुमानः। (How an assembly can be interesting in Kalidasa's play leaving aside the works of glorious Bhasa, Kaviputra and Saumillaka?). It refers to the fact that Bhasa might be predecessor of Kalidasa. In the time of Kalidasa, Bhasa was the successful dramatist. Kalidasa's allusion doesn't clarify other two dramalists Saumillak and Kaviputra. A few researchers believe that Saumillak wrote Shudrakkata and his bother Kaviputra or Sandlak wrote Maniprabha during the first century A.D.

Another allusion related to Bhasa's life is found in Bhasa's Harshcarita. Bana has praised his predecessors. In the opening of Harshcairata he has written the following shloka about Bhasa

सूत्रधारकृतारम्भेनाटिकैर्बहुभूमकैः ।

सपताकैर्यशो लेभे भासो देवकुलैरिव ।।

As the expert architects get fame by building multi-storeyed, well-designed temples so Bhasa was honoured to have plays with many characters and events opened with (sutraddhar) the stage manager. Bana's homage to Bhasa hints at a few features of his plays. His dramas don't commence with Nandi. The stage manager enters and recites the auspicious shloka.

Bhasa's characters are of many types. His dramas are divided into many parts or they are with many interesting events. Bana's mentioning of Bhasa's qualities has helped to decide his authorship.

Avantisundarikatha composed in seventh-eighth century mentions Bhasa that परेतोऽपि स्थितो भासः शरीरैरिव नाटकैः means Bhasa lives with his dramas though he is dead.

The ninth century poet Rajshekhar mentions the following shloka in his Suktimuktavali about Bhasa:

भासनाटकचक्रेऽपिच्छेकैःक्षिप्ते परीक्षितुम् ।

स्वप्नवासवदत्तस्य दाहकोऽभून्न पावकः ।।

The critics tested Bhasa's dramas in critical aspects but Swapnavasavadattam emerged as the best of his dramas.

Besides, Vakpatiraj honours Bhasa as जलणमित्त(ज्वलनमित्र) companion to fire'. It might be said with reference to frequent scenes of fire in Bhasa's dramas.

Jaydev, a famous poet of twelfth century praises in his work Prasannraghavam as "Kavita kamini nu has" भासो हासः poet of humour.

Bhasa's works are referred to in many ancient literary works. There is similarity of Pratigyayogandharayana's second shloka in the fourth act with (नवं शरावं सलिलैःसुपुणं) in Arthshastra of Kautilya of fourth century B.C. It is believed that Bhasa was pre-contemporary of Kautilya. It shows probability of Bhasa's influence on Kautilya.

Ashvamegha's Buddhcarita has similar shloka as that of Bhasa's Pratigyayogandharayan shloka-18 of first act (काष्ठादग्निजयिते मथ्यमानात्)

The eighth century poet Vamana has quoted some of Bhasa's shloka composed in Swapnavasavadattam and Charudattam in his (काष्ठं हि मथ्यन् लभते हुताशं) Even his contemporary Bhamah has criticized Pratigyayogandharayana's incident of duplicate elephant in which Udayan mistakes the duplicate elephant to be a real one. He considers it against the common sense. Abhinavagupta of Kashmir happened to be in 10th century hails Bhasa as Mahakavi (Great poet) and mentions Daridracharudatta as a play of Bhasa. In 1100 A.D. Shardatanaya described some incidents of Swapnanataka in his Bhavprakasham. Ramachandra and Gunachandra of twelfth century have considered Swapnavasavadattam as the drama of Bhasa in Natyadarpan and has mentioned shefalik flowers and seat of stone presented in fourth act. Sagarnandi of 13th century might have written summary of preface scene of Swapnavasavadattam. The quotes are taken from Bhasa's Charudatta, Ghatotkach, Panchratra, Balcarita, Swapnavasavadattam and Avimaraka in the work Shakuntalavyakhya written in fourteenth century. Even in ancient collection of shloka; about fifteen shloka are taken from Bhasa's dramas.

* Legends about Bhasa

According to a popular legend, Bhasa was a washerman. Since poetic genius has not been monopoly of any caste or race, a washerman can be a poet. Distinguiishing Bhasa as Dhavak, a washerman and a poet, a famous scholar of North India Shri Narayan Shastri has quoted a few shloka and entitled

Priyadarshika, Ratnavali and Naganand to Bhasa. The shloka are believed to be quoted from Rajshekhar's 'Kavyavimarsh'.¹ It is stated that Harshvardhana honoured Dhavak Bhasa appointing him as a member of the court. It is believed that Priyadarshika and other plays were entitled to Harshvardhan's name as he purchased them from Bhasa in exchange of money. Acharya Mammata notes the function of 'kavya', poetry is, acquisition of wealth in the first 'ullas' of Kavyaprakash but in fact, in some manuscripts 'श्रीहृषदिविकादीनामिव घनम्' is revised as श्रीहृषदिविकादीनामिव घनम्' and that reflects Dhavak as Bhasa. Paranjape and other scholars have also accepted Priyadarshika and other works as creations of Bhasa. His belief can't be considered authentic for it considers Bhasa as contemporary to Harshvardhan. Harshvardhan's time span is definite (606 to 648 A.D.) Kalidasa's favourite poet Bhasa can't be this one. Moreover, Narayan Shastri's matter of quoting shloka from Rajshekhar's Kavivimarsh is doubtful. Kavyaprakash's version doesn't clarify that Dhavak was Bhasa. It simply shows patronage for poetic genies. Further, it is widely accepted that Priyadarshika, Ratnavali belong to Harshvardhan. Due to relevance of Pratigyayogandharayan, Swapnavasavadattam with above mentioned works such legends have come to light.

Another legend is related to his likeness to the poet named Ghatkarpar. He was also a washerman and poet. He was so called because he challenged that the person who defeated him in composition of Yamakfigure of speech, he would be water-bearerfilling water in pieces of a pot for the victorious. There is yet a difficulty to consider Bhasa as Ghatkarpar. Traditionally, it is believed that Ghatkarpar was contemporary to Kalidasa and he was one of gems of

Vikramditya's nine genius.² Kalidasa's homage doesn't justify this keeping in view the antiquity of Bhasa.

Third legend is about a competition between Bhasa and Vyasa for honour and fame. Both considered themselves genius. To decide superiority both tested their works throwing in fire. It is said that Vyasa's works burnt to ashes but Bhasa's Swapnavasavadattam remained intact, even fire couldn't destroy it.

The legend shows antiquity of Bhasa as well as superiority of Swapnavasavadattam.³ The great poet of Prakrit poetry 'गडवहो' Vakpatiraj honoured Bhasa as 'जलणमित्त (ज्वलनमित्र') (Friend of fire).⁴

Prof K.H.Dhruv believes Bhasa's name to be based on his lineage. The tradition was very prevalent to baptize the child on the name of the lineage in ancient time. Patanjali, Yogadharayan, Kashyap are examples of it. 'Bhasa' lineage is in 'Hemodak' branch of "Agastya" lineage.⁵

Interpreting the works of Bhasa, it becomes clear that Bhasa might belong to Brahmin caste. Bhasa's attraction to yajna and varna (caste) system frequently highlights in his works. His references in Karnabharam 'हुतं च दत्तं च तथैव तिष्ठति' (१.२२) अनेकयज्ञाहुतितर्पितो द्विजैः किरीटवान् दानवसंधमर्दनः' (१.२३) in Panchratra क्रतुव्रतैस्ते तनुगात्रमेतत् सोढुं बलं राक्षसि पीडयानि(१.२६) etc. express his adoration for religious rituals and yajna.

His honour for "Brahmin" caste is expressed in पूज्यतमाः खलु ब्राह्मणाः in Madhyamvyayoga.

***His personality in his works:**

There is no any solid information regarding to Bhasa's life, his works may help to come to some solid facts. As shown above Bhasa seems to be a Brahmin interested in veddharma (rituals and performance of religious acts). A scholar on Bhasa Dr. Pusalkar points out Shankar's opinion that 'त्वाम्' and 'ते' used in invocation (mangalacharan) of Swapnavasavadattam and Avimaraka respectively. It suggests Bhasa to be a ruler poet. He might have involved himself in acting he might have used 'त्वाम्' or 'ते' to bless the spectators. Such words reflect the poet's physical presence and his being a ruler.

In fact, the invocations of Pratigyayogandharayana, Pratimanataka and Panchratram don't mention the presence of the poet ruler. In these the audience is blessed with 'वःपातु' it shows that he might be some patronized poet at king's palace. The reference 'राजसिंहःप्रशास्तु नः' in major works of Bhasa insists him to be a poet of the court. Being associated with court's life his works reflect mainly palaces and activities of queens, the descriptions of ministers, armies messengers, wars reflect his attachment with family of kings and he might be poet of the court (king).

The gods worshipped by him in invocations claims him to be a poet of Vaishnava sect or a worshipper of lord Vishnu. He describes Rama and Krishna as incarnations of Vishnu. Bhasa seems to be a staunch worshipper of lord Vishnu as he prays all incarnations- Varah, Vamana, Narsimha, Rama, Krishna, Balrama etc. in his allegories. Besides, he respected all deities. In Pratigyayogandharayana, there is devotion to lord Shankara and his son Kartikeya. In Balcarita there is devotion to Kali.

Bhasa would be a nationalistic and patriotic. He prays for benevolence of citizens and the king. His nationalistic quality is seen in his sketch of minister Yogandharayana thinking for welfare of the king. Due to his presentation of such matter he could be a patriotic minister of some state and a king. He might have surrendered some king in south India hence his works are found from South India.

Bhasa believed not only in hard work but also in fate. In the first act of Swapnavasavadattam his favour for hard work is presented.⁶ In many allegories there are references to power of fate.⁷ Besides, Bhasa may be estimated as religious, diligent, virtuous, scholar, and staunch believer of morality. Bhasa may be virtuous and idealist who nurtures human values, as glorifies the fallen characters. In his plays variety of subjects and variety of knowledge present his deep knowledge and devotion. His interest in folk tales is reflected in his plays based on the stories of Udayan. He presents politics in his plays which acquaints us with scholarly knowledge. His style is egoistic which expresses simplicity of his nature.

*** Probable Native Place :**

There is no definite birth-place of Bhasa hence allusions in his works are helpful. Many scholars like Dr. Bonart believe him belonging to Kerala as many of his works are found from there. On the bases of society, rituals and description of his dramas he would be North Indian. The geographical information also clarifies his relation to north India. A little description belongs to south India. Even in his plays based on Ramayana, there is no reference of Rameshwar, the famous temple of south India. Had he been south Indian, he would have definitely mentioned the place. In the later part of life he might have settled to south. In his plays the reference for the earth 'हिमवदबिन्ध्य-कुण्डलम्' depicts his love for

north India and Madhyapradesh. The border of Madhyapradesh mentioned in Manusmriti is mentioned in Bhasa's plays. There may be some place of south India or Madyapradesh to be his probable birth-place.

In the fourth act the clown refers to उत्तरकुरुवासः मयाऽनुभूयते known for luxuries. It is a mythical name. It is an area surrounding Badrinath or Badrikashram temple. It is hilarious for its beauty and natural scenery. The scholars believe it to be the birth-place for his love for the place but it's completely imaginary.

His love for Ujjayini comes to us in his works. Antiquity and grandeur of Ujjayini are mentioned in mythical and historical books. It was on the top in mauryakal. In the time of Buddha, Pradyot Mahasen ruled over Ujjayini. He had two sons- Gopal, Palak and a daughter Vasavadatta. His love for Ujjayini is well presented in his plays on Udayana. The following matters reveal him to be a native of Ujjayini:-

1. He has described different places and plans emotionally and thoroughly that it indicates his relation to the place. It's not possible only by imagination. In Pratigyayogandharayana he describes Kanaktalvana near Ujjayini for its beauty.⁸
2. In 'Pratigyayogandharayana' there is reference to the river Kshipra which broke the landscape and it became topsyturvy. On the night of Kalashtmi, Vasavadatta had to pass through the route near the jail due to broken road. At that time Udayan saw her and they fell in love.⁹
3. He should have experienced the richness of Ujjayini. Yakshini temple belonged to before Mauryakal. The virgin girls/spinsters used to worship goddess Yakshini to achieve what they wished. The above reference depicts him to be of Ujjayini.

4. In Pratigyayogandharayana the description of a route reaching to the Yajnashala shows his knowledge of the city. In 'Skandapurana's Avantikakhand Yajnashala is mentioned. His love for such places leads us to believe him native of Ujjayini.

In Swapnavasavadattam and Pratigyayogandharayana references to Magadha, the king Darshaka and Padmavati as well as his feelings for the area, the scholars imagine him to be native of Magadha. Padmavati's visit to see old mother in tapovan reflects rituals of that time. The scholars believe that he mentioned Chandragupta's defeat with simile of the moon covered by 'Rahu'- a planet. In Pratigyayogandharayana 'shramanaka' experimented for possessing a spirit by which Chanakya succeeded in his works in Patliputra. Chandragupta's marriage with Durdhara of Nanda dynasty points at Padmavati's marriage. Bhasa's use of the word 'Rajsinh' points at Chandragupta. The scholars also believe that he might be a minister in Chandragupta Maurya's court. It is guessed that Magadha would be his area of fieldwork. He has mentioned matters related to omens in his plays.¹⁰ The tradition of omen has strong relation with Madhyapradesh. The interior references point to his belonging to Magadha. It is also believed that he might have lived in either Ujjayini or Magadha for a long time.

***Time Span of Bhasa:**

It's difficult to decide time span of majority of Sanskrit literary figures. Bhasa stands foremost in the list. Keeping in view the hypotheses of different scholars, Bhasa might have born in 6th century B.C. A few other scholars have supposed him to be of 11th century A.D. About the birth of Bhasa various opinions have evolved. A few of them are as under:

1. M.M.Shri Ganpati Shastri and other believe Bhasa to be living between 6th century B.C. and 4th century B.C. Some scholars consider him former to Buddha. Such views can't be accepted with reference of Buddha sages in Bhasa's dramas.
2. Shri K.H.Dhruv and other scholars believe Bhasa belonging between second century B.C. and first century B.C.
3. According to Stain Kona, Bhasa belonged to the reign of Kshatrap king Rudrasinh. The king ruled in 2000A.D.
4. Dr. Keith believes Bhasa to be a successor of Ashwaghosh. Likewise, Ashwaghosh's Prakrit is more ancient than Bhasa. Dr. Mahendracommenting the same, supports it.
5. Winternitz places Bhasa to somewhere between the later half of third century and early half of the fourth century. In response to Prakrit he might have happened after Ashwaghosh and before Kalidasa. He notes that Bhasa's reference to Krishnavasudeva vad in Balcarita evolved after the birth of lord Jesus.
6. Shri Devdhar considers Bhasa the poet of seventh century. Ramavatar Shastri doesn't consider Bhasa's dramas authentic. He believes his time to be the second century. Even some scholars classity him to be either of 9th or 11th century.
7. Dr. Pusalkar considers Bhasa to be the writer of Ugrasen Mahapadmanand's time before Mauryayayug. Iyer believes him to be the poet of Chandragupta Maurya's reign in the later half of 4th century B.C.
8. It's difficult to come to any authentic fact out of such opinions. Neveratheless, the external, internal testing through testing of the writers about Bhasa and reflection of the contemporary societyin Bhasa's works may estimate Bhasa's time span.

*External Tests:-

Rajeshkhar of 9th century A.D. mentioned Bhasa and Vamana in 8th century A.D. quoted Bhasa's Shloka as well as Bana's tribute in shloka सूत्रधारकृतारम्भै to Bhasa in 7th century A.D. definitely mention that Bhasa might exist before 7th century A.D. Kalidasa also mentioned Bhasa in his preface to Malvikagnimitra. It also points out that he could exist before Kalidasa. A few classify Kalidasa in 4th century A.D. and others classify him as the poet of 1st century B.C. There is resemblance in Ashwaghosh's काष्ठं हि मथन of Buddhacarita and Pratigyayogandharaya's काष्ठादग्निजयितेमथ्यमानात् as well as between Kautilya's नवं शरावं सलिलस्य पूर्णै 1.3 of Arthashastra and Pratigyayogandharayana's 4-2 shloka. It is difficult to predict whether Bhasa influenced Kautilya and Ashwaghosh or they influenced Bhasa. He was predecessor to Ashwaghosh and Kautilya's contemporary. Kautilya belonged to 4th century B.C. and it is probable that Bhasa might exist in first half of 4th century B.C. This is external test.

*Internal Test:-

1. In a few Trivendram plays राजसिंहःप्रशास्तु नः and the earth is called हिमवदिन्ध्यकुंडला. The area between Himalaya and Vindhya points out sovereignty of Maurya. Iyer believes that in some plays the reference परचक्रं प्रशाम्यतु refers to invasion of Celux Niketor.
2. Kashiraj is referred to in Avimaraka, Pratigyayogandharayana. Avimarka's किमिदानीं काशिराजदूतं प्रति कर्तव्यम and Pratigyayogandharayana's गच्छ प्रतिहारक्षकं ब्रूहि एष काशिराज्योपाध्याय आर्य जैवन्तिरथ दौत्येन प्राप्तः refer to Kashiraj. The state Kashi set in 4th century B.C. Bhasa might have been before that time.

3. Religious allusions of Bhasa's drama reflect his bias for Brahmin. Nevertheless, he uses words shakya, najna, sharamanka, and places Nagavana, Venuvana, Rajagruh. It decides time after Buddha's birth.
4. Socially the reference to ritual of middle son in Madhmyamvyayoga and citations of Manu, Maheshwar, Meghatihi and Prachetasa in plays based on Ramayana mention that the plays are very ancient. The magicart in Avimaraka and Charudatta and its scholars resemble to description of Kautilya's Arthashastra.
5. The breach of Panini's rules in Bhasa's plays and the word 'Aryaputra' for 'Prince' and 'Mahabrahman' for 'Mahan Brahman' resemble Mahabharata's close style and different style from Ashwaghosh as well as simplicity of prose acclaim Bhasa as Kautilya's contemporary and he would be the poet in 4th century B.C.

***Authorship:**

***Bhasa Problem:-**

In 1912 A.D. Ganpati Shastri released thirteen plays and it is proved on the bases of internal and external tests that the plays belong to sole authorship and the playwright is Bhasa. The newly found plays of Bhasa were accepted enthusiastically by the Sanskrit literary circles. After two years some scholars doubted about similar authorship. They doubted Ganpati Shastri's claim and similar authorship. They opposed the authorship of those works. On the issue of authorship three parties agreed and counterargued on that issue. Let us mention arguments of each party:

***Favouring Party:-**

The scholars of this party believe that all Trivendrum plays released by Ganpati Shastri belong to one author and he is Bhasa. Besides, Ganpati Shastri Yakobi, Jolly, Keith etc. favour the authorship. Their arguments are as follow:-

1. The special features of Bhasa's plays mentioned by Kalidasa, Bana, Vakpatiraj, Rajshekhar etc are all in these plays.
2. That is an external resemblance among all those plays e.g. like later Sanskrit plays these play don't open with 'Nandi- prayer. In opening the statement नान्द्यन्ते ततःप्रविशति सूत्रधारः leads to invocation by sutradhar which suits to nandi.
3. In some plays the names of major characters are mentioned by mudra figure of speech in invocation.
4. In a few plays 'sthapana' replaces 'prastavana'.
5. Prastavana-preface is very short and same sutradhar says after the invocation (Mangal Shloka) एवम् आर्यमिश्रान् विज्ञापयामि। अये किं नु खलु मयि विज्ञापनव्यग्रे शब्द इव श्रूयते। अङ्ग पश्यामि।
6. The statement महीमेकातपत्राङ्गां राजसिंहःप्रशास्तु नः or alike repeats in Bharatvakya of all plays.
7. Besides external similarity, language style, scenery, distinguished use of words, repetition of imagery, breach of Panini's rules, breach of Bharata's rules, in the matter of death and battle scenes lead us to believe in sole authorship. Swapnavasavadattam was definitely written by Bhasa and others might be created by Bhasa.

***Opposite Party:-**

Against the above arguments the opposite party believes that Trivendrum plays don't belong to Bhasa. Their arguments are as follow:-

1. There is no reference to the name of playwright or the play. It reveals that they don't belong to one author.

2. The external similarities are in most of Malayalam plays of south India as they are in these plays. Even in Mahendravikram's farce Mattvilas such qualities are marked. In many plays the rules of Bharata's Natyashastra are ignored.
3. The shloka referred to as belonging to Bhasa in ancient literary works are not found in Trivendrum plays. The following shloka quoted by Ramchandra-Gunachandra in Natyadarpan from Bhasa's Swapnavasavadattam is nowhere in our Swapnavasavadattam

यथा भासकृते स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् — वत्सराजः -
पादाक्रान्तानि पुष्पाणि सोष्म चेदं शिलातलम्।
नूनं काचि दिहासीना मां दृष्ट्वा सहसा गता।।

Likewise, Abhinavgupta's quotation of Swapnavasavadatta's court lady in critique of Dhavanyaloka in the following couplet is not in our Swapnavasavadattam

सञ्चितपक्ष्मकपाटं नयनद्वारं स्वरूपतोऽनेन।
उद्धाट्य या प्रविष्टा हृदयगृहं मे नृपतनूजा।।

4. Trivendram plays are mere stage plays created by the group of actors as the group of Kerala's 'Chakyar' actors picked up some scenes from Sanskrit plays as per their needs of satge. The plays based on Ramayana and Mahabharata are in this style. The latest edition of Swapnavasavadattam consists the second at the third acts very short and it may be only a stage play with scissor.

They believe that Trivendrum plays don't belong to Bhasa. The supporters are Ramavatar Sharma, Mahamahopaddyayay Kane, Dr. Barnet, Dr Kunhan Raja, Silva Levi etc.

***Neutral party:-**

The supporters of this party don't accept any party. According to them there is no definite measurement to decide historic accuracy. It is not good to justify anything

on the basis of mere hypotheses. Regarding the arguments of these three parties, it is supposed that Trivendrum plays would be works of a sole author. It can be opposed if we have to decide it only on the basis of external characteristics. In Trivendrum plays internal resemblance pertains to subject, scenery, style, psychological approach, faith in human extremist capacity and such matters can't be imitated even by a great writer and stage actors can never imitate. Some common aspects are as under:

1. The story of the plays is taken from famous tales. The scenery is set in a way that it results into resolution.
2. The subject of many plays is regaining the kingdom.
3. Psychological effects are consequential. Characterization is also psychological.
4. Every character has touch of humanity, even Ravana and Duryodhana evoke pity and sympathy.

Regarding the internal resemblance, a common authorship can be decided. Of course, they may be precise editions of original plays. It makes no difference in deciding authorship. The precise editions may not have shloka quoted in ancient collection of shloka. It is also possible that some parts of the plays may be detached due to carelessness of the scriptwriters. In the case of Swapnavasavadattam the author should be Bhasa only whether it is original or stage show edition because there are a few shloka of Swapnavasavadattam quoted in literary works don't take place in available edition of Swapnavasavadattam. Hence, it can be imagined that there may be difference in some shloka in both works but the subject and content are not different in both Swapnavasavadattam.

***Dramatic Creation of Bhasa:-**

Nobody knew about Bhasa's plays till 1912A.D. Bhasa is referred to in various works written up to about 14th century A.D. Then his plays would have been lost. Till 1912A.D., Bhasa belonged to us merely in name. In 1969A.D. the great scholar Ganpati Shastri got manuscript of Swapnavasavadattam, Pratigyayogandharayana, Charudatta, Dutaghtotkach, Panchratra, Balcarita, Avimaraka, Madhyamvyayoga, Karnabharam, Dutavakyam and Urubhangam written in Malayalam language in a 3000 year old leather cover. He visited other areas to search more plays. He got manuscripts of Abhisheknataka and Pratimanataka from Govind Pishroti of Kailaspur. Such manuscripts are also got from the library of Trivendrum's palace. Only Charudatta was incomplete. He couldn't get complete manuscript of the play. There is no reference of the name in all plays. It is sure that Swapnavasavadattm was written by Bhasa. On the same basis it is said that other plays with internal, external similarities might be written by Bhasa. On this logic Ganpati Shastri released thirteen plays in 1912A.D. one by one in Trivendrum collection of books as the plays of Bhasa.

Shri A.D. Pusalkar arranges these plays chronologically as under:

Dutavakyam, Karnabharam, Dutaghtotkach, Urubhangam,
Madhyamvyayayoga, Panchratra, Abhishekanataka, Balcarita, Avimakaka,
Pratimanatakam, Pratigyayogandharayana, Swapnavasavadattam, and Charudatta.

On the basis of subject and content the following classification can be done:-

1. Based on Ramayana:- Pratimanataka and Abhishekanataka
2. On Mahabharata: Dutavakyam, Karnabharam, Dutghatotkach, Urubhangam, Madhyamvyayayoga, Panchratra.

3. On Udayankatha: Pratigyayogandharayana, Swapnavasavadattam
4. On Harivansh: Balcarita
5. On a part of folk-tales:- Avimaraka, Charudatta.

The plays released from Trivendrum collection of books are also known as Trivendrum plays. Besides, in 1941 A.D. Shri Jivram Kalidasa Shastri of Gondal in Saurashtra released Yagyafalam as the plays of Bhasa. Its authorship is controversial.

Reference and notes

- (१) कारणं तु कवित्वस्य न सम्पन्नकुलीनता
धावकोऽपि हि यद् भासः कविनामग्रिमोऽभवत्।
आदौ भासेन रचिता नाटिका प्रियदर्शिका ।
निरोर्ष्यस्य रसज्ञस्य कस्य न प्रियदर्शना ।।
तस्य रत्नावली नूनं रत्नमालेव राजते
दशरूपककामिन्याः वक्ष्यस्यत्यन्तशोभना।
नागानन्दं समालोक्य यस्य श्रीहर्षविक्रमः।
अमन्दानन्दभरितः स्वसभ्यमकरोत् कविम्।।

K.K.Pisharoti, Indian Historical Quarterly. Culcutta-1.PP.105,
106,5.PP 552-554, A.K.Pisharoti (Criticism PP.13-14 : Raja
Journal of oriental Research madras 226-227.

- (2) धन्वन्तरी क्षपणकोऽमरसिंहशंकु क वैतालभट्टधटकर्पर कालिदासाः
ख्यातो वराहमिहिरो नृपतेः सभायां रत्नानि वै वररुर्चिर्नव
विक्रमस्य।।

- (3) भासनाटकचक्रेऽपि छेकैः क्षिप्ते परीक्षितुम्।

स्वप्नवासवदत्तस्य दाहकोऽभून्न पावकः।।

- (४) भासम्मि जलणमित्त कुन्तीदेवे तहावि रहुवारे।

सो बन्धवे अ बन्धम्मि हारिअन्त अ आणन्दो।।

- (५) स्वप्नसुन्दरी पृ-१४ केशव हर्षद ध्रुव

- (६) काष्ठादग्निजयिते मथ्यमानाद् भूमिस्तोयं खन्यमाना ददाति।

सोत्साहानां नास्त्यसाध्यं नराणां मागरिब्धाः सर्वयत्नाःफलन्ति।।

प्रतिज्ञायौगन्धरायण १.२

- (७) चक्रारपंक्तिरिव गच्छति भाग्यपंक्तिः। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् १.४

न हि सिद्धवाक्यान्युत्क्रम्य गच्छति विधिः सुपरीक्षितानि।

स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् १.११

(८) दुर्वाङ्कुरस्तिमितनीलमणिप्ररोहैः पीतङ्गदेः परिगतैः
परिजीवितांसः ।

अस्माद् धनात् कनकतालवनैकदेशात् निर्धावितः शरवणादिव
कार्तिकेयः ।।

प्रतिज्ञायौगन्धरायण २.२

(९) या सा कालाष्टमी अतिक्रान्ता, तस्या तत्रभवती वासवदत्ता नाम
शिबिका यामविधाट्टितप्रणालि प्रस्त्रुत सलिलविषमं राजमागं
परिहृत्य यत् यत् बन्धहारस्याग्रतो भगवत्याः यक्षिण्याः स्थानं
तस्मिन् देवकायं कर्तुं गतासीत् ।

प्रतिज्ञायौगन्धरायण अं-३

(१०) 'अज्ज एव किल सोभणं एकखतं' स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-२
एक नाडिकावशेषः कृत्तिकाविषयः । तस्मात्
प्रतिपन्नायामेव रोहिण्यामयोध्यां प्रवेक्ष्यति कुमारः । प्रतिमाअं-३

CHAPTER-II

Merits of the Female Characters of Bhasa

Among the thirteen plays of Bhasa, Swapnavasavadattam, Abhisheknataka, Pratimanataka, Avimaraka, Daridracharudatta expose qualities, virtues of female characters. Dutaghatotkach, Madhyamvyayoga and Balcarita partially expose and highlight the female characters.

***Swapnavasavadattam:**

It is observed in Swapnavasavadattam that Udayan is disturbed, fallen in love with Vasavadatta head to toe. Aruni, the enemy takes benefit, defeats Udayan and becomes the ruler. Yogandharayana organizes a scheme to conquer Aruni and get the kingdom back. As a part of the plan Yogandharayana and Vasavadatta reach to Darshaka's kingdom concealing their identity. Udayan can get his kingdom back provided that he marries the sister of Darshaka, Padmavati. Padmavati is seen in the first act in tapovana and Vasavadatta knows that she will marry her husband and become her co-wife. Vasavadatta expresses looking Padmavati that she is a 'Princess' and she feels sisterly affection for her.¹ In fact, a woman can't bear co-wife whatsoever reason may be. Vasavadatta prefers benevolence of her husband and wishes husband's kingdom back. Vasavadatta doesn't feel jealousy but feels sisterhood.

Padmavati is going to be her co-wife, and it is natural that Vasavadatta may be jealous as Padmavati is a charming woman. As nobody can bear beauty of another woman so Vasavadatta shouldn't bear Padmavati's beauty. She praises Padmavati's beauty of body and speech instead of feeling jealous.² It attracts the readers.

In response to Padmavati's query, who wants what? Yogandharayan proposes to hand over Vasavasatta for her security. Kanchuki replies, "It is difficult to protect somebody's capital." Padmavati denies to accept Kanchuki's words and denies to think over her decision.³ Padmavati's attitude to 'believing in truth' is acknowledged.

In the first act, a sage describes an incident happened in Lavanaka Village and reveals that Vasavadatta is burnt wholly. Vasavadatta answers in soliloquy, "It's lie, lie, unfortunate I live!"⁴ Vasavadatta's words reflect agony. For the sake of her husband's benevolence she faces the incident of her own death. It is climax of her agonies.

The sage also reveals that the king Udayan returned hunting and knew that Vasavadatta and Yogndharayana died in the fire of Lavanaka, Udayan wished to throw himself in the fire but the ministers prevented him to do so. He also reveals that the king lost consciousness embracing Vasavadatta's clothes to his chest. Vasavadatta speaks out in soliloquy "May Yogandharayana's cheme be fulfilled now."⁵ Vsavadatta's love and sacrifice for her husband emerges. She has no problem to bear problems but her husband's kingdom should be returned.

In the second act Cheti, Padmavati and Vasavadatta talk about would be husband. Referring to Udayan, Cheti reveals that Padmavati likes Udayan due to his qualities and caring nature. Cheti doubts for the king's appearance but Vasavadatta in disguise, can't bear her words and reveals that he is handsome.⁶ It shows her love for Udayan that she can't even bear doubts about her husband's beauty. It reflects well- wishing nature of Vasavadatta.

Vasavadatta's natural attitude to womanhood is reflected as Dhatri informs Padmavati that she is betrothed to Udayan. She can't understand Udayan's

role. He was ready to throw himself in to fire and he showed his willingness to marry Padamavti.⁷ It's unbearable for Vasavadatta to hear.

Udayan marries Padmavati and Vasavadatta visits Pramadvan for peace of mind and expresses that Udayan now belongs to someone else. She praises Chakravaki who can't live separating herself from her husband and she shows her helplessness to die.⁸ Her love for Udayan is so strong that she would like to die to make Udayan happy. She expresses her agony secretly. It is her unique quality. She doesn't let others realize her sorrows.

The climax is accelerated by the episode of weaving garland for the groom. Cheti offers Vasavadatta responsibility to prepare such a garland viz. Kautukmala for wedding of Udayan and Padmavati. She sighs that deities are cruel.⁹ She weaves the flower named 'Avidhavakaran' but doesn't select 'Sapatnimardan' for it may torture her. Weaving a garland for one's own husband who is going to marry another woman, intensifies pathos in the play. Vasavadatta's sacrifice is marked here that she desires only welfare of Udayan.

Cheti suggests Padmavati to tell the groom that she will also learn to play 'vina' in the fourth act. Padmavati replies that she informed him but he kept silence sighing. Vasavadatta inquires to know saying, 'what do you mean?' Padmavati replies that he might introspect Vasavadatta's virtues. He might cry but maintained decency. Vasavadatta feels better and expresses that she is fortunate if it is so.¹⁰ The woman is fortunate whose husband remembers her after her death. She feels elevated and light knowing it.

King Udayana and Vidushak (the clown) enter the Pramadvan in the fourth act, Padmavati and Vasavadatta hide themselves seeing them. In isolation

the clown asks whom the king likes, Vasavadatta or Padmavati. King Udayan ignores to answer. Responding the clown's insistence he says:-

पद्मावती बहुमता मम यद्यपि रूपशीलमाधुर्यैः ।
वासवदत्ताबद्धं न तु तावन्मे मनो हरति ।। अंक-४-४

(I like Padmavati for her beauty, charity and melody but she can't help me forget Vasavadatta.)

Vasavadatta feels satisfied and expresses that she has got what lost. In fact, her disguise proved beneficial.¹¹

Vasavadatta's sorrows turns into joy as she knows that Padmavati hasn't possessed the king Udayan and she has her own place in Udayan's heart and mind. Truly, love of husband is everything for a woman.

Padmavati's virtues and generosity are witnessed. These qualities add charm to her character. Cheti shows her dislike for the remarks about Padmavati and says that her husband hasn't maintained decency. Padmavati replies that the king is honest that he can't forget Vasavadatta.¹² Padmavati takes Udayan's remarks positively instead of feeling jealous or angry. It adds glory to her character. It's her distinguishing quality.

In the fifth act Padmavati suffers from headache and her bed is in Samudragruh. Vasavadatta enters, feels sad and reveals that deities are cruel to her. Padmavati was a step for consolation to him but she fell ill.¹³ In disguise too, Vasavadatta thinks about Udayan's well-being. Vasavadatta not only thinks for the king but also for Udayan's half-wife Padmavati. She worries for Padmavati's illness. She appears to be a typical virtuous Indian wife always looking after husband's welfare.

In the sixth act king Udayan asks Padmavati whether she knows that Kanchukiya Dhatri and Vasavadatta are at the door-steps. She responds “I like to listen to that my relatives are safe.”¹⁴ In fact, they are relatives of Vasavadatta. Padmavati likes the relatives of Vasavadatta as her own family members. She is generous to Vasavadatta’s relatives. Her generosity attracts both Udayan and the readers to her character.

In the end Vasavadatta discloses her identity. Padmavati feels hurt for her indecency and behaving as a friend with her. Bowing her head she shows her courtesy asking to forgive her. Vasavadatta’s generosity drops in her words “Arise, o fortunate lady! Arise, my whole body is criminal” (nobody else).¹⁵ She blames herself and none else. It shows her good quality and forgiving nature.

***Abhisheknataka**

Bhasa contributes two plays based on epic The Ramayana- Pratimanataka and Abhisheknataka. Sita Plays central role in both the plays. In Abhisheknataka Sita appears in second and fifth acts. She is an ideal figure for Indian virtuous females.

In the second act, kidnapped and imprisoned at Ashokvatika in Ravana’s palace, Sita curses her fate saying that she has to live listening to indecent words and abuses. She expresses that she keeps herself alive for she trusts her husband Rama’s courage. In heavenly palace of Ravana, Sita’s mind and heart dwells in Rama. Sita committedly thinks that Rama would be unhappy and sad without her.¹⁶ She wishes that her husband be happy in such a situation. She has full confidence in her husband’s valour. She craves for her husband’s happiness and peace of mind. She appears to be well-wisher of her husband.

Sita makes fun of Ravana calling him “Ravaniyo.”¹⁷ She means that Ravana has no skill or etiquette to behave with a woman when he forces her to be his possession. She thinks it funny. She doesn’t accept anybody except Rama as her husband. Again she appears to be husband -oriented wife.

Hanuman reaches Lanka crossing wide sea. Sita believes him to be devil in the form of Hanuman though Sita has doubt about identity of Hanuman as a believer of Rama, she prepares herself to talk to him as he mentions ‘Rama’.¹⁸ It reflects Sita’s blind-folded love for Rama.

Hanuman reveals Rama’s mental and emotional status. Sita is happy to listen to about Rama’s affection for her.¹⁹ Sita reveals that she is not the cause for her kidnapping but she is the cause for Rama’s mental agony. She can face difficulties and torturing herself but can’t bear problems of Rama. She doesn’t think Rama to be responsible for her status and she can’t listen to blames for Rama.

As she can’t bear Rama’s present condition she blames deities for their fate. She states “Oh, the deities are truly cruel who cause Rama to mourning.”²⁰ She can’t bear separation from her husband and curses the gods for their separation.

She always thinks for welfare of her husband and addresses Hanuman “Gentleman, tell my husband in a way that he may not experience shock.”²¹ Sita is ready to face any condition but she can’t tolerate her husband’s sorrows. Sita is an ideal figure who bears pangs of separation to make her husband happy. She appears wholly Indian wife.

In the fifth act Ravana presents cutoff heads of Rama and Laxmana. Sita believes it to be real. She says, “O my beloved, I am unfortunate to see eyes

pushed out like fragrant fresh lotus flower. O my love! why did you leave me in the midst of sorrows. I can't die. Is it artificial? O gentleman, kill me with the sword with which you killed my husband."²² It's really pathetic to see one's husband dead. She finds herself helpless. She believes that Rama should be with her at every walk of life. She can't exist without Rama and likes to die.

In the end of the play when Ravana is ready to fight against Rama she worries for her husband and says, "O god! Be my husband victorious if I've followed my husband fidelly."²³ Sita worries that Ravana can do anything to defeat Rama and she prays god for Rama's victory on behalf of her fidelity's oath. Her pious fidelity emerges in her action.

***Pratimanataka :-**

Sita attracts with her virtues.

Sita's understanding Rama's nature thoroughly appears in an incident in the first act. Rama tells Sita that king Dashrath addressed him taking in the lap "my child Rama, accept my kingdom." Rama asks Sita "What do you guess?" Sita replies that she guesses that he should have bowed to father's feet sighing and without saying a word.²⁴ It reveals that Sita knows Rama inch by inch. It is feature of her being genuine, committed wife.

Rama reveals that he denied to accept Dashrath's request but he forced Rama blackmailing emotionally on behalf of oath. After coronation's preparation Manthara whispered and he couldn't be the king. Sita affirms that she liked it. King remains king and prince remains prince.²⁵ Sita intends to reveal that Rama remained beloved for her only and Dashrath remained king for all. Sita's possessive nature appears. Her words reflect that she doesn't like Rama to be the king. He should only be her husband. Her quality to be a housewife attracts all.

Sita puts on 'Valkal' (special attire to be worn in special cases) and Rama tells Sita that he also likes such a dress as it is the dress of old people of Ikshvaku family. Sita finds bad omen in Rama's words.²⁶ She says that she sees bad omen as he has given up ornaments. The suggestion proves to be true and Sita has to put on such attires.

When Rama has to leave the palace to go to forest he asks Sita, "What do you think?" Sita replies that she is his life-partner. Rama says that he has to go alone. Sita suggests that she will follow him. Sita reveals that the forest will be palace for her in his company.²⁷ Generally, a wife is unhappy in husband's difficult time and happy in the moments of joy. For an ideal and virtuous wife forest turns in to palace when her husband is with her. She proves herself to be a true life-partner.

In the fourth act Bharata reaches to the forest abusing his mother. Rama sends Sita to welcome Bharata. Sita says that Bharata is not only handsome but also with melodious speech. She blesses him "Long live o son!"²⁸ Sita doesn't feel revenged for Bharata though his mother is responsible for their leaving the kingdom. She blesses him to live long. Sita is family oriented woman. She considers her brother-in-law as son. She doesn't blame Bharata for their condition.

Bharata repeats to serve Rama in the forest but Rama explains Bharata to follow father's order and rule over Ayodhya. Bharata asks for Ram's foot-wear and Sita tells Rama that he should fulfill Bharat's demand.²⁹ Sita feels honour and respect for all family members. The incident reflects Sita's family-hood.

Bharata has to satisfy himself only with foot-wear of Rama and Rama suggests Bharata to return immediately and should not leave the throne for a moment. Sita doesn't like it and shows her dislike saying, "Oh, prince Bharata is

leaving!”³⁰ She likes to talk to Bharata on domestic matters. She feels bad to bid farewell to Bharata.

In the fifth act Rama is sad after bidding farewell to Bharata. He thinks that it is difficult for Bharata to carry responsibility alone. He goes to Sita. Sita reads expressions of his face and says, “My dear’s face appears like a man with blank heart due to mourning.”³¹ It shows Sita’s affinity and understanding of Rama’s nature. She appears a true life-partner who understands every change of her husband’s mood.

Rama informs Sita that there will be annual ritual to perform on father’s death next day ‘How shall I perform?’ worries Rama or “the father only knows my position and he will be satisfied with whatever I offer.” Sita consoles him saying that Bharata will perform the ritual gracefully. She says that he should perform as per available fruit and water. She says that the father would like it.³² She knows how to please sad husband.

Bharata insults his mother Kaikeyi in response to her role of sending Rama to the forest. In the end of the play Bharata comes to know that a sage’s curse was responsible. For that act he begs pardon. Kaikeyi forgives Bharata saying that every mother forgives her child. She says to stand Bharat up for there is no fault.³³ Kaikeyi appears very cruel initially but she is soft to her son. Kaikeyi seems a loving mother as we learn that she is not responsible but a sage’s curse. She comes out as a loving mother.

In the seventh act when Rama returns after fourteen years Bharata begs pardon and reveals that he is blessed. He bows to Sita. Sita blesses him saying that he should accompany Rama for a long time.³⁴ She appears family oriented woman believing in united family.

***Avimaraka**

In fact, Avimaraka is a play based on love. The main heroine Kurangi attracts us with some qualities.

In the second act Magadhika says that Jayvarma is Kashiraj's son. A messenger approached, the king welcomed him and accepted the gifts. Kurangi says in soliloquy that it's not fair and she owns her soul.³⁵ Her character appears modern. She dislikes her father's choosing her husband. she appears revolutionary.

In the second act Kurangi turns miserable. Day by day in separation she feels separated and finally leads herself to death. Kurangi ties cloth on her neck to assassinate her but she falls down in saying 'save, save' as thunder strikes.³⁶ It can be compared with modern women with a little tolerance.

In the second act Anjangiri elephant attacks Kurangi but Avimaraka saves her. Both get attracted to each other. Dhatri acknowledges her affection and says that seeing Avimaraka she doesn't like garland, doesn't like to eat, doesn't play with friends, sighs long, speaks unrelated, doesn't listen to, simply laughs alone, weeps and seems miserable.³⁷ Kurangi represents a woman fallen in love.

In the fifth act princess Kurangi embraces Nalinika and says, "Hey, your body is cool and charming. Hey it extinguishes burns of my body (alone) Good, I embraced my friend and body relation ends with her(loudly), you go please."³⁸ It depicts that it is difficult to understand woman's heart. Though she addresses Nalinika she implies it to Avimaraka.

When Kurangi is saved as she shouts "save, save" Avimaraka embraces and says., "It extinguished fire of my body in a second."³⁹ Kurangi's burning body might be caused by her desire to see her lover. It is fact that beloved's union with

the lover leads to heaven, no aches remain. Extinguished burning is caused by her meeting with Avimaraka. It is her distinguishing quality.

Affected and loved by Avimaraka, Dhatri describes an important matter. Due to her shame, fear, respect to family she doesn't reveal it to any friend.⁴⁰ She worries for being caught by some family member. She fears whether she will be detached. Though she falls in love she cares for her family members. Thus, Kurangi attracts her for her tender feelings to both the lover and the family members.

***Daridracharudatta :-**

Daridracharudatta attracts us for Vasantsena's virtues and qualities.

In the first act Shakar and Vit pursue Vasantsena. Vasantsena goes ahead. Vit and Shakar follow her. Vit says that she is a prostitute and she should think that she is like a plant grown on the route so that anybody may use it. He says that she should sleep with the people whom she likes and whom she doesn't like. She moves with body to be sold for money. Vasantsena replies that she should love keeping in mind her familyhood.⁴¹ Vasantsena is a prostitute by profession. People believe that she is like a tree on the path that anybody can use it. She is with virtues though she is a prostitute. She tries to maintain dignity of her family though she has accepted the profession of prostitution unfortunately.

Shakar and Vit are behind Vasantsena and she reaches to Charudatta's house. She exclaims with joy, "Oh! Is this his house? I am fortunate that they have led me close to my dear person."⁴² It is believed that prostitutes are meant only for money and not for love but Vasantsena is different.

In the second act Cheti feels Vasantsena that she loves somebody. Vasantsena replies that she is right to guess. Cheti asks who the prince is. The

prostitute Vasantsena replies that she would rather love her lover than serve a prince.⁴³ Vasantsena is a true beloved in the play.

When Cheti asks her about lover whether he is a son of Vanik, foreigner. Vasantsena replies that a woman with fantasies can't bear dreams broken by loving foreigner.⁴⁴ Vasantsena teaches the modern women not to be mesmerized by the foreigners. The followers of Vasantsena may not turn to penance.

When Vasantsena tells Cheti that she loves Charudatta, Cheti is surprised. She says that Charudatta is poor. Vasantsena replies that she loves him for that. The prostitute affected by a poor's love is not criticized.⁴⁵ Generally, it is believed in our society that prostitutes love only the rich and they love their money. In the case of Vasantsena, it is not so. She loves Charudatta and not money.

Cheti reveals to Vasantsena that an elephant named Bhadrak caught a sage. People gathered and he pushed the elephant and saved the sage. People praised his adventure but nobody offered him anything. A gentleman offered his upper cloth. Cheti inquires the name of the gentleman but Cheti sees the man passing and points to him. Vasantsena identifies that he is Charudatta who has only lower cloth to be worn at the time of performing yajna. She stares at him until he fades away.⁴⁶ Vasantsena honours Charudatta for his generosity and sacrifice. These are the qualities that attract her to him.

When people blame husband, wife can't bear it in Indian culture. Such an episode takes place when Vasantsena's golden treasure is stolen. Charudatta's wife offers her jewellery but the clown doesn't accept it. Cheti tells the clown that Charudatta is worried to offer Vasantsena. Charudatta's wife tries to get him out

of blames. She offers her jewellery to save her husband from blames and says the clown to accept it.⁴⁷ Being Charudatta very poor, people might doubt for his role.

The clown finds the wife of Charudatta crying. He asks her but she says that it is due to smoke of the temple. Vidushak (the clown) forces her to tell the truth by swearing her husband's oath. The wife of Charudatta says, "Alas! I hate myself."⁴⁸ For Charudatta's wife her husband's honesty is important. The wife can't bear oaths of her husband in Indian culture. Indian wife desires for her husband's fame, honour. She can't accept people's blames. She is loyal to her husband.

The jewellery deposited at Charudatta's house is stolen and the clown reaches to Vasantsena with the wife of Charudatta's jewellery. In place of the jewellery Vasantsena is requested to accept it. Vasantsena curses herself saying that she hates herself. She knows that people would consider her greedy being a prostitute. She shouts, "Bring me."⁴⁹ It reflects Vasantsena's generous character.

*** Balcarita:**

The play is based on the character sketch of Krishna. Bhasa hasn't portrayed female characters significantly in this play. Devaki is the only female character who plays a littlerole on the stage.

In the first act Devaki bears the seventh child as a male. Vasudev suggests Devaki that it's midnight and all are sleeping in Mathura. He says that he will leave Mathura so long as nobody is watching him. Devki asks where he will take him. When Vasudev is ready to leave Devki says, "Dear, I wish to see him satisfactorily."⁵⁰ It's painful for Devaki as a mother to abandon her son soon after his birth. She offers her son to protect him from Kansa. The episode presents a

mother's heart filled up with love. It means that she always wishes for his good future.

Bhasa wrote six Plays based on The Mahabharata but only Urubhangam, Dutaghatotkach and Madhyamvyayoga contain female characters.

***Urubhangam:**

Bhima breaks Duryodhana's heap with his stem. He doesn't follow the rules of battle and strikes on Duryodhana's heap. Both the queens go to Dhritrashtra and he says that his blindness is increased as he hears his son killed having been betrayed. He cries, "Are you living Gandhari?" Gandhari says, "Unfortunate I live!"⁵¹ It reveals Gandhari's feelings for son. She considers herself unfortunate thinking that her son would die earlier.

Dhritrashtra breaks down and angrily reveals that he won't be offered homage by a son though he is the father of hundred courageous, warrior, virile, self-respected sons. Gandhari says, listening to Dhritrashtra, to Suyodhan that he should console the king.⁵² Gandhari is an ideal wife and can't bear mourning of Dhritrashtra. Though Gandhari is sad she tolerates but can't tolerate her husband's condition.

Duryodhan is on the death bed having been wounded by Bhima's stem. He confesses that he would like to be Gandhari's son in the next birth if he had some good deeds in the present birth. Gandhari agrees saying, "Truly, you said what I thought."⁵³ She knows that there is nothing good credited to Duryodhana, though she desires Duryodhan to be her son in the next birth. A son for a mother is always the son however strange he may be.

***Dutaghatotkach:**

Kauravas kill Abhimanyu. Dhritrashtra wonders how it happened. He says that he dislikes the news. It's sin to kill a child and it will destroy all Kaurava. Gandhari says that it will be a war among our sons.⁵⁴ A mother's pain is witnessed in her words.

Dushala knows that Jaydratha, her husband has killed Abhimanyu. Then she says that her husband has indirectly made her widow by making Uttara a widow.⁵⁵ She trusts that Arjuna will kill Jaydrath and she will be a widow. She appears to be powerful figure not arguing to save her husband.

***Madhyamvyayoga:**

An old Brahmin is passing through a forest with his wife and sons. Ghatotkach catches them and orders to satisfy a son for his mother's performance of ritual. The Brahmin suggests that his body is well-versed by religious rituals and old, he will sacrifice himself to save his son. The wife of the Brahmin says that she lives only for the family, she has served her husband, the family and now she wants to protect her family.⁵⁶ She is confident that she will protect and save the family. It shows a loyal wife's confidence in Indian family.

When the second son is ready to go with Ghatotkach, he bows both the parents. The mother blesses him to live long.⁵⁷ It presents eternal desire of a mother that her son may live long. The wife of the Brahmin appears pious, family oriented woman. She saves the family with her values. It's her distinguishing quality.

The female characters like Vasavadatta, Padmavati, Sita, Kurangi, Vasantsena, the wife of the Charudatta, Devaki, Gandhari, the wife of the

Brahmin in Swapnavasavadattam, Abhishekanataka, Pratimanataka, Avimaraka,
Daridracharudatta, Balcharita, Urubhangam,
Dutaghatokach and Madhyamvyayoga respectively impress the readers and the
spectators with their special qualities and virtues.

Reference and notes

(१) राजदारिकेति श्रुत्वा भगिनिकास्नेहोऽपि मेऽत्र संपद्यते।
स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-१

(२) न हि रूपमेव, वागपि खल्वस्या मधुरा। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-१

(३) आर्य, प्रथममुद्धोप्य कः किमिच्छतीत्युक्तमिदानीं विचारयितुम्। यदेष
भणति तदनुतिष्ठत्वार्थः। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-१

(४) अलीकमलीकं खल्वेतत्। जीवामि मन्दभागा। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-१

(५) (स्वगतम्) सकाम इदानीमार्ययौगन्धरायणो भवतु। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-
अंक-१

(६) न हि न हि। दर्शनीय एव। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-२

(७) अत्याहितम्। न खलु किञ्चित्। तथा नाम संतप्योदासीनो भवतीति।
स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-२

(८) आर्यपुत्रोऽपि नाम परकीयः संवृत्तः। धन्याखलुचक्रवाकवधुः
यान्योन्यविरहिता न जीवति। न खल्वहं प्राणान्
परित्यजामि। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-३

(९) एतदपि मया कर्तव्यमासीत्। अहो,
अकरुणाः खल्वीश्वराः। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-३

(१०) (आत्मगतम्) धन्याखल्वस्मि, यद्येवं सत्यं भवते। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-
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(११) (आत्मगतम्) भवतु, भवतु। दत्तं वेतनमस्य परिखेदस्य। अहो
अज्ञातऽवासोऽप्यत्र बहुगुणः संपद्यते। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-४

(१२) चेटी-भर्तुदारिके, अदाक्षिण्यः खलु भर्ता।

पद्मावती-हला, मा मैवम्। सदाक्षिण्य एवार्यपुत्रः, य इदानींप्यायया
वासवदत्ताया गुणान् स्मरति। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-४

(१३) अहो, अकरुणाः खल्वीश्वरा मे। विरहपर्युत्सुकस्यार्यपुत्रस्य
विश्रामस्थानभूतेयमपि नाम पद्मावत्यस्वस्थाजाता। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-५

(१४) आर्यपुत्र प्रियं मे ज्ञातिकुलस्य कुशलवृत्तान्तं श्रोतुम्। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-
अंक-६

(१५) अत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठाविधये, उत्तिष्ठः। अर्थिरवं नाम
शरीरमपराध्यति। स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्-अंक-६

- (१६) किन्तु खलु मामन्तरेण प्रसन्नहृदय आर्यपुत्रो भवेत्। अभिषेक अं-२
- (१७) हास्यः खलु रावणकः, यो वचनगतसिद्धिमपि न जानाति। अभिषेक अं-२
- (१८) यो वा को वा भवतु। आर्यपुत्रनामसंकीर्तनेनाहमेतेनाभिभाषिष्ये। अभिषेक अं-२
- (१९) आर्यपुत्रस्य विरहपरिश्रमोऽपि मे सफलः संवृत्त इति पश्यामि, यदि खल्वयं वानरः सत्यं मन्त्रयते। अभिषेक अं-२
- (२०) अहो अकरुणाः खल्वीश्वरा एवं शोचन्तमार्यपुत्रं कुर्वन्तः। अभिषेक अं-२
- (२१) भद्र, एतां मेऽवस्थां श्रुत्वार्यपुत्रो यथा शोकपरवशो न भवति, तथा मे वृत्तान्तं भण। अभिषेक अं-२
- (२२) भद्र, येनासिनार्यपुत्रस्यासदृशं कृतं तेन मामपि मारय। अभिषेक अं-५
- (२३) ईश्वराः आत्मनः कुलसदृशेन चारित्रेण यद्यहमनुसराम्यार्यपुत्रम्, आर्यपुत्रस्य विजयो भवतु। अभिषेक अं-५
- (२४) तर्क्याम्यार्यपुत्रेणाभणित्वा किञ्चिद् दीर्घनिःश्वस्य महाराजस्य पादमूलयोः पतितमिति। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (२५) प्रियं मे। महाराज एव महाराजः, आर्यपुत्र एव आर्यपुत्रः। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (२६) उज्झिताभिषेकस्यार्यपुत्रस्यामङ्गलमिव मे प्रतिभाति। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (२७) तत्खलु मे प्रासादः। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (२८) (आत्मगतम्) नहि रूपमेव। स्वरयोगोऽपि स एव। (प्रकाशम्) वत्स चिरं जीव। प्रतिमा अं-४
- (२९) आर्यपुत्र, ननु दीयते खलु प्रथमयाचनं भरतस्य। प्रतिमा अं-४
- (३०) हम्, अद्यैव गमिष्यति कुमारो भरतः। प्रतिमा अं-४
- (३१) शोकशून्यहृदयस्यैवार्यपुत्रस्य मुखरागः। किमेतत्। प्रतिमा अं-५
- (३२) आर्यपुत्र, निर्वर्तयिष्यति श्राद्धं भरत ऋद्ध्या, अवस्थानुरूपं फलोदकेनाप्यार्यपुत्रः। एतत्तातस्य बहुमततरं भविष्यति। प्रतिमा अं-५
- (३३) जात, का नाम माता पुत्रकस्यापराधं न मर्षयति। उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ। कोऽत्र दोषः। प्रतिमा अं-६
- (३४) आर्यपुत्रेण चिरसञ्चारी भव। प्रतिमा अं-७
- (३५) (आत्मगतम्) एतदलीकम्। अहमात्मनः प्रभवामि। अविमारक अं-२

(३६) सा तदा प्रभृति सुमनोवर्णकं नेच्छति, आहारं नाभिलषति, न रमते गोष्ठीजनेन, दीर्घनिःश्वसिति, असंबद्धं कथयति, कथितं न जानाति, गूढं हसति, विविक्ते रोदिति, रोगमपदिशति, तन्वी भवति, पाण्डुभावं गच्छति। अविमारक अं-२

(३७) एवं विधैरवस्थाविशेषैरात्मनो लज्जया भयेन कुलमानेन बालभावेन च एकस्या अपि किञ्चिन्न मन्त्रयते। अविमारक अं-२

(३८) हला। सम्प्रति नश्यतीव मे शरीरदाहः। (स्वगतम्) हन्त कृतः सखीप्रणयः। समाप्तश्चाद्यैतस्याः शरीरसंसर्गः (प्रकाशम्) गच्छेदानीं त्वम्। अविमारक अं-५

(३९) आश्चर्यम्। एकक्षणेन नश्यतीव मे शरीरदाहः। अविमारक अं-५

(४०) भवतु, उत्तरीयवाससात्मानमुद्बध्य व्यापादयिष्यामि (उत्थाय तथा कुर्वती मेधस्तनितं (श्रुत्वा) हं परित्रायस्व परित्रायस्व माम्। अविमारक अं-५

(४१) एसो मे अभिणिवेसो अभिजणेण तुळीअदि। (एष मेऽभिनिवेशोऽभिजनेन तोल्यते)। दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-१

(४२) (सहर्षमात्मगतम्) एदं तस्स गेहं दिट्ठआ दाणि अमित्तजणणिरोहेण पिअजणसमीवं उवणीदम्हि। भोदु, एवं दाव करिस्सं। (अपसरति) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-१

(४३) रमिदुं इच्छामि, ण सेविदुं। (रन्तुमिच्छामि, न सेवितुम्।) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-२

(४४) उन्मत्तिए। आसाच्छेदं उक्कण्ठन्ता का सदेहि। (उन्मत्तिके। आशाच्छेदमुत्कण्ठमाना का सहते।) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-२

(४५) अदो क्खु कामी अदि । अदिदरिद्रपुरुषसत्ता गणिआ अवअणीआ होइ। (अतः खलु काम्यते। अतिदरिद्रपुरुष सक्ता गणिका अवचनीया भवति।) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-२

(४६) (प्रासादाद् विलोक्य) हज्जे। एसो हि सो अप्यचारुदत्तो एव्व जण्णोववीदमत्तपावरओ गच्छइ। ता जाव दूरं गओ ण भविस्सदि एसो, पेक्खम्ह। दाव णं (हज्जे। एष हि स आर्य चारुदत्त एव यज्ञोपवीतमात्रप्रावारको गच्छति। तद् यावद् दूरं गतो न भविष्यत्येष, पश्यामस्तावदेनम्। दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-२

(४७) उद असम्भवदाए मुक्तावलीए तव अदुळ्ळहदाए उवआरो विस्सरिदो। गण्ह एदं। (ददाति।) (उदक सम्भवतया मुक्तावल्यास्तव च दुर्लभतयोपचारो विस्मृतः। गृहाणैतत्।) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-३

(४८) हद्भिः।(हा धिक्) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-३

(४९) (आत्मगतम्) धिक् ख्वु गणिआभावं। कुद्धत्ति मं तुळअदिंजइ ण पडिच्छे, सो एव्व दोसो भविस्सदि।(प्रकाशम्) आणेदु अय्यो।(धिक् खलु गणिकाभावम्।लुब्धेति मां तुलयति। यदि न प्रतीच्छामि, स एव दोषो भविष्यति। आनयत्वार्थः। दरिद्रचारुदत्त

अं-४

(५०) अय्यउत्त। इच्छामि दाव णं सुदिट्ठं कत्तुं। (आर्यपुत्र।इच्छामि तावदेनं सुदृष्टं कर्तुम्। दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-१

(५१) जीवितास्मि मन्दभागा। उरुभंगम्

(५२) जात सुयोधन, देहि मे प्रतिवचनम्।पुत्रशतविनाशदुःस्थितं समाश्वासय महाराजम्। उरुभंगम्

(५३) मम मनोरथः खलु त्वया भणितः। उरुभंगम्

(५४) महाराज। अत्थि उण जाणीअदि केवलं पुत्तसंखअकारओ कुलविग्गहो भविसदि त्ति। (महाराज। अस्ति पुनज्जयिते केवलं पुत्रसंक्षयकारकः कुलविग्रहो भविष्यतीति) दूतधटोत्कच

(५५) जेण दाणिं बहूए उत्तराए वेधव्वं दाहदं, तेण अत्तणो जुवदिजणस्स वेधव्वमादिट्ठं।(येनेदानीं वध्वै उत्तरायै वैधव्यं दत्तं, तेनात्मनो युवतिजनाय वैधव्यमादिष्टम्।) दूतधटोत्कच

(५६) आर्य,मा मैवम्। पतिमात्रधर्मिणी पतिव्रतेति नाम। गृहीतफलेनैतेन शरीरेणायं कुलं च रक्षितुमिच्छामि। (अय्य,मा मा एवं।पदिमत्तधम्मिणी पदिव्वदत्तिणाम। गहीदफलेण एदिणा सरीरेण अय्यं कुलं च रक्खिदुमिच्छामि। मध्यमव्यायोगम्

(५७) जात। चिरं जीव। (जाद।चिरं जीव।)मध्यमव्यायोगम्

Chapter-III

Limitations of the Female Characters of Bhasa

The chapter will spare space for demerits and limitations of the female characters of Bhasa. The former chapter highlighted merits and good qualities of the female characters of Bhasa.

***Swapnavasavadattam:-**

Yogandharayana and Vasavadatta are in the forest in disguise. Padmavati is approaching at that time. The soldiers make way for Padmavati. Vasavadatta asks Yogandharayana whether they will push her away. Then she says that it's an insulting attitude.¹ Vasavadatta is Udayan's wife and the queen but she has hidden herself in disguise. She is unhappy with a mere thought that they will push her away. It's a limitation of her character that she can't bear an insult.

When Padmavati enters the forest Vasavadatta is mesmerized by her beauty and speech. Tapasi asks whether somebody is interested to marry the king's daughter Padmavati. Cheti replies that the king of Ujjayini Padyot inquires for Padmavati's marriage with his son. Vasavadatta says alone that she'll belong to them.² The limitation of Vasavadatta remains that she imagines Padmavati to be Udayan's wife on the basis of only inquiry. In stead of being unhappy she thinks it good that Padmavati will be her husband's wife. The purpose behind it is that it will be a step to get her husband's kingdom back.

Brahmchari narrates the incident occurred in Lavanak. He narrates that Vasavadatta and Yogandharayana have been burnt to ashes. Vasavadatta sighs that she is unfortunate to listen to it that she is dead. When the ministers resist the king's attempt to throw himself in fire, Vasavadatta whispers that she realizes

his love for her.³ Vasavadatta has good intent not to be disclosed. She tolerates to fulfill her aim.

In the second act Padmavati's issue of marriage is being discussed among Padmavati, Vasavadatta and Cheti. Cheti reveals that Padmavati likes Udayan for his merits. Cheti doubts if he is ugly. Vasavadatta all of a sudden speaks out that he is handsome.⁴ She doesn't like any-body addressing him ugly.

Padmavati leaves the ceremonial atmosphere and goes to Pramadvan to relieve herself. She thinks that it's really pathetic that her husband will belong to somebody else. She praises chakravaki (the wife of chakravaka bird) who can't live in separation from chakravaka. She is helpless to die.⁵ She thinks herself unfortunate that she has to live in separation. She loves so much as chakravaki loves chakravaka but she is helpless to die.

Cheti comes to Pramadvan for Padmavati's Kautukmala has to be woven. Vasavadatta expresses it with a sigh that the deities are cruel that she has to weave the garland. She is ready to weave kaututmala for her affection to Padmavati. Vasavadatta asks about the name of the flowers to Cheti. Cheti identifies them as Avidhavakaran. Vasavadatta considers it good to weave. Other flowers are named 'Sapatnimardan'. Vasavadatta makes up her mind not to weave them for Udayan's wife is dead. They are useless.⁶ In fact, Vasavadatta is alive and to weave 'saptnimardan' flowers means her own oppression. She confesses death of her own life and to reveal it she appears pathetic.

In the fourth act, Vasavadatta and Cheti enter Pramadvan. Cheti collects flowers Vasavadatta praises beauty of the flowers when Cheti suggests to collect more flowers, Padmavati denies. Vasavadatta asks why she rejects Cheti's idea of collecting more flowers. Padmavati replies that Udayan will love richness of the

flowers and it will add her honour. Vasavadatta asks mildly whether she loves Udayan. Padmavati reveals that she doesn't know it but she becomes eager to meet him. Udayan is dear to Padmavati but she can't express it openly. She knows the reason of her eagerness but due to natural feminine quality she can't express.⁷

In the fifth act, there is a scene of Samudragruh. The king and the clown reach to the room of Padmavati to enquire her health. Padmavati is not present there. The clown narrates a story. The king sleeps sound. Vasavadatta also approaches to see Padmavati. She sleeps beside thinking Padmavati on the bed. In the sleep the king addresses Vasavadatta. Listening to it Vasavadatta feels satisfied for the king reminds her, she is afraid of being caught and it will destroy Yogandharayana's strategies.⁸ Vasavadatta is embarrassed. She is helpless to stop with her own husband though she gets a chance to do.

***Abhisheknataka**

Bhasa has contributed two plays based on the story of the Ramanaya: Abhisheknataka and Pratimanataka.

Ravana kidnaps Sita and takes her to Lanka. Rama and Laxman search for Sita. In the second act Sita enters with a group of devil women. Sita says that she is separated, kidnapped and brought to Ravana's kingdom, unfortunately abused and yet she lives. She controls herself due to trust in Rama's arms. She doubts whether Rama would be happy. She hates herself thinking thus. She says that she is cruel and unfortunate.⁹ It presents Sita's situation without Rama. Worried for Rama she can't go to him. She can't do anything except worrying for Rama. Helplessness of Sita is remarkable.

In the second act Ravana tries to tempt and overpower Sita. He says, "O, slender woman, delicate, charming eyed, enjoy your life with me." Ravana's such

abuses are helplessly tolerated. Torn mentally she only curses Ravana.¹⁰ When a woman is helpless she only can curse.

Hanuman reaches to Sita with a message from Rama. Hanuman says that Rama killed the elder brother of Sugriv, Vali and established him as a king and adds that king Sugriv has sent his soldiers in all directions and he is there for the vulture guided him. Sita doesn't believe words of Hanuman, she thinks him to be devil in disguise of Hanuman. She feels it a dream. Hanuman says that Sita adores Rama though she doesn't trust due to her mourning.¹¹ She doesn't trust anything for she is surrounded by the devils.

In the fifth act when Ravana presents heads of Rama and Laxman cut off, Sita expresses her sorrows. She requests Ravana to cut her head off through also with the same sword.¹² Sita has a little doubt she considers it real. She moves back in her trust and confidence for Rama. It shows weariness of her mind.

In the sixth act Rama kills Ravana. Sita becomes free from Ravana's prison. Vibhishan says that Sita is like goddess Laxmi made free from the devils and she is relieved due to his physical strength.¹³ Rama says that Sita is sinful due to her stay with the devils. She should stay there for she is stigma for Ikshvaku family.¹⁴ Though Sita is fidel, loyal she has to bear intolerable words of her husband. She is punished by her fate. It is very difficult for Sita to prove her chastity. It's unfortunate that she has to prove her chastity by throwing herself into fire. It's very cruel moment for a loyal wife to prove her loyalty.

***Pratimanataka:-**

In Pratimanataka, Sita is the female character.

In the first act Rama's coronation is to take place. The maid servant informs Sita. The drums stop. Sita thinks it a problem in the ceremony and says

that royal family is always eventful.¹⁵ Ramasays that his father assembled priests, ministers and citizens, took him in his lap and requested him to accept the kingdom. When he denied, Dashratha forced him taking oath to kill himself.Sita inquires further and Rama requests that Manthara presented herself there and whispered and he lost kingship.¹⁶ Sita innocently reveals that king is king and prince is prince.¹⁷ Sita's limitation appears in her innocent nature. She doesn't seem to be a queen. She isn't a politician.

Rama has to leave the palace for fourteen years. Rama suggests Sita that he has alone to go to the forest. But Sita is ready to follow him. Rama suggests Sita to serve the father-in-law and the mother-in-law, Sita says that she bows the deities.¹⁸ It's Sita's primary duty to serve in-laws but she prefers duty towards husband. She begs pardon of the deities for that. It's her limitation that she misses the chance to serve the in-laws.

At the time of Rama's coronation Kaikeyi demands Bharata's coronation and Rama's long fourteen years stay in the forest. Bharata abuses his mother and doesn't bow. Kaikeyi says that she tested the king's value for truth.¹⁹ Kaikeyi replies that she was tempted to make her son the king.²⁰ She keeps distance between Rama and Bharata. She becomes prey to Manthara's strategy.

Bharata visits Rama to see him in the forest. Sita leads Bharata to Rama. Sita is not biased to Bharata's look and speech. Rama suggests Bharata to rule over the throne. Bharata doesn't consider it proper. He requests Rama to justify. He thinks it to be the crime of his mother. Sita feels soft to Bharata's speech. She says that Bharata speaks pathetic and what Rama thinks about him.²¹ Sita's limitation is that she can't tolerate others' sorrows. She is worried for Bharata's pain.

Rama, Sita and Laxman live in the forest and they have to perform final ritual of Dashratha after his death. Ravana appears in the disguise of a sage. Ravana teaches Rama how to perform excellent rituals after father's death. He paints a golden deer of the Himalayas. Rama tells Ravana that he achieves with his bows and arrows. If he can't achieve with arms he can achieve with tapa.²² Sita appears innocent as she doesn't doubt Ravana to be in disguise.

After killing Ravana, Rama reaches to motherland. Rama and Sita feel nostalgia. Rama tells Sita that the riverbank is the witness of their rituals. He mentions the golden deer and Sita requests Rama not to mention it.²³ She knows that the golden deer is the cause of her kidnapping. She is very feminine by heart. She doesn't like to remind the former pathetic events.

It's Sita's limitation that she is feminine though queen. She is unable to tolerate difficult situations.

***Avimaraka:-**

Kurangi is the principal female character in Avimaraka. The following scenes bring limitations of the female characters to us.

In the third act Kurangi's betrothal is being discussed. Magadhika informs that Jayvarma is the son of Kashiraj and the princess is betrothed to him. The king accepted gifts from them. The princess doesn't like it. She says that she has right to decide her own matter. The queen is also unhappy to know it. She considers her daughter a child and she loves her a lot. She expects the son-in-law to see before betrothal. The king agrees. A messenger and the minister Aryabhutika set to visit Kashirajpur. Kurangi feels relieved saying that it is good that it is post-poned.²⁴ Though Kurangi doesn't like decision of others she doesn't cross limit by refusing the matter. She enjoys delay in the matter.

In the fifth act Avimaraka and the clown (Vidushaka) enter the palace of the king Kuntibhoj. With the help of the ring given by Vidyadhar they reach to the queen's palace. Avimaraka tells the clown that she is sad, unable to bear time, look up to avoid tears. Kurangi says alone that her life is useless.²⁵ Kurangi and Avimaraka love each other. Kurangi can't cross the limits of her family honour. Her family honour is her limitation.

***Daridracharudatta:-**

Vasantsena is the principal figure in Daridracharudatta. Here are some limitations of Vasantsena's character.

Shakar and Vit follow Vasantsena. She seeks place to hide. Suddenly the back door of Charudatta's house opens. The clown and Radnika open the door to take away offerings as sacrifice. Vasantsena enters blowing the lamp off. She considers it improper to stay there in the first meeting. She loudly speaks that her ornaments may be in the house.²⁶ The robbers are behind her due to ornaments. In fact, she finds an excuse to revisit Charudatta as she is in his love. Though Vasantsena is a prostitute, she doesn't cross her limit.

In the first act Vasantsena's love with Charudatta is exposed. It is her excuse only to forget jewellery in Charudatta's house. Cheti and Vasantsena converse and it clarifies that Vasantsena is in love with Charudatta. Cheti exclaims with surprise that Vasantsena is in love somebody. Vasantsena replies that her supposition is right. She agrees that she is in flirt with somebody.²⁷ She doesn't let others know about her love to poor Charudatta. The impression of prostitutes is not very good as it is believed that there is no true lover for such women. She doubts whether people will accept her love as true. Others read out her expressions. It's limitation of prostitutes to love a man of society.

***Balcarita**

Balcarita is a play based on Harivansha. There are only a few characters and rarely acts on the stage. Devaki's character attracts us only. Kansa has imprisoned Devaki and Vasudev. Kansa has killed six children of Devaki. The seventh is the male child born in the prison. Vasudev thinks to save the child. When the people of Mathura were sleeping, Vasudev is in hurry for he knew Kansa's system. Davaki wishes to see the child for a long time. But Vasudev afraids of Kansa's cruelty. Devaki confidently says that it won't happen.²⁸ Though Devaki believes in god she is helpless to send the child away.

When Vasudev leaves the prison with the child Devaki doesn't go in. Vasudev suggests her to go inside She replies that she will go as she is unfortunate.²⁹ Devaki's condition of mind shakes us. Her helplessness is her limitation.

***Dutavakyam**

Abhimanyu is killed in the play. Many kings kill him together. Jaydrath is the main to kill him. Dushala weeps over the event for she knows Arjuna's valour. She knows that Arjuna will kill Jaydratha the next day definitely. Jaydratha is cause for widowhood for Dushala and Uttara. She goes to Dhritrashtra for permission to meet Uttara. She wishes that she will inform her that she will also bewidow the nextday.³⁰ It depicts agony of a woman. Dushala's pathos and helplessness emerge from the event.

***Madhyamvyayoga:-**

The play consists only one female character, the wife of Brahmin. An old Brahmin is passing through a forest with his wife and sons. Gatotkach catches them and orders to sacrifice any one of them for his mother's performance of ritual. Brahmin has full trust that Pandava will protect them. He hears that Pandava have gone to Dhaumyamuni. He also knows that the middle (madhyam) Bhima guards the hut. Ghatotkach hurries to lead them and Brahmin is ready to be sacrificed. His wife mentions that she has served him with loyalty and fidelity, she will die to save others.³¹ As the Brahmin and sons can't protect them the wife of the Brahmin can't bear her husband and sons dying in front of her. She has confidence of her own chastity. It comes to her rescue.

Among Bhasa's thirteen plays only a few consist female characters. The male characters dominate his plays. The female characters get on the stage rarely.

Reference and notes

- (१) आर्य, तथा परिश्रमःपरिखेदं नोत्पादति, यथायं परिभव। स्वप्न-अं-१
- (२) (आत्मगतम्) भवतु भवतु। एषा चात्मीयेदानीं संवृत्ता। स्वप्न-अं-१
- (३) (आत्मगतम्) जानामि जानाम्यार्यपुत्रस्य मयि सानुक्रोशत्वम्। स्वप्न-अं-१
- (४) नहि नहि। दर्शनीय एव। स्वप्न-अं-२
- (५) धन्या खलु चक्रवाक वधूः यान्योन्यविरहिता न जीवति। न खल्वहं प्राणान् परित्यजामि। आर्यपुत्रं प्रेक्ष इत्यनेन मनोरथेन जीवामि मन्दभागा। स्वप्न-अं-३
- (६) उपरता तस्य भार्या, तन्निष्प्रयोजनमिति। स्वप्न-अं-३
- (७) आर्ये, न जानामि आर्यपुत्रेण विरहितोत्कण्ठिता भवामि। स्वप्न-अं-४
- (८) महान् खल्वार्ययौगन्धरायणस्य प्रतिज्ञाभारो मम दशनिन निष्फल संवृत्तः। स्वप्न-अं-५
- (९) हा धिग् अतिधीरा खल्वस्मि मन्दभागा। अभिषेक अं-२
- (१०) शप्तोऽसि। अभिषेक अं-२
- (११) एवं गाढं परिज्ञाय भतरिं भर्तुवत्सला।
न प्रत्यायति शोकार्ता यथा देहान्तरं गता।। अभिषेक अं-२/२४
- (१२) हा आर्यपुत्र, परिमलनवकमलसन्निभे वदने परिवृत्तनयने पश्यन्ती अतिधीरा खल्वस्मि मन्दभागा। हा आर्यपुत्र, एतस्मिन् दुःखसागरे मां निक्षिप्य कुत्र गतोऽसि। यावन्न म्रिये। किन्तु खल्वलीकमेतद् भवेत्। भद्र, येनासिनार्यपुत्रस्यासदृशं कृतं तेन मामपि मारय। अभिषेक। अं-५
- (१३) एषा हि राजस्तव धर्मपत्नी त्वद्बाहुवीर्येण विधूतदुःखा। लक्ष्मीः पुरा दैत्यकुलच्युतेव तव प्रासादात् समुपस्थिता सा ।। अभिषेक अं-६/२१
- (१४) विभीषण, तत्रैव तावत् तिष्ठतु रचनिचरावमर्शजातकल्मषा इक्ष्वाकुकुलस्याङ्गभूता। अभिषेक अं-६
- (१५) अथवा बहुवृत्तान्तानि राजकुलानि नाम। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (१६) सम्भ्रान्तया किमपि मन्थरया च कर्णे।
राज्ञः शनैरभिहितं च न चास्मि राजा ।। प्रतिमा अं-१/७
- (१७) महाराज एव महाराजः, आर्यपुत्र एव आर्यपुत्रः। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (१८) एनामुद्दिश्य देवतानां प्रणामः क्रियते। प्रतिमा अं-१
- (१९) जात, महाराजस्य सत्यवचनं रक्षन्त्या मया तथोक्तम्। प्रतिमा अं-३
- (२०) जात शुक्ललुब्धा ननु प्रष्टव्या । प्रतिमा अं-३

(२१) आर्यपुत्र, अतिकरुणं मन्त्रयते भरतः। किमिदानीमार्यपुत्रेण चिन्त्यते।प्रतिमा अं-४

(२२) धनुर्वा तपसि श्रान्ते, श्रान्ते धनुषि वा तपः।प्रतिमा अं-५/९

(२३) हम् आर्यपुत्र, मा खलु मा खल्वेवं भणितुम्।(भीतावेपते)प्रतिमा अं-७

(२४) कुरंगी-हन्त कालान्तरितं कार्यम्। अविमारक अं-३

(२५) कुरंगी -(स्वगतम्) किमेतेन जीवन्मरणेन।अविमारक अं-५

(२६) गणिका-जड् मे अय्यो पसण्णो, अअं मे अलंकारो इह एव्व चिदुदु। अलंकारणिमित्तं पावा मं अणुसरन्ति। अहं पि अय्येण रक्खिदा गेहं गन्तुमिच्छामि।(यदि मे आर्यः प्रसन्नः, अयं मेऽलङ्कार इहैव तिष्ठतु। अलंकारनिमित्तं पापा मामनुसरन्ति। अहमप्यार्येण रक्षिता गेहं गन्तुमिच्छामि। दरिद्रचारुदत्त अ-१

(२७) सुट्ठ तुए किदं।अवञ्चिदा दे दिट्ठी। ईदिसवण्णय्येज। (सुष्टु त्वया कृतम्।अवञ्चिता ते दृष्टिः। ईदृशवर्णैव।)दरिद्रचारुदत्त अ-२

(२८) देवकी-सव्वहा ण भविस्सदि। (सर्वथा न भविष्यति।) बालचरित अं-१

(२९) देवकी-एषा गच्छामि मन्दभाआ। (एषा गच्छामि मन्दभागा) बालचरित अं-१

(३०) दुःशला-तात्। एवं च भणिस्स-अज्जकालिअं च दे वेसग्गहणं अहं विं अवधारइस्सामि ति।(तात् ! एवं च भणिष्यामि-अद्यकालिकं च ते वेषग्रहणमहमप्युपधारयिस्यामीति।दूतवाक्यम्-अं-१

(३१) बाह्मणी-आर्य, मा मैवम्।पतिमात्रधर्मिणी पतिव्रतेति नाम। गृहीतफलेनैतेन शरीरेणायं कुलं च रक्षितुमिच्छामि।मध्यमव्यायोगम् अं-१

CHAPTER-IV

Comparison of the Female Characters of Bhasa and Modern Woman

Bhasa's plays consist only a few female characters. Sita and Vasavadatta are two major female figures. Though a few female characters play roles, they are famous for their qualities.

Vasavadatta is wholly committed to her husband. She sacrifices everything for her husband Udayan as he is drenched in love with Vasavadatta. Udayan's secretary Yogandharayana prepares a plan. The purpose of the plan is to regain the kingdom. As per the plan it is announced that Vasavadatta is burnt to ashes in the fire of Lavanaka. So long as Vasavadatta is alive, Udayan can't marry Darshak's sister Padmavati. Yogandharayana deposits Vasavadatta to Padmavati in disguise. Vasavadatta knows that Padmavati is to become Udayan's another wife. Generally, a wife can't bear another woman as a wife of her husband. If she knows his intention of marrying another woman she misbehaves with her, scolds her and threatens even beats her. If she can't tolerate she commits suicide. Though Padmavati is to be her co-wife she reveals that she feels like her sister as she is the 'princess'.¹ In stead of hatred for her she feels sisterly love. The modern women can't bear anything related to another woman. They feel jealous of other women's speech and beauty. Vasavadatta praises speech and beauty of Padmavati.² The modern women shouldn't be blamed for they can't bear another woman as the wife of her husband. No woman can bear it in modern time.

Vasavadatta reaches to Pramadavan to pacify her mind knowing that Padmavati is going to marry Udayan. When Cheti tells her to weave a garland called Kautukmala, Vasavadatta weaves 'Avidhavakarana' flowers but doesn't weave 'Sapatnimardan' for they may torture her as per its name. With an idea of

weaving a garland for her husband's wife she is shattered once and sighs, "Oh, the deities are truly cruel."³ She weaves the garland thinking that the marriage of Udayan and Padmavati will be benevolent and will help to regain the lost kingdom. The modern women consider their husband everything for them. They create a commotion. They can't have generosity such as of Vasavadatta who always thinks for her husband's happiness.

Soon after Udayan's marriage with Padmavati, Padmavati falls ill and Vasavadatta is so much worried that she reveals that Padmavati's illness may disturb the mental peace of Udayan as he is sad due to separation from her.⁴ Vasavadatta knows that Udayan loves her and his marriage with Padmavati will pacify Udayan's mind. Padmavati's illness is a matter of worry for her. The modern women perhaps may consider Padmavati's illness good for her and feel jealous. She may enjoy such state. The modern women may not accept that her husband will be happy with another woman. She will go for divorce in such event. It is not essential that modern woman may have such quality of Vasavadatta.

Vasavadatta's love for Udayan is so selfless that she considers Udayan innocent as he hasn't proposed for Padmavati himself. Udayan's words of love for her console even in disguise and she feels herself proud of being his wife. For the sake of her husband, she tolerates Padmavati's service as a maid servant. She fulfills her responsibilities in disguise with consciousness and commitment. She presents her sorrow saying that her husband belongs to somebody else.⁵ The modern women may never tolerate her husband's marriage with another woman for benevolence of husband. On behalf of her husband's happiness she may not compromise.

Padmavati attracts us all with her qualities though she is subordinate female character in Swapnavasavadattam. Vasavadatta isn't jealous although there are many reasons for her jealousy. She is generous, emotional and sensitive who feels jealousy in several matters but she doesn't feel jealousy in case of Padmavati. Padmavati doesn't force in the matter of learning to play vina and compromises herself. In Pramadavan though Udayan clearly favours Vasavadatta, she isn't disappointed at all. Even she scolds Cheti who criticizes Udayan's favour to Vasavadatta. Padmavati praises Udayan for he reminds his former wife.⁶ The modern women can't bear that her husband remind another woman.

Abhisheknataka and Pratimanataka are two plays of Bhasa based on Ramayan. Both of them provide Sita's role ideal for modern woman for her high thinking, obedience, trust for Rama. She considers herself unfortunated for being separated from Rama, surrounded by devil females as she is kidnapped by Ravana in Abhishekanataka. She thinks that she is alive for she has confidence in Rama's bravery and power of bows and arrows.⁷ She doesn't even touch other male being loyal to Rama. She is kept in Ashokvatika. It is difficult for her to preserve her character and loyalty. Though she feels it difficult to be free from Ravana's kingdom, she trusts Rama's archery. With reference to the modern woman, there are chances of infidelity in such conditions. The modern women should adopt such virtues if their husbands are like Rama.

Ravana suggests Sita that she is slender, delicate, with beautiful eyes and she should give up her hair tied with flowers. She should give up simplicity and think for his body adorned with golden jewellery. Sita's words should be considered by the modern women. She says that it is not ethical that Ravana lives.⁸ People with loose character shouldn't live on the earth as it's immoral. In

modern time women surrender muscle power and wealth power though they don't wish. The women who slip to other males tired of their own husband should keep Sita in mind. Sita's character is an ideal for modern women though she is controversial.

Sita emerges simple, generous and bright in the opening of Pratimanataka. She appears loyal to her husband and she knows Rama well. She adores Rama. She isn't interested in coronation or living in the forest. When Dasharath selected Rama for coronation, Sita realized the mental status of Rama. Rama is proud of Sita's sense of finding out his hidden thinking. Rama praises her quality and says that a few couples possess equal qualities.⁹ Sita knows what Rama thinks. It's unity of her mind with Rama's mind. Though Sita is not present at that time she reveals what Rama had thought. They had different bodies but one soul. In modern time, rarely such couples are found. Sita's apprehension of Rama is unique. The modern women should understand their husbands well. They should trust their husbands and solve the problems unitedly.

The modern women believe that their husbands should be omnipotent, people should praise them. They think so because they seek their honour to do so. Sita likes and she is happy that Rama's coronation is cancelled. She says that the king is king and her husband is her husband.¹⁰ The modern woman thinks that the father-in-law should confer everything upon her husband. Her husband only should possess power, wealth and honour.

Kaikeyi's boon has scared Rama of being the king and he has to go to the forest for fourteen years. Rama asks Sita to know her wish. Sita replies that she is his follower, partner.¹¹ She says that she will follow him. Rama reveals that she will have to live in the forest, Sita states that she will turn the forest into palace.

An ideal gentle, Indian lady emerges from Sita's words. She is happy if Rama is happy and unhappy if he is unhappy. The modern women lack this quality. It's doubtful whether the modern women follow their husbands in such difficult moments. Perhaps they prefer divorce. If a husband turns in to bankrupt, the wife would like to prefer divorce to bear dishonour. The women, addicted to modernity, are never ready to follow their partners in difficult time. Even they don't like to live in small villages or towns. The helpless husband has to commute as she prefers to live in city.

Rama, Laxman and Sita are in the forest and Bharata reaches to see them. He used to live at his maternal place and doesn't know Sita well. When he bows to Sita, she praises his appearance and voice. He likes it and feels joy for that. She addresses him as son and welcomes heartily.¹² Infact, Bharata is the cause for Rama and Sita's living in forest though he is not involved directly. Sita's generosity and loving nature flourish in her words. The modern women believe in 'I and my husband'. They feeljealous aimlessly. Sita isn't jealous for Bharata and she has affection for him. It is good for familyhood The modern women should have liked Sita for it may cement harmony among family members.

Rama and Sita are a happy couple in the forest. In Bharata's welcome she is true life partner of Rama. She protects her house, she is housewife, adviser, counsellor entertainer and generous as well as an ideal wife. Sita couldn't bear holding a mirror for a long time but she performed every difficult and hard duty in the forest. Sita is a successful partner. Her precept was **भर्तृनाथा हि नार्यः ।** The modern women will be happier if they follow Sita's qualities. The household

duties should be carried out with full respect of husband. The modern women should learn it.

Kurangi in Avimaraka is a beloved and princess. Her ideas match with the ideas of modern women. The king and the queene are worried for Kurangi's marriage. In the opening discussions of her marriage are found. In the first act, Kuntibhoj is worrying for her daughter Kurangi's marriage and the elephant Anjangiri attacks on Kurangi in the garden behind the curtain at that time. The brave Avimaraka rushes to resque Kurangi and saves her. Naturally, Kurangi falls in love with the saviour. She is his beloved. Afterseeing Avimaraka, Kurangi isn't interested in other things, her behaviaour is different. सा तदाप्रभृति सुमनोवर्णकं नेच्छति, आहारं नाभिलषति, न रमते गोष्ठीजनेन, दीर्घनिःश्वसिति, असंबद्धं कथयति, कथितं न जानाति, गूठंहसति, विविक्ते रोदिति, रोगमपदिशति, तन्वी भवति, पाण्डुभावं गच्छति।।

Dhatri brings to us an inportant matter after describing libido of Kurangi that she doesn't cross the limits. एवंविधैर् अवस्थाविशेषैरात्मनो लज्जया भयेन कुलमानेन बालभावेन च एकस्या अपि किञ्चिन्न मन्त्रयते। She respects family honour and doesn't reveal it to anybody. She always worries whether her family knows her secret. Kurangi is shy and she believes in dignity of the royal family. She prefers honour and dignity of her parents to her love. The modern women never care for others when they are in love. Even they don't care for parents and relatives. The modern women should maintain family honour in case of love.

When intoxicated Kurangi listens to a news from Magadhika that she is to be betrothed to Jayvarma, son of Kashiraj. The messenger brought gifts and the king accepted to confirm betrothal. She says that it is wrong for she is the owner

of her soul.¹³ Kuragni's thinking suits to modern girl. The modern girl falls in love with strangers without thinking about qualities. The parents try to think for their decision for they always wish good for them. They have good options for their daughters. When their daughters realize it, they speak like Kurangi.

Though Vasantsena is a prostitute in Daridracharudadttta, she is a true lover. In the first act Vit and Shakar follow Vasantsena. Vit says that she is like a tree in the way to be exploited by anybody. She can also be used by anybody. He says that she carries a body to be sold by money and in return she has to sleep with a person whether she likes or dislikes. He insists to enjoy his company. Vasantsena replies that her family will decide when she should love.¹⁴ Though she is prostitute, she has respect for family. The modern women consider themselves forward and keep in touch with more than one male. Even the married flirt with the unmarried and have extra-marital affairs. They consider themselves modern in doing so. Vasantsena is better than them as she doesn't surrender the devils like Shakar and Vit. She believes in traditions of her family and profession. In fact, prostitutes have no family and lover. They love wealth of the customer. If Vasantsena has respect for family, the modern women also should respect honour of their family. The modern women have lost their samskara and concept of family honour.

Vasantsena is in love with Charudatta who is poor. She likes him for his virtues. When Cheti asks her whether her lover is any famous prince, Vasantsena replies that she wishes to flirt but not to serve any prince. She loves very common Brahmin. When Cheti asks her whether he is foreigner, son of Vanik. She replies that it is unbearable for woman when a foreigner leaves optimistic girl.¹⁵ Vasantsena's words may inspire modern women. Vasantsena believes that

foreigners go away leaving their beloveds behind and betray sometimes. It's difficult to bear such condition. The modern women are crazy to go abroad. They even don't think to marry a foreigner. They don't check whether he is in love with anybody or married. After marriage they come to know reality of the foreigner. They get tired of life. For modern women Vasantsena sets an example to those who wish to marry a foreigner.

Vasantsena comes to us as brilliant, loving natured person. To get herself free from Shakar she stands behind door hidden. The door opens and the clown goes out with a clay lamp. She uses her intellect and blows off the lamp with the corner of her saree so that nobody can identify her. When she is identified she excuses that she has been there to deposit her jewellery to Charudatta. She thinks that she may return in future to meet Charudatta under that excuse. There is a problem of depositing her capital. She creates an excuse that the robbers follow her for those ornaments and so he should take care of them.¹⁶ With respect to the modern women it is difficult to believe that they love the poor. They dream for rich, wealthy persons. The modern girls don't choose even virtuous, meritorious boys due to their poverty. The standards of love, in modern time have changed. Nobody chooses poor boy. They should choose virtuous fellow like Charudatta. They will never oppress a life partner.

Even Charudatta's wife also stands as an ideal for the modern women. Vasantsena's jewellery is stolen at night. Charudatta is embarrassed. Being poor, he thinks people will blame him as a thief. Charudatta's wife reads out Charudatta's embarrassment. She offers her necklack (Muktavali) to the clown. He reads out her expression and tears. He says that she looks like crying. The wife of Charudatta tells him a lie that it's due to smoke of the temple.¹⁷ She adores her

husband. She sacrifices her ornaments for the sake of saving her husband from blames. The modern women should learn it. They should follow the concept that they are happy in husband's happiness and unhappy in his sorrows. The modern women can't sacrifice their ornaments to save husband. In poor condition women can't give up ornaments. In poor and difficult moment, woman has to maintain her husband's dignity. A few modern women openly curse her husband's poverty and sell their dignity. The wife of Charudatta knows that he couldn't return her jewellery. She sacrifices for the sake of her husband's dignity. Both the women are ideal for the modern women.

Bhasha based Urubhangam on Mahabharata. Gandhari attracts us for her qualities and merits. She marries a blind Dhritrashtra. She accepts indirect blindness by tying bands on her eyes for whole life. She believes that she has no right to see the world as her husband is blind. First of all, no modern woman will marry a blind. By chance she marries a blind, she won't live life by tying bands on eyes. Gandhari is an ideal character. She appears an affectionate mother in the play. When Duryodhana is killed by Bhima, Dhritrashtra says that his eyes feel extra blindness knowing that his son is killed by a trick. He inquires Gandhari whether she lives. Gandhari replies that she is unfortunate and lives. She considers herself unfortunate to live without her son. Dhritrashtra asks whether she sees Duryodhana. Gandhari replies that she doesn't see him.¹⁸ Gandhari's heart-felt mourning over her son's death can be marked. Mother loves the sinner and devilson. Mother always loves her child how bad he is. The modern women also feel for their children.

In Balcarita Devaki's character also is an example of motherly love. She offers her child soon after his birth to Vasudev for his safety. Kansa has killed

former six children. He took an oath to kill all children of Devaki. When Vasudev sets out to lift the son, she wishes to watch the boy. Vasudev says that he will be killed by Kansa. Devaki replies that it won't happen.¹⁹ She has faith in her son. The modern women love their children, take care but can't forecast the future of their children. The modern women should trust capacity of their children.

In Dutaghatotkach Abhimanyu is killed by the Kaurava collectively. Kaurava and Pandava were cousins. Kaurava crossed the boarder of humanity and killed child-like Abhimanyu. Gandhari is the mother of Kaurava. She is very truthful and pious. She forecasts a war. Gandhari exclaims with sorrow that it has caused brutal war and unfortunately the grand son has lost his life.²⁰ Her melancholy appears in words. The family war brings destruction. The episode is suggestive of that fact. Gandhari has never supported Duryodhana in his sins. In modern time women are behind domestic conflicts. They should realize that conflicts lead to destruction.

Sita in Pratimanataka and Abhisheknataka, Vasavadatta and Padmavati in Swapnavasavadattam, Kurangi in Avimaraka, Devaki in Balcarita, the wife of Charudatta, in Daridracharudatta, Gandhari in Dutaghatotkach are ideal female characters in Bhasa's plays for modern women. They can build an excellent family and society if they apply virtues of these women. It is very difficult and impossible to evaluate merits of female characters. The comparison is based on general attitude of women. It may vary from evaluation of others.

In modern Indian society the cast based system is replaced with economy based system. The family management also is changed. Along with freedom of women they contribute social, economical activities. The family consisting of employee women can't follow traditional status. Due to their economic

contribution, they develop consciousness of their existence which results in to ego. The women have got their own identity and in Hindu family they take their own decisions. They may not follow what their in- laws believe.

Freedom of women has destroyed traditional system of united family and it has developed devised family system. The concept of family is destroyed. Women earn themselves and with that they have changed their mentality gradually. In Hindi literature the changing face of women is well presented. Nirmal Varma's Parinde, Rajendra Yadav's Pratiksha, Usha Priyamvada's Vapasi and Jindagi Aur Gulab ke Ful are a few examples.²¹

In Indian society male dominated and their power was uncontrolled. Then women started to be independent. The weak and miserable women now carry responsibilities of others. Male dominance is shaken. They try to protect their rights but it creates conflicts in family. The women have got employment and economic independence. She can feed her parents, younger brothers and sisters.

With change of time, human mentality has also changed. Man has gone to be materialistic day by day. The material civilization has destroyed relations of family. Women are independent and it has established a new relation of friendship with males.²²

Husband-wife relationship has undergone a vital change. Marriage is not mere social and religious act, it is a means to accomplish needs of male, female. Woman doesn't consider husband good and doesn't think her personality within her husband's personality. She has developed her independent existence. It brings conflict in marital relation.²³

In villages, males never consulted their wives in the matters of purchasing and selling properties. The wind of female freedom hasblown. The higher

education should be useful to preserve morality. Women are equal to men. They believe that they can do whatever men can. They even don't realize what they lose in their attempts to be equal to men.

Female freedom movement in India should be seen with different angle. The western traditions, superstitions, wrong beliefs break down their development thoroughly. Women have to be independent physically, mentally but dowry, caste, character, virginity, economic dependence prevent them to be independent.²⁴

Women are marching on to fulfill their expectations. They are ruining established traditions and beliefs of men. People consider their efforts as protest. They do more efforts to succeed but their efforts are cause of their problems.²⁵

Our society believes in imprisoning women within four walls of a house. A woman has to take permission before going out of the house. It's reality of Indian society. Are women supposed to prepare food or keep the house? In fact, married women don't go out in fulfilling responsibilities.²⁶

To protect himself from the blames of people Rama had to abandon Sita in the forest after firetest. Rama is considered the best man who didn't marry second time. He performed Ashwameghayajna keeping Sita's golden idol with him. Even Sita didn't marry for the second time. Though she was innocent, she didn't argue. She fed two sons alone in the forest. Rama and Sita meet again and she has to prove her fidelity. Rama's proof is not demanded for he was the best man. In fact, Sita was also an ideal woman. Why is there such difference? Sita protects a woman's self esteem by praying her mother Earth (Dharati). The mother takes her in lap. If Sita opposed injustice to her, a different condition would have been. She believed her husband to be god and god would never be wrong. She forgets what her husband thinks her to be in Indian society.²⁷

In Mahabharata woman has two status- a virtuous woman is praised and an infidel woman is criticized. स्त्रियो यत्रच पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता।(अनु पर्व ८/५६)

Women in Vedic period enjoyed respectable position. As a daughter, a wife and a mother, she earned dignity in society. In veda there are many prayers for the birth of a son. A girl child's birth is problematic. In Mahabharata, a virgin form of woman is described. In a few families they had honour They are shown lovable, equal to son, a daughter with power. Draupadi's birth was celebrated in whole Panchal, Gandhari desired to have a daughter after hundred sons, Bhima received a daughter with two sons by the grace of Yama. These are examples of valuable positions of women.

Woman is considered to be followed as a mother and prayed as a sister. Kunti blesses Draupadi and says to be a follower of Vishnu like Laxmi and enjoy life becoming a mother of brave sons.

In the form of mother, a woman was the most excellent image. Upanishada's conceptमातृ देवो भव। existed. In Mahabharata, this form was honoured the most.

नास्ति मातृसमा छाया नास्ति मातृसमागतिः।
नास्ति मातृ समं त्राणं नास्ति मातृसमः प्रियः।।

(शान्तिपर्व- २५२/२५)

The scholars believe with reference to mother that father is a collective form of gods but mother consists of all mortals and gods. She is adorable like a mentor. The virtuous women contributed benevolence of society and nation. On the contrary infidel women were free from social codes, lived independent life, they were prostitutes and maid servants who lived lewish life. The virtuous

women were preached to be away from them and advised not to indulge in to material bliss and sex.

नारीणां स्वैरवृत्तीनां स्पृहयन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।अनु-७३

In Mahabharata Draupadi, Kunti, Gandhari, Savitri, Damyanti, Sukanya and nuns of ordinary family present ideal with virtues like duties, manners, chastity, love, service and sacrifice. Due to materialistic influence women are independent. She has many chances but she hasn't reached to such ideals and heights as they were in Rigveda era.²⁸

The modern women are not ready to believe that they are mean, inferior to men. The modern women present a new model of motherhood to society. Along with love, husband, family she has maintained morality. She has challenged beliefs. It's clear that she shall win over natural weakness. If she becomes free from weakness, lust, greed and jealousy she will be free from all bondages. Freedom of women is a movement not a slogan. It can slowly be brought by ideals, self analysis, reform and sacrifice.²⁹

The modern girl contribute her mobility and co-operation. She studies and manages market. Rape and dowry are two obstacles for them. Female foeticide is a common thing. In present time woman is a possession of man, she bears children from them, and labours. Women is still a body, an attractive, soft, delicate item. Nobody marks her mind, enthusiasm, dreams. People look at her like a 'dress code'.

In advertisements and entertainment industry her glamorous, erotic pictures are presented more attractive. Women try to have their identity. They are enjoying dignified designations. They are scientists, managing directors and they

go to the moon too. They perform hard duties wearing shirts, t-shirts and pants in shopping malls and departmental stores operated by foreign companies.³⁰

The literal meaning of 'Mahila' is mahaila महा+ इला (Goddess Mahalaxmi). They are goddess Laxmi's form. She offers happiness. Laxmi has not only eight types but she has many forms. Dhan-laxmi, gyan-laxmi, Vidya-laxmi, Vijaya-laxmi, Rup-laxmi etc. are a few forms of Laxmi. It is good to honour and respect women for bliss.

Empowerment means to empower with strength. The strong women build strong nation. According to Devibhagvata Mahapurana, the gods couldn't control Shumbh, Ashumbh, Raktabija and Mahishasur, they prayed goddess of power. The goddess of power was in the form of a woman. Indra devoted Vajra, Vishnu-Sudarshana, Brahma- Pasha, Varun- Varunastra, Shiva- Pashupatastra and other gods devoted their arms to goddess of power. She killed all devils. It's empowerment. That is why woman is respected with 'मातृ देवो भव' ³¹

Gandhiji praises the role of women and he says that woman is an idol of sacrifice. He adds that she can shake mountains when she works with good intentions and Gandhiji has worshipped women as an incarnation of service and sacrifice.

In Indian culture woman believes her marriage to be a bondage of many births and her husband a god. Divorce in modern time is an issue to worry. Women is a storage of virtues and it's not positive to discuss her vices.

It is essential that modern women should maintain their impression as it was in Veda, Purana and Sanskrit plays. Bhasa's plays focus mainly on how a woman should be and how her qualities be. The comparative study of modern

women with Bhasa's female characters is to acquaint modern women with good character, virtues, familyhood of Bhasa's female characters.

Reference and notes

- (१) (स्वगतम्) राजदारिकेति श्रुत्वा भगिनिकासनेहोऽपि मेऽत्र संपद्यते।स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-१
- (२) (स्वगतम्) न हि रूपमेव, वागपि खल्वस्या मधुरा।स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-१
- (३) अहो अकरुणाः खल्वीश्वराः।स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-३
- (४) विरहपर्युत्सुकस्यार्यपुत्रस्य विश्रामस्थानभूतेयमपि नाम पद्मावत्यस्वस्था जाता।स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-५
- (५) आर्यपुत्रोऽपि नाम परकीय संवृत्तः।स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-३
- (६) हला, मा मैवम्। सदाक्षिण्य एवार्यपुत्रः, य इदानीमप्यायया वासवदत्तया गुणान् स्मरति।स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् अं-४
- (७) आदु अय्यउत्तसाअअप्पच्चएण कहं वि अत्ताणं पय्यवत्थावेमि।(अथवा आर्यपुत्रसायकप्रत्ययेन कथमप्यात्मानं पर्यवस्थापयामि।)अभिषेकनाटक अं-२
- (८) (हं विपरीओ खलु धम्मो, जं जीवदि खु अअं पापरक्खसो) हं विपरीतः खलु धर्मः, यद् जीवति खल्वयं पापराक्षसः। अभिषेकनाटक अं-२
- (९) अल्पं तुल्यशीलानि दृन्दानि सृज्यन्ते। प्रतिमानाटक अं-१
- (१०) प्रियं मे।महाराज एव महाराजः, आर्यपुत्र एव आर्यपुत्रः। प्रतिमानाटक अं-१
- (११) ननु सहधर्मचारिणा खल्वहम्।प्रतिमानाटक अं-१
- (१२) एहि वत्स। भ्रातृमनोरथं पूरय। प्रतिमानाटक अं-४
- (१३) एतदलीकम्।अहमात्मनः प्रभवामि। अविमारक अं-३
- (१४) एसो मे अभिणिवेसो अभिजणेण तुळीअदि।(एष मेऽभिनिवेशोऽभिजनेन तोल्यते।)दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-१
- (१५) उन्मत्तिए।आसाच्छेदं उक्कण्ठन्ता का सहेदि।(उन्मत्तिके ! आशाच्छेदमुत्कण्ठमाना का सहते।)दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-२
- (१६) यदि मे आर्यः प्रसन्नः, अयं मेऽलङ्कार इहैव तिष्ठतु। अलंकारनिमित्तं पापा मामनुसरन्ति। अहमप्यार्येण रक्षिता गेहं गन्तुमिच्छामि। दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-१
- (१७) देवतलधूमेण रोविदा।(देवकुलधूमेन रोदिता) दरिद्रचारुदत्त अं-३

(१८) महाराज, न दृश्यते। उरुभंग

(१९) सुव्वहा ण भविस्सदि।(सर्वथा न भविष्यति) बालचरितम् अं-१

(२०) हा वच्छ अभिमन्यो।ईदिसे विणाम पुरुसखअकारए कुल विग्गहे वत्तमाणे बालभावणिमज्जणं अम्हाणं भग्गकमेण कहिं दाणिं पोत्तअ।गदोसि।(हा वत्स अभिमन्यो।ईदशेऽपि नाम पुरुषक्षयकारके कुलविग्रहे वर्तमाने बालभाव निमज्जनमस्माकं भाग्यक्रमेण कुर्वन् कुत्रेदानीं पौत्रक।गतोऽसि।)दूतवाक्यम्

(२१) हिन्दी कहानी में नारियों की पारिवारिक समस्याएँ - वनमाला चौधरी पेज-३०

(२२) हिन्दी कहानी में नारियों की पारिवारिक समस्याएँ -वनमाला चौधरी पेज-४०

(२३) हिन्दी कहानी में नारियों की पारिवारिक समस्याएँ - वनमाला चौधरी पेज-४१

(२४) मनुभंडारी के कथा साहित्य में नारी चेतना - पेज-२९० (नारी लेखन और समाज)

(२५) नारी लेखन और समाज-पेज-२९५

(२६) नारी लेखन और समकालीन समाज (एकेला पलाश एक दृष्टि)- पेज-२९६

(२७) रामायण में नारी-हिन्दी साहित्य में स्त्री असमानता एवं वीर नारियाँ।पेज-२२, २३, २४

(२८) आर्षकाव्य महाभारतमे स्त्रीविमर्श.डा. मीना गुप्ता

(२९) साहित्य के दर्पणमें स्त्री(प्रसेन जीतसागर) पेज-३५

(३०) (साहित्य के दर्पणमें स्त्री-नयी सहस्त्रादी में स्त्री विमर्श के कई आयाम।डा आरती वर्मा । पेज-८३

(३१) (साहित्य के दर्पणमें स्त्री-महिला सशक्तिकरण :विकास का आधार-प्रो अवधेशकुमार झा

Chapter-V

Conclusion

The female character of Bhasa's plays compared with the modern women. In the first chapter allusions on Bhasa and his life is discussed. The merits, qualities and virtues of the female characters of Bhasa are analysed in the second chapter. The third chapter presents discussion of demerits and limitations of the female character. In the fourth chapter Bhasa's female characters are compared with the modern contemporary women.

The first chapter, it is noted that little personal information is available. Information about his life is collected through allusions. There are differences of opinion in respect of its authenticity. Before 1912 A.D. no play of Bhasa existed. Allusions on Bhasa's life are in Kalidasa's *Malvikagnimitra*, Bana's *Harshcharita* and *Avantisundarikatha*. Besides, he is mentioned in the Prakrit epic *Gandvaho* and in Jaydeva's *Prasannaraghav*. In eighth century Vamana quoted some shloka like those of Swapnavasavadattam and *Charudatta* in his *Kavyalankarasutravritti*. Kashmir's *Abhinavagupta*, *Jaydeva*, *Ramchandra Gunachandra*, *Sagarnandi* etc. have mentioned either Bhasa or his plays. Though many writers have mentioned him, no authentic information is achieved.

Like his life, little is known about his time. There are many different opinions about his time. The scholars like *Ganpati Shastri* sets him between the 4th century A.D. to 6th century A.D. *Keshav Harshad Dhruva* considers him to be a writer of 1st century B.C. *Vinternitz* believes him to be in the later half of the 3rd century and former half of the fourth century. *Devdhara* believes him to be a writer of seventh century A.D. *Iyer* sets him to the later half of fourth century B.C. On the bases of internal and external analysis Bhasa belongs to the former

half of 4th century B.C. in external analysis and to 4th century B.C in internal analysis.

In the second chapter merits, virtues and qualities of the female characters of Bhasa are discussed. In Swapnavasavadattam, Vasavadatta is caricatured as an ideal woman. Udayan falls in love with Vasavadatta head to heel. Aruni, his enemy attacks and rules over his kingdom as he couldn't look after his courtly matters. Yogandharayana plans to get the kingdom back with the help of Vasavadatta. They spread a rumour that Vasavadatta passed away burnt in the fire of Lavanaka village. As per the plan he deposits Vasavadatta to Padmavati's patronage. Then Padmavati marries Udayan. Vasavadatta has to weave wedding garland. To weave a garland of one's husband for his marriage with another woman is not tolerable at all. Though she is unhappy, she performs her duty to relieve Udayan from miserable condition. She tolerates many insults. Though she adores her husband she has to suffer a lot and not to go close. Vasavadatta is a bundle of virtues. Even Padmavati's character is no doubt extraordinarily portrayed excellent. When the king praises Padmavati for loyal character and chastity, he confesses that she can't wipe out Vasavadatta's memories from his mind.

Padmavati is praiseworthy for she praises the king's nature otherwise an ordinary woman may be angry hearing such a favour of another woman. She doesn't miss to beg Vasavadatta's pardon when Vasavadatta comes to her original being. Likewise, Sita attracts us for her high principles and ideals. She tolerates Ravana's tortures in Lanka for she trusts Rama's valour. Sita doesn't surrender Ravana's offers of making her wife. She addresses him 'Ravaniyo'. When Hanuman proposes to carry her on his shoulder to Rama, Sita denies saying that

she doesn't touch another man. She considers herself responsible for Rama's condition. Sita stands as a faithful woman who can't tolerate her husband's pain.

In *Pratimanataka*, she is ready to live in the forest with Rama. She loves Bharata like a mother loves a son. Due to Kaikeyi, Rama has to leave the palace hence Bharata is not responsible for that. She wishes that Bharata may stay for a long time with them. She favours Bharata to be Rama's companion for a long time in the end of the play. Sita is a gentle lady in the play.

Kurangi in *Avimaraka* suits to the modern girls. Kurangi loves Avimaraka but her father wishes her marry to somebody else. She dislikes it and reveals that she can select herself her own husband. Though she doesn't agree with her father's choice she isn't a rebel. She suits to a responsible daughter of the modern time.

In *Daridracharudatta*, Vasantsena is a prostitute but she owns features of an ideal woman. Shakar and Vit pursue Vasantsena for bad intention. She rushes in to Charudatta's house. She falls in love with Vasantsena being attracted by his virtues. Though she is a prostitute she doesn't love money and selects a poor Charudatta as her lover. She proves the belief wrong that the prostitutes love only money. Likewise, Charudatta's wife attracts all with her good qualities. She is generous as she offers a chain of diamonds when the jewellery of Vasantsena is stolen so that nobody may doubt her husband to be a thief. Both the female characters are with virtues.

In *Balcharita* Devaki's character is portrayed as eager to watch the infant with motherly affection. Gandhari weeping over the death of ninety-nine sons seems more pathetic as she finds Duryodhana on the death-bed. Hidimba in

Dutaghatotkach and the old Brahmini in Madhyamvyayoga attracts for their virtues.

In the third chapter limitations and demerits of Bhasa's female characters are discussed. Vasavadatta is a queen. When Vasavadatta and Yogandharayana reach to the garden Padmavati is to reach there. The guards push people away from the route of Padmavati.

She thinks that the guard will push her away, she feels insulted. It is her limitation. Knowing that Padmavati is going to marry her husband, she accepts her as her own. It seems that she accepts her without any shock. It surprises us that Vasavadatta doesn't show any sign of embarrassment. Though Vasavadatta's being alive, her husband marries Padmavati in her presence. In fact, it is unbearable and yet she weaves kantukamala (a garland). It presents her limitation as well as pathos.

Likewise, in Abhisheknataka Sita tolerates many difficulties. Ravana tempts her with material objects and uses vulgar language which proves to be harassment for Sita. She can't punish Ravana, helplessly she satisfies herself by cursing Ravana. It's pathetic that the wife of a very brave man has to undergo pains. Her helplessness is her limitation.

In Pratimanataka, Rama's coronation is replaced by Bharata's kingship and he has to pass fourteen years in a forest. Sita is ready to follow him. Rama suggests her that she should serve father-in-laws and mother-in-laws. Sita replies that she honours god's justice. Sita knows that her prime duty is to serve in-laws but she prefers duty to her husband. In stead of serving her in-laws, she selects difficult duty to render for her husband.

In Avimaraka, Kurangi is an erotic woman. She believes that she is responsible for her own decisions. She was to be betrothed to the son of Kashiraj. They set to see the son-in-law but she can't show her dislike. She is happy to know that it is post-poned. Kurangi is like a modern woman but she doesn't cross limits. Though Vasantsena is a prostitute, she loves poor character. She proves the belief wrong that the prostitutes love only wealth and luxury.

In Balcarita Devaki's miserable and helpless condition is presented. Dushala puts on a saree of widowhood hearing that her husband Jaydrath is responsible for the death of Abhimanyu. Though Dushala is a kind and loyal lady she guesses the consequences of the act. Her act of wearing widow's dress reflects helplessness and miserable condition of a woman.

Bhasa's female characters are compared with modern women. It's difficult to compare virtues and vices of modern women. Keeping in view the merits and demerits of Bhasa's female characters, the merits and demerits of modern women are analysed.

Swapnavasavadatta's Vasavadatta attracts due to her good qualities. To get the lost kingdom back she tolerated many difficulties along with Yogandharayana. She faced many problems. Though she is alive she got herself announced dead. She got her husband marry another woman Padmavati. She tolerated insulting words for the safety of her husband. She served Padmavati too. Vasavadatta appears husband-oriented as she suffers a lot for betterment of her husband. In the life of a married woman entry of another woman creates turmoil. It's the most pathetic to experience. She fights alone so that her husband's kingdom may be regained safely. The modern women should accompany their husbands at every walk of life. It should be learnt by modern women how to co-

operate husband. The modern woman only thinks about her husband and children. She doesn't believe in united family and doesn't concern for in-laws and relatives. The modern women are self centered. There are exceptional women who look after her in-laws and get themselves involved as a daughter of the family of in-laws.

Sita in Abhisheknataka and Pratimanataka approves herself an ideal for modern women. She emerges a good companion with virtues like high thinking, trust for husband, obedience for husband. The modern women even don't trust their husbands. Sita has full confidence and trust in Rama. She believes in Rama's valour, bravery and adventures though she is very far from him. Rama and Sita are example of a unique couple, lack of mutual love results into divorce.

Sita is not interested at all in coronation of Rama because she knows the duties of a king. She thinks that she is happy with Rama as a husband not as a king. The materialistic women enjoying luxuries are only interested in status and income of their husbands. At the time of cancellation of Rama's coronation, Sita thanks god for Rama will be only her husband. It shows that Sita likes Rama to be only husband and not the king. She believes in reverence for elder people of the family. The elders should decide all matters and they should carry responsibilities and earn respect. The modern women don't like management of elder members of the family. They believe that their husbands should decide every matter and manage. She plans various tricks so that her husband may possess superiority. She quarrels, complains and threatens to get what she desires.

The majority of women hates their brother-in-law. They treat them with jealousy. If the brother-in-law earns better, holds better status, she will be jealous. In Pratimanataka, Bharata is not responsible for Rama's fourteen years

punishment in the forest. Sita loves him like a son. Other women may feel jealousy in such condition. She would consider Bharata responsible. Sita behaves affectionately with Bharata. she is unhappy to know Bharat's mental condition. She wishes that Bharata may stay longer.

The modern girls get acquaintance with many boys during their study or jobs. They flirt without thinking about family honour or status of the boy. They elope even with the relatives without thinking about their parents. They go against honour of their family. Kurangi is a torch-bearer for such girls. She loves Avimaraka but maintains dignity of the royal family. She doesn't cross limits of the loyal family.

In society, prostitutes are criticized. People believe that they can't love, for them wealth is more important than love. Nobody trusts prostitutes. Vasantsena is a prostitute and yet she proves to be a true lover. She proves it by loving a poor fellow Charudatta otherwise she could have loved a rich, wealthy person. Her affectionate behaviour and softness win our heart.

Charudatta's wife is also a centre of attraction though she is poor. She sacrifices her ornaments for the welfare of her husband. Gandhari, weeping over Duryodhana's death is heartfelt and she teaches a lesson that quarrel of family destroys everything. Devaki arouses pity as she is scared to leave her child at the time of enjoying for a birth of a son.

When the country was growing up in ancient India, women were honoured. They were equal contributors of men in all fields of life. There are such proofs in veda and upanishada. In upanishada, Narada said to Lord Vishnu,

नाहं वसामि वैकुण्ठे न च पृथ्वी मंडले ।
नायस्ति तत्र पूजन्ते तत्रैव तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

Women are incarnation of power, goddess of wealth Laxmi, goddess of knowledge Saraswati. Even the goddess of Power Durga is in the form of a woman. Woman is an administrator of home, she earns wealth and feeds others with food and love. She brings peace in the home.

Woman is an embodiment of beauty, colour, essence and smell. She fills up the heart of a man with love. She is omnipresent, she relieves men from difficulties and provides mobility. Dinkar praises woman in the following verse lines :

नारी।तुम धरती हो, गर्भ में छुपाये हो अनगनित खजाने।
कोमल रेणुका कहीं रसवन्ती हो, दिनकर की कविता की तुम्हीं
उर्वशी हो।।

A woman's power of eyes weakens the great archer. It is very difficult to understand mysteries of a woman's heart. She is a part and an ideal of a family. Woman is always respected in Indian culture. Once upon a time she was considered an image of goddess. To be blessed by her maternal love, lord Rama and lord Krishna took birth on the earth. In the form of mother she loves all. Her role in family is significant. As a housewife she forms a happy family. Happy family creates happy society and happy society creates happy nation which creates happy world. In India Ahalya, Sita, Panchali and Gandhari are best examples of ideal women. A woman's name is always before a man's name due to her importance in society e.g. Bhavanishankar, Radheshyam, Sitarama etc. (p.427, Nari Lekhan aur Samkalin Samaj-Madhudhavan). The project is based on the objective of getting modern women acquainted with the female characters of Bhasa.

The project presents comparison of modern woman with the female characters of Bhasa's plays with reference to merits and demerits. Kalidasa, Bhavbhuti and Bhasa are the best dramatists of Sanskrit literature. There are only a few dramas of Bhasa with female characters. The characters like Gandhari, Devaki and Kurangi of Dutaghatotkach, Balcarita and Avimaraka respectively have minor roles with a little impression. Bhasa portrays Vasavadatta, Padmavati and Sita excellently in Swapnavasavadattam, Pratimanataka and Abhisheknataka. Bhasa portrays them with great virtues like obedience, tolerance, emotionality, lack of jealousy and bias, helping nature. Vasavadatta and Sita are characters of inspiration and ideal for modern women. Their virtues can bless the modern women with happy life. Family and society can also be virtuous. For better life of modern woman, a study of Bhasa's female characters may be helpful and inspiring.

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