CHAPTER VI

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

This is the sixth chapter of this dissertation and it includes all the summarized portion of the findings as come out from this research work.

This work consists of six chapters. In these chapters a humble attempt has made to find out the socio-cultural aspect of society during Bhāsa’s time. Here the first chapter is introductory. It has three sub chapters. There it is described that Bhāsa is the earliest dramatist of Sanskrit literature and he has to his credit thirteen plays. Pandit T. Ganapati Śāstri is the person who first brings Bhāsa’s works into light. Though there is a great deal of controversy regarding the authenticity and the authorship of these dramas. But after a careful examination of different similarities lying in these plays Ganapati Shastri came to the conclusion that these plays are from the pen of Bhāsa. After observing all the points it may be said that Bhāsa might have flourished in between 5th and 4th century B.C. The second sub chapter contains the thirteen works of Bhāsa. The third sub chapter discusses about the studies conducted on Bhāsa and there all the names of the editions are given through which the researcher has gone with.

The second chapter deals with the characteristics of Sanskrit drama. In this part Bharata’s scheme of ten types of dramatic compositions are envisaged through different patterns of literary construction.
In the third chapter all the thirteen plays are described in brief with their plot, type, sentiments, deviation, evaluations etc.

The Indian sociologists are greatly interested in the problem of social change since the Indian society has now taken up the task of changing itself from an agricultural society, from a colonial society with emperors and monarchs to a republican society, from a society based on caste and class to a society which aims to be casteless and classless with equality of opportunity to every citizen.

It is like the profound changes, physiological and social which take place in each individual. When the child is born, he is small and helpless. As he grows up he is highly egocentric. With the further growth, profound changes take place in his body, mind and social behaviour during adolescences. Further changes took place in adulthood when he takes up an occupation, marries and settles down to rear his own family. Finally, further profound changes take place when he retires from his occupation and also from his family life. But throughout he is the same individual, having bodily, mental and social identity.

In these thirteen plays one finds the reference to all these factors. In this proposed dissertation it has shown in the fourth chapter, which is named as Social Aspects as Reflected In the Plays of Bhāsa, having nine sub chapters. In these chapters it is discussed that society is under a strict social rule and it falls under a joint family where father is the head of the institution. The society was divided into four caste groups i.e., Brāhmana, kshatriya, Vaiśya and sūdra. Amongst these four groups
Brâhmanas are supreme and are entitled for teaching and all the wealth as also the religious merit of sacrifice is also regarded as fruitless if the teacher is not satisfied. They are also entitled for worship and belong to priestly class. It is seen in these dramas that Brâhmanas have to wear the sacred thread in those days though it was not merely a thread but a piece of cloth to them. The Brâhmanas are exempt from all the capital punishments. During the days of Bhâsa it is seen that Brâhmanas are proficient in all the Vedas, Vedangas, the dharmaśāstra, Arthaśāstra, Yogaśāstra, Nyāyaśāstra, Śrāddhakalpa etc.

The Kshatriyas comes after the Brâhmanas. They are entitled as the warriors. They have to look after the subjects as their children and they held the Brâhmans in high esteem. The Kshatriyas are told to perform the sacrifices and feed the Brâhmanas and poor at them.

The third class which is the Vaiśya class is referred as the third class caste. The word Vaishya is gone for a trader. These traders are reduced to the position of permanent subordination and become the third class of the four-class society. Amongst these thirteen plays one finds rare discussions about this caste.

The südra s are reffered to as the fourth class caste. Weaver, farmer, hunter etc. are mentioned as the südra s in the Vedic index. This caste people are also not allowed to read the Vedas and also at the same time are unable to utter the mantras. For this reason the südras worshipped their deities without reciting any mantras.

There is another caste named Caṇḍāla. They are treated as untouchables because of their gory religious practices, penchant for sacrifices, magical rites and unclean habits. In ancient time

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they are not allowed to enter a village or city during day time or walk in the same street. Even their shadow is regarded as impure. So they lived mostly on the fringes of the society. They worked mostly in the graveyards and cremation ground or as professional cleaners of human waste.

The Buddhist Bhiksus in these plays show the presence of a rigid caste system in the society.

Through the study of these plays it can be easily assumed that all these castes are cordial to each other. Just as society was divided into four Varṇas, the life of an individual was divided into four stages or asRāmas, the Brāhmaṇacarya, the garhasthya, the vanaprasastha and the sannyasa. People of that age tried to maintain these throughout their whole life.

In education system it is observed that the society reflected in the plays of Bhāsa contained diverse elements of education. The Vedic literature, the Upanishads, the Purāṇas, Science of polity and other non-scholastic learning are cultivated in the time of Bhāsa. Social, religious and moral ideals of the people in the society are maintained during Bhāsa’s time. It is not reasonable to say that society was highly cultured and has a good educational background both in scholastic and non-scholastic field.

Court life has described the royal and the legal life of people during the age of Bhāsa. It has also described how the buildings are made during that age. There mentions are also available about the duties of Kings, Ministers, Spies.

Marriage is the most important social function for both man and woman. They have to maintain this relation through out their life. There are eight forms of marriage. Bhāsa has
mentioned five forms of marriage: Brāhma, Prājāpatya, Gāndharva, Rāksasa and Asura. Brāhma form of marriage is that marriage which is witnessed in the drama Svatapta between Padmavati and Udayana (Svatapta Act II) where Padmāvatī’s brother, king Darśaka had given his sister to Udayana on his own. The Prājāpatya form of marriage is found in between Jayavarman and Sumitra, where Kashirasja has sent his envoy to king Kuntibhoja for the hands of Kuraṇgi (Abhim Act VI p177). Marriage between Kuraṇgi and Abhimāraka; Vāsavadattā and Udayana; Sajjalaka and Madanikā are the instances of Gāndharva form of marriage. In some cases parents took dowry from the bridegroom and these were enjoyed by the bride only. This type of marriage is called as Asura by Manu and it is found in Pratimā-Nātaka, the marriage between Daśaratha and Kaikeyi though it was regarded as a heinous crime. In these dramas the researcher finds perfect husband and wife who are fully loyal to each other. Both Polygamy and polyandry are in use. There are no reference found to the marriage of widows and children. After a careful observation of these dramas it is seen that women enjoyed freedom in full and they are educated. They have to wear two oblong pieces of cloths and have to use a veil on the head. Mention of various ornaments are also found in these dramas. In short women received a fair and honourable position in the society.

People have religious spirits and performed sacrifices and other rituals as much as they can. Wives perform vrataas for the well-being of their family; sacrifices like Angihotras are also done by the people of that age. In short they are religious.
It is very much important to know one's culture because none can ever forget cultural heritage of their own as all great men are products of the cultural tradition and environment in which they live. The culture of India refers to the religions, beliefs, customs, traditions, ceremonies, arts, values and the way of life in India and its people. India's languages, religions, dance, music, food and customs differ from place to place within the country. Its culture often labeled as an amalgamation of these diverse sub-cultures spread all over the Indian subcontinent and traditions that are several millennia old. It is described in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. It has also another nine sub chapters.

Performance of four types of festivals are seen in this chapter. These are worship of different deities (Samaja); Gosthis or social gatherings of both sexes; Apankas or drinking parties; Udyana-yatras or garden-parties and Samasyakrida in which social diversions many people take part. During the time of Bhāsa people are liberal to choose their lives, they are independent in Gosthis and Samajās. In the Abhimāraka one finds Vidyāsaka repenting on his friend's loss who is humorous at Gosthis. (Mayāpi saha goṣṭhim necchati, Abhim, Act II, p29).

In these thirteen dramas one finds mention of the names of festivals like Kāmamahotsava or cupid festival where boys and girls take part and choose their life partners. (Yā bhavatā Kāmadevānuyāna-prabhṛti nayanamātra-samstutā sannihita-manobhavena hrdayenoudahyate, Cārudatta, Act I, p43). Dhanurmahotsava (Mathurāyam dhanurmaho nāma mahotsava bhavisyati, Bālacarita, Act IV, p84) and Indramahā is another
festival of cowherds. *(Ghoṣasya-ucita indrayajña nāma-utsava bhaviṣyatī, Bālācarīta, Act I, p16).*

There are so many instances in these dramas of passing time by playing a number of sports with mates. Girls used to make garlands of flowers. They used to play with balls also. Among manly sports, wrestling matches are there. Dice playing was another favourite sporting area for them. Most of the characters in these thirteen plays are fascinated towards dice. Painting was also there favourite hobby.

Among the sixty-four art forms music is the most popular form. In Pratijñā one finds Naradiya form of singing, which Vāsavadattā has gone to learn from Vaitaliki. Along with music they use musical instruments also. Dancing is another art form. Courtesans are expert in this form of art. There is a dance form named, Hallisaka is found in the drama Bālācarīta. This Hallisaka is a circular dance performed by women under the direction of one man or in which the circle is consisted of males and females. Fascination towards painting is also seen.

Hospitality was a very common feature to every person of that age. Guests are heartily welcomed by the host and this ritual is known as Atithya. A strong spiritual background is seen in these thirteen plays. People have strong faith on gods, magic, astrology, curse, semi-divine beings. Use of different languages are seen in these dramas. At the time of Bhāsa's dramas Ladies including queens also use pārkṛt as their spoken language and Kshatriyas and Brāhmans use Sanskrit as their spoken language.
Mostly people are vegetarian. Non-vegetarian food is also present there in the society. Liquor is also there. Milk and milk products are in use.

After the study of these thirteen plays it comes into notice that men and women wear two oblong pieces of cloths along with various ornaments in neck, hand, feet, throat respectively. Rich people wore embroidered cloths while hermits use valkala or bark garment.

Bhāsa's belief in Lord Bhīṣma shows him to be a follower of Vaisnavism and this also reflects a Pañcarātra system of philosophy through out these thirteen plays.

The society is changing day by day. Bhāsa's dramas are also showing the same. Amongst these dramas in Svapna the researcher can find an empirilistic society. But in Cārudatta, the same dramatist's work shows a democratic society where people are concern about their own life and are able to choose their own life-partner also. Inter-caste marriage is also seen in the drama Cārudatta which also establishes a socialistic outlook. As Bhāsa has flourished before the rule of the British and his dramas are driven as an instance that before the rule of British India has evolved democracy here.

Bhāsa's plays show the society of his age and after examining all these thirteen plays a relevance with our today's society can be seen. As like our today's society equality is seen among the four caste class. A dig towards Buddhist and Jaina monks are seen in these dramas. But the presence of these Buddha Bhikṣus also show a rigidity towards caste system. During the days of Bhāsa some war loving people are found but
on the other hand, peace loving people are also seen in these plays.

Polygamy is seen in these dramas. But husbands are found to treat equally both the wives. It is found easy to fall in love with another lady by the husbands also in the presence of their first wives.

A society can be well judged through the position of women as witnessed during the time. From Vedic times Indian women have undergone through various difficulties. But in Bhāsa’s DRAMASLadies have given immense importance by the dramatist. In some DRAMASone finds husbands have concern for their wives e.g., Dūryodhana. It is known to all that Dūryodhana is a crooked character of the Epic and he has never been found to be a kind hearted man in the Epic. But Bhāsa has shown him a man of nice qualities in his Mahābhārata dramas. There he has shown his concern for his wife also. In Abhimāraka and Pratijñā one finds the Kings to consult with their queen on the matter of their daughter’s marriage proposals. They are seen independent to choose their life they are also educated they have both formal and non formal education just like the boys. People are seen happy to have a daughter in their life. Birth of a girl is welcomed by the society members.

Ascetism is seen in these thirteen plays. Both male and female ascetics are there. In some of these plays Bhāsa shows penchant for rapid action. From ancient times guests are treated as Lord Bṛṣṇu. by the household and it is not our ancient tradition only but it is our today’s tradition also.

The dramas of Bhāsa also throw light on the urban and rural life. In the play Abhimāraka more realistic and typical
aspects of the average city, Vairantya, the capital of Kuntibhoja of the period has been described. It mentions palatial buildings in the market place on both sides of the roads and the ground floor used as shops selling country sugar, honey and other commodities. The city also had a public park, but public entrance was stopped when any royal princess visited the place.

Reference to idol worship can also be found in the dramas of Bhāsa. The glorification of Krisna is also found at many places in the plays of Bhāsa. During the days of Bhāsa, Buddhists were looked down in the society. In Ėruḍatta a reference had been made about a Buddhist monk who has made an assignation with a girl servant, thus speaking about the low morality of the Buddhist monks in Bhāsa’s times.

Fascination towards sixty-four art form is also there. Today the forms have changed but not the art form. Hallucination is also present there in the society. For instance, Daśaratha. After the study of Pratijñā, Svapna, Abhimāraka and Ėruḍatta it can be said that society is based on secularity.

Through these plays Bhāsa has tried to show people that the persons present there in the society are of high moral standard, simple and straightforward towards life.