CHAPTER V

CULTURAL ASPECTS AS REFLECTED IN THE PLAYS OF BHĀSA

Culture, a simple word has a very difficult meaning. It generally denotes the customs, institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or group. It differs from men to men of different groups. All human societies have a culture and culture can only exist where there is a society. Sociologists distinguish between society and culture despite their close interconnectedness primarily for analytical purposes. In this present chapter it is tried to highlight the culture of people during the days of Bhāsa’s dramas.

(i) FESTIVAL

India being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. Various festive assemblies are organized with music and dance. A Hindu life is full of religion, rituals or moral duties for others. At the occasion of sacrifices and such other great assemblies many diversions are found in which all take part.

Festivals are of various types. According to Vatsyayana there are five types of occasional festivities. These are worship of different deities (Samāja); Goṣṭhis or social gatherings of both
sexes; Āpanakas or drinking parties; Udyāna-yātras or garden-parties and Samasyākrida in which social diversions many people take part.

Samāja- It is a function where almost every citizen takes part. This festival accompanies by musicians, dancers and other artists permanently employed by them for the performance in honour of the various deities. On this occasion virtuous matrons also participate with the permission of their husbands.

Goṣṭhis- It is a festival where educated, intelligent and wealthy persons gather together and engages themselves in various sports. Besides literary works competition on fine arts, such as music, painting, dancing, instrumental etc. are performed. In these gatherings courtesans also take part. As courtesans are well versed in sixty-four kalas they please the Nāgarakas by their proficiency in education and knowledge of fine arts.

During the time of Bhāsa people are liberal to choose their live, they are independent in Goṣṭhis and Samājas. In the drama Abhimāraka Vīduṣaka is found repenting on his friend's loss, who is humorous at Gosthis. (Mayāpi saha goṣṭhim necchati, Abhim, Act II, p29).

Both married and unmarried women participate in the gosthis. Courtesans also take part. In some cases this goṣṭhis or social assemblies are organized in the house of the courtesans. Married women also sometimes with the permission of their husbands organize this type of gathering at their residence and there they participate. In Bhāsa's Abhimāraka one finds the maids to invite Vīduṣaka to hear the incident among their gosthis in the inner court. (Goṣṭhijanena saja vṛttāntam śrnomi,

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Abhim, Act V, p144). Among these five types of festivals we do not find reference to Apanakas and garden parties.

Last of all one may come to the sports that Vatsyāyana calls Samsyā-krida. In this sport festival several people come and take part. The Hallisaka is a sport where both the male and female cowherds take part. This Hallisaka is a dance where women dance in a circular form under the direction of one man. (*Adya bhartṛ-Dāmodara asmin vṛndāvane gopakanyākābhīh saha hallisakam nāma prakriditum-āgacchati, Bāla, Act III, p57*).

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 Kāmadeva-anuyāna-prabhṛti nayanamātra-samstutā sannihita-manobhavana hṛdyena-uduhyate, Cār, Act I, p43*).

Dhanurmahotsava (*Mathurāyām dhanurmaha nāma mahotsava bhavisyati, Bāla, Act IV, p84*) and Indramahā is another festival of cowherds. (*Ghoṣasya-ucita indrayajña nāma-utsava bhavisyati, Bāla, Act I, p16*).

Rājyābhiṣekā is another function where several types of religious conducts are done by the kings. It comes to them just like a festival to coronate their king. In Pratimā the researcher finds the detail reference to Rama’s Rājyābhiṣeka. Several things are collected for the coronation. Learned priests are gathered to perform Homa for the well-being of Rāma. (*Ārabdhe patahe sthite gurujane bhadrāsane langhite skandha-uccārana-namyamāna-vadana-pracyotitoye ghate/ Pratimā, Act I, sl 5, p19*).

In Royal houses the royalties sometimes enjoyed fight between unarmed human being with elephants or of other
gladiators. In the Bālacakrīta one finds Dāmodara’s fight with an elephant and a serpent without any kind of weapons. The drama Abhimāraka has also given the same reference where Abhimāraka engages himself in a great duel with a mad elephant to save Kurāṇgi in first act. There is another festival enjoyed during the days of Bhāsa, i.e. Agastya festival arranged by other Vidyadharas in the Malaya hill to worship sage Agastya. (Adya bhagavantam-agastyam-ārādhayitum malayaparvate vidyādhara-h-utsavah prārabdah; Abhim, Act IV, p109).

(ii) SPORTS AND PASTIMES

Besides all engagement there are many high days and holidays when he makes merry with his companions. Vatsayana told that each companion can be relished best in the company of friends of the same social status, but not with those that are either above or below one, because permanent good relations and mutual understandings can only be established when each party in a sport seeks to afford pleasure to the other and where each is honored and respected by the other (Chakaldhar H.C. Social Life In Ancient India, p162).

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. (Mahākula-prasūtā snigdhā nipuneti imām tāvad kautuka-mālikām gumphti-ārya, Svapna, Act III, p72). They played with ball. (Kandukena kridantita eva-agacchati, Svapna, Act II, p56). Among many sports, wrestling matches are there. (Sruttā vraje vipula-vikrama-vīrya-satvam Dāmodaram saha balena samācarantam/
Ādiśya kārmukaham tamiha-upaniśa mallena rangagatam-
adya tu ghātayāmi// Bāla, Act V, p87). In various festivals the
kings called wrestlers to join the game and he himself observed
the game from the palace balcony and this was also enjoyed by
his subjects. Kings were fond of wrestlers. Garden parties are
organized. Young princesses also occasionally visited the park
with their mates. (kim nimittam bhartṛdārikā pramadavanam-
āgata, Sīvapta, Act IV, p86).

Dice playing was another favourite sporting area for them.
Most of the characters in these thirteen plays are fascinated
towards dice (Yat purā te sabhāmadhye rājye māne ca
dharṣitāh/ Balātkāra-samarthaih-taih kim roṣo dhāritastadā//
PAṉCARĀTRA, Act I, sl 37, p38; Yat-
kṛṣṭā karanigrahākiṃcidkacā dyute tadā draupadī yad bāla api h
ata-tadā ranamukhe putra abhimanyh punah/

Aksha vyājajitā vanam vana-mṛgaih-yat-pāṇdavāh samśritā
nanu-alpam mayi taih kṛtāṃ vimṛṣa bho dapahitam
dikshitaḥ// Uru Act I, sl 63, p68). Some take dice as their means
of profession (dagdha-śarira-rakshanārtham dyutapajīvi
samṛttah, Cār, Act II, p61).

Lute was the most popular of the musical instruments. In
almost all these dramas the researcher finds the reference to lute
playing. Every character is fascinated towards Vina (References
are found in Pratiṇāḍ, Sīvapta, Cārudatta and Abhimāraka).

Another sport in which herdsmen took place was the great
Hallisaka dance (Asmin vṛndāvane gopakanyakābhīḥ saha
hallisakam nāma prakriditum-āgacchati, Bāla, Act III, p57). It is a
dance from performed by women under the direction of one man
or in which the circle consisted of males and females alternately arranged.

Painting was there another hobby. In ancient India every cultured man had in his house at least a drawing board and a vessel for holding brushes and other requisites of painting. (Chakaldhar H.C. Social Life In Ancient India, p188). Bhāsa had also referred this in Cārudatta where Vasantasenā appeared with paint board, brush and many cups of wet colours. (Tatah praviśati sa-utkanthā Vasantasenā, citraphalakam-ādāya vartikā-karandahastā ceti ca, Cār Act IV, p98).

After studying all these facts it may be said in short that at the time of Bhāsa people enjoyed a great social life.

(iii) MUSIC AND DANCE

The music of India includes multiple varieties of religious, folk, popular, pop and classical music. The oldest examples of Indian music are the melodies of the Sāmaveda which is popularly known as Sāmagāna. These are still sung in certain Vedic Srauta sacrifices.

Among the sixty-four art forms music is the most popular form. It has appertained three kalas altogether Singing (Gitā); playing on instruments (Vādyā) and dancing (nṛtṛya). Vatsyāyana has given the first place to music among all the sixty-four types of arts.

Singing (Gita) comes first. During the time of Bhāsa also singing is there in the society. Courtesans are proficient in all the sixty-four art forms. In Pratijñā one finds Nāradiya form of singing, which Vāsavadattā has gone to learn from Vaitālikī. (Uttarāyā vaitālikyāḥ sakāśe vīnām śiksūnta nāradiyām gatāsit,
Pratijñā, Act II, p51). For learning this music Sangitaśālās are there in the cities. (Sangitaśālāṁ gatvā nātakīyebhyo vijñāpayya, Pratimā, Act I, p10).

There are lots of musical instruments. But the musical instruments used by the Indians are generally of four types-String instruments, percussion, wind instruments and cymbal. Through the study of these thirteen plays it can be assumed that Vina has taken the most precious position in the society. People regard it to be the most precious jewels which is obtained from the churning of the ocean, while the well-known fourteen jewels are extracted from the ocean by churning it. (Vinā nāma-asamudrāt-utthitam ratnam, Cār, Act III, p69). Udayana has excellent skill in playing lute. He can control an elephant by playing his lute. He has taught Vāsadattā how to play this instrument. Not only Udayana but other characters like Vasantasenā and lot more characters of these plays can play lute.

(Uccam harmyam sanniruddhāścas jālāh-tantrinādah śruyate sānunādam/


Music accompanied with instruments is prevailed there in the society and it is supported by another statement as found in the Abhimāraka. When Abhimāraka is on the way to the Royal palace to meet with Kurangī he heard singing on Vinā from distance.

(Tānastu mando viśad-pravṛtto jātaśca nādo mukhanāsikena/)
Sthūla-api hetuh karatālanādah saṅjāyate sadvalayasvanena// Abhim, Act III, sl 6, p73).
Ladies from high class families are also experts in playing on lute and in singing.
Dancing is another art form. Courtesans are expert in this form of art. (Kim tvam bhayena parivartita-saukumārya nrtya-upadeśa-viśadau caranau ksipanti/
There is a dance form named, Hallisaka is found in the drama Bālacarita. 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 alternately arranged. (Pushalkar A.D.- Bhāsa A Study). In this dance form generally both male and female cowherds take part. (Adya bhatṛ-Dāmodara-asmin vṛndāvane gopakanyakābhīḥ saha hallisakam nāma prakrīditum-āgacchati, Bāla, Act III, p47).

(iv) HOSPITALITY
Hospitality is the relationship between guest and host or the act or practice of being hospitable. Specifically, this includes the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers.
‘Atithi Devo Bhavo’ is the concept for every Indian. This means guests are to be treated as Lord Nārāyana. The householder has to arrange all the best accommodation he can prefer. In Indian culture a guest is worshipped through various ways.
In the dramas of Bhāsa though one does not find much information about the welcoming of guests at one’s house but
there are some instances which show that persons are fully
cultured and have maintained a good social bonding with each
other. In Carudatta the researcher can find Vasantasena, a
courtesan is welcomed by Carudatta, (a Brähmana) in his house
when she has asked for a shelter to save herself from śakāra
(Carudatta, Act I). At another part when Samvāhaka comes to
take protection from the money-lender Vasantasena tries her
best to afford Samvāhaka with everything she can do for him
(Carudatta, Act II). In the Pratimā-Nātaka also one finds
reference to Rama’s hospitality for Rāvana. When Rāmaand Sitā
are discussing about how to perform the funeral rite of King
Daśaratha then Rāvana appears and introduces him to be a
guest. Hearing this Rāmaoffered him a chair to sit and asked
Sitā to bring Padodaka to wash the guest’s feet. (Svāgatam-
atithaye; Etad-āsanam-āsyatam; Pādyam-ānaya bhagavate,
Pratimā, Act V, p162).

Among the royals also there is a code of conduct. They
welcome their enemies also like their guests with all promps and
glory. In Pratijñā, Mahāsena has ordered his soldiers to bring
Udayana with all the Royal fashions as are supposed to be given
to the princes. (Kumāra-vidhi-viśiṣṭhena satkārena Vatsarājam-
agratah kṛtvā prabeśyatām-amātya iti, Pratijñā, Act II, p60). In
Pañcarātra also the researcher finds that Abhimānyu is said to
be taken in front of the Virāta king along with all the royal
customs (Satkṛtya praveśyatām-Abhimanyuh, Pañc, Act II, p105).

The messengers are also treated respectively. In Pratijñā it
is said by the chamberlain that AryaJaivanti has come with the
marriage proposal of Vāsavadattā from Kāśirāja’s side and he is
said to be treated with special royal manner so that he can
realize the good culture of Ujjain. (Eṣa kāśirāja-upādhyaṭa ārya-Jaivantih-adya dautyena prāptah/ Asya sāmānyadūtasatkāram prṣṭhataḥ kṛtvā sukhamiva niyeṣyatām/ yathā ca-atithisatkāram jāniyāt tathā prayattitavyam iti, Pratijñā, Act I, p43).

In ancient India when a guest comes to one’s house he is at first welcomed and then Pādya and Argha is used to wash his feet. In Abhimāraka when Nārada appears the royal court, Kuntibhoja welcomes Nārada first and then orders his minister Bhutika to bring Pādya and argha so that he can worship the Lord. (Idam-arghyam pādyaṃ ca, Abhim Act VI, p168).

(u) **BELIEF AND SUPERSTITIONS**

As like the other persons India also had its own beliefs and superstitions. In Bhāsa’s dramas also one finds the reference to several beliefs and superstitions. Belief regarding magic, astrology, God, dream, worship etc. and superstitions regarding curse, omens, ghost etc. are found in these thirteen plays.

From ancient time India has a strong spiritual background. People have faith on God. (Aho Balavān hi bhagavān prajāpatih, Abhimā, Act III, pp78-79; tato bhartrā-vatiyah-āśvāda-āgamyā devatānāṃ pranāmam kṛtvā grhitā vinā, Pratijñā, Act I, p20). Before doing any deed they worship their lord because it is said that Lord Bṛṣṇu had created this Universe (Brhmā te hṛdayam jagat-traya-pate ! Rudraśca kopastava netre candra-divākarau surapate ! Jīhvā ca te bhārati/

Sa-brahmendra-marudganam tribhuvanam srṣṭam tvayaiva prabho ! Siteyam jala-sambhavālaya-ratā Visṇuh-vabān grhyatām// Abhiṣ, Act VI, sl 30, p122) and by the power of his grace people get their position.
Faith on astrology can be seen in these thirteen plays. Kings and ministers believed on the predictions made by the astronomers. (Aho viṣamaśilāḥ sāmvatsarikā nāmātmano nakshatraviśeṣameva cintayanti, Abhimāraka, Act VI, p151; Puspaka-bhadradibhiḥ-ādeśikaih-ādiṣṭā svāmino devi bhavisyatīti, Svapna, Act I, p15, 31; Praṣṭavyau sāmvatsarika-purohitau, Bāla, Act II, p40).

People had faith on magic. They believed that through the power of magic one could assume different forms, he might go everywhere etc. According to Kautilya magicians are expert in incantation ascetics and mendicants can prevent danger. (Artha p556). It is also mentioned that there are magical devices. (Dīvyam svabhāvam samupāgata-asmi sa eva nāmāsmi gunaih-viśiṣṭhah/ Idam yadā nirguna-martya-vṛndaih-na jñāyate ca asti ca me śariram// Abhim Act IV, sl 16, p115).

Belief in the existence and wide supernatural powers of semidivine beings like the Gāndharvas, Vidhyādharas etc., arrangement of funeral rituals to please the ancestors (Tvatrodayah-nipatitam patitasya bhumau-etat-śirah prathamam-adya vimuñca roṣam/

Jīvantu te kurukulasya-nivāpameghā vairam ca vigrahakathāśca vayam ca naṣṭāḥ// Uru, Act I, p35, sl 31; nirvapanakriyākāle kena pitrim-tarpayāmi?; Virudheṣu darbhaḥ, oṣadhīṣu tilāḥ, kalāyam śākeṣu, matsuṣu mahāsafarī, pakshiṣu vārdhīnasah, paśuṣu gauḥ khargo vā, ityete mānuṣaṃāṃ vihitāḥ, Pratimā Act V, pp165-166); some people have power to give the curse etc. (Vane pitruyo mṛgayā-prasamgatah kṛta- aparādho muniśāpam-āptavān/
Tadā-prabhṛtyeva sa dāra-nispṛhah parātmajānāṁ pitṛtām katham vrajet//, Dv, sl 21, p28; Śakrāpanita-kavaca-ardharathah pramādi vyājo-palabdha-viphala-astrabalo ghṛnāvān/

Karno-arjunasya kla yāsyati tulyabhāvam yadya-astro-dāna-guravo dahanendra-rudrāh// Dgh, sl 23, pp30-31) all these are found in these dramas of Bhāsa.

Faith in amulets are also seen. It was believed that it may avoid any kind of unblessedness.

In Bālacakrita mention is found about Alakshmi, Kālarātri, Mahānidra and Pingalaksi – all of them denotes evil. The same one shows curse, omens too. As Kamsa slays Nanda’s daughter, Katyayani appears and forecasts Kamsa’s doom. It is also stated in the Nāndi verse of Bālacakrita that Lord Biṣṇu is white in the Satya era, golden in the Treta, grass-green in the Dvapara and black in the Kali. They have faith in miracles also. In Bālacakrita when Kṛṣṇa was brought to Gokula everything became alive and even Yasodha’s still-born child revived. (Bālacakrita Act I) The sound of a crow sitting on a dry tree may cause disaster. (Kīm nu khalu-eṣa vāyasah śuṣka-vṛksham-āruhya śuṣka-śākhā-nighattita-tundam-āditya-abhimukha visvaram vilapati, Pañca, Act II, p62)

Though belief in curse is there but advice of revered sages are tried to be obeyed. (Caritam ca mayā samvatsaram śvapāka-vratam/ adya-asmi śāpāt-muktah/ Abhim, Act VI, p163). After performing religious worship the benediction of a Brāhmaṇa after presentation of offerings was regarded as a pious one. References are found in Cārudatta, Pañcarātra, Karṇabhāra.
(VI) LANGUAGE

Language is the method of human communication either spoken or written consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. It may refer to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex system of communication.

There are three main languages of India. These are-Ancient Indian, Middle Indian languages or dialects and Modern Indian languages or dialects, i.e., Pali languages. Sanskrit is the ancient Indian language. It is popular among the educated circle only. There are grades of spoken Sanskrit, Epic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit and Ancient Indian Sanskrit of the Vedas.

Sanskrit belongs to the Indo-Aryan sub-family of the Indo-Iranian branch. Vedic Sanskrit is the language of the Vedas and the basis of much of the Hindu religion.

Classical Sanskrit belongs to the age of Panini's Astadhyayi. During that period Sanskrit was not thought of as a specific language set apart from other languages, but rather as a particular refined manner of speaking.

Next one is Prākṛt. It refers to the broad family of Indic languages and dialects spoken in ancient India.

As it is already stated that Sanskrit is the language of high social class and educational attainment and was taught mainly to Brāhmins. On the other side, Prākṛt the literary language is generally patronized by Kings identified with the Kshatriya caste. They generally speak in Prākṛt when addressing women or servants in contrast to the Sanskrit used in reciting more formal poetic monologues.
The distinction of the use of different languages by different characters as enunciated in the Natyaśāstra was not based on an arbitrary whim, but on the actual state of affairs in ancient India. (Pushalkar A.D. – Bhāsa A Study). During the days of our poet, Bhāsa also the same system prevailed there in the society. Ladies including queens also use prākṛt as their spoken language and Kshatriyas and Brāhmans use Sanskrit as their spoken language.

Literary works are also found in these dramas. In the Pratimā and Pratijñā one finds mention about Hastisiksha. (Aṣṭyeva cakravartī haste nilakuvalaya-tanuh-nāma hastisikshāyām pathitah, Pratijñā, Act I, p17). Amongst the thirteen plays eight plays based on the two great Epics of our Indian culture. But the poet has brought some minor variations in each of these plays as like the statue-house scene, Durvodhana’s good behaviour in the Urubhanga etc. Bhāsa is fully acquainted with Bhāgavadgitā and for this reason he has used a verse of Gitā in the Karṇabhāra and the Abhiṣeka respectively.

(Hata-api labhate svargam jītvā tu labhate yaśah/
Ubhe bahumate loke nāsti niṣphalatā rane// Karṇa, sl 12, p16). (Hat ova prāpsyasi svargam jītvā vā bhokshyasi mahim/
Tasmāt-uttistha kaunteya yuddhayā kṛtaniścayah// Gitā, II, 37). One does not find much reference to the literary works in the dramas of Bhāsa.
(VII) PAINTING

The pictorial art or Ālekhyam, is one of the foremost of the sixty-four arts cultivated from ancient times. In earlier time almost every cultured person has a drawing board or citraphalaka and vessels for holding the brushes and colours.

Pictures (Citrakarma) appear to have been drawn both on the walls (bhitti) as well as on panels or boards. (Chakaldhar H.C. - Social life In Ancient India, pp188-89). This Citrakarma or pictures made on the walls are very popular and in almost every wall some beautiful paintings are found. (Hamsāḥ svapanti maniratna-śilātaleṣu

Vaidūrya-mauktika-kṛtāḥ sikatāpratānāh/

Stanbhāḥ pravālavihitāḥ kimīha pralāpāih-mandi-bhavanti manidipahatāḥ pradipāḥ// Abhim, Act III, p83). The walls of the fire-shrine are stated to have got fast-coloured paintings on them. (Ālikhitam khalu mama mādakamallacakam santāpa-timireṇa suṣṭu na prekṣhye, Pratiṣṭā, Act III, p73).

Ākhyānaka-pata is another type of painting. It means a roll of canvas which depicts a short story. It is also mentioned by Vatsyayana in his Kāmasutra. In the drama Dūtavākya one finds a canvas where Draupadi’s scatch is portrayed by a painter when Duhsasana is trying to make her naked in the open hall. (Āniyatām sa citrapato nanu, yatra draupadi-keśa-ambara-ākarṣanam-liākhitam, Dv, pp 11-12).

In the presentation of these portraits significant similies are described in the canvas in a life like manner. (Etad-ranam hata-gaja-aśva-narendrayodham sankirna-lekhyamiva citrapatam praviddham/
Yudhe vr̥kodara-suyodhanayoh pravṛtte yodhā narendra-nidhana-eka-gr̥ham praviṣṭāḥ// Uru, sl 3, p5). Each design is painted on the canvas in a variety of colours.

Not only close attentions are portrayed in the canvas but their expression is also carefully worked out on the canvas. Udayana and Vāsavadattā who eloped before their marriage from Ujjaini, the King Pradyota decides to celebrate their marriage by making their lively portrait on a canvas. The portrait is made by a proficient artist that his work has come to everyone as to be quite life-like and has shown a remarkable resemblance to the original (Tat-citrphalakasthayoh-Vatsarāja-vāsavadattāyoh-vivāha-anuṣṭhiyatām, Pratijñā, Act IV, p138; Atisāḍrśī khalu-ayam-āryāyāh, Svapna, Act VI, p195).

Courtesans have special rooms in their houses for painting. In Cārudatta the researcher can find Vasantasenā, who is a courtesan by profession makes herself surrounded by many cups of colours, brushes and canvas. (Tatah praviṣati sa-utkanthā Vasantasenā, citrphalakam-ādāya vartika-karanda-hasta ceti ca, Cār, Act IV, p98). In the drama Cārudatta Vasantasenā’s representation of Cārudatta as he is passing by the road below her balcony is said to have been carried out praiseworthy.

(VIII) FOOD AND DRINK

The Upanisadic word denoting food appears to be anna which may have been derived from the root ad (to eat) and means that which is eaten.

Early Indians ate those foods that are easily available from nature. Fruits, wild berries, meat, fish etc. were the main food
items of the nomadic dwellers. Rice was their staple food. Wheat was used by them to make chapattis. Milk and milk products came much into use during ancient times. Rice was eaten with curd. Cows were respected hence beef eating was not there. Most people were vegetarians. The only intoxicating drink in the Vedic age was the fermented juice of soma.

Besides milk products rice and barley are supposed to be the staple articles of diet as they are regularly offered into gr̥hya fire every morning and evening. In these dramas also one finds reference to the names of rice and barley and other products. (Gṛ̐t̄am gudo dadhi tandulāśca sarvam-asti api ca dakshināmāśakā bhavisyanti, Cār, Act I, p6).

In the period of the Vedas and the Brāhmanas lists of forbidden foods like some vegetables and meats are found. According to the dharmaśāstrās, flesh of birds and beasts as well as fish and vegetables are restricted. These are also accepted by Manu and Yajnavalkya. During Vedic Samhitās and the Brāhmanas people sanctifies the cows and make her immune from slaughter, although it is usual to slay bulls and cows at sacrifices. At the time of the Gr̥hyasutras drinking the five products of a cow (Pañcagavya) has been prescribed as a means of purification from various sins.

The Samhitā appears to have expressed four kinds of food by using the four terms – Carvya (food tested by mastication), Cusya (food tested by sucking), lehya (food tested by licking) and Peya (food used as drinks). Milk which is one of the principal items of food is either drunk fresh or make into butter, ghṛta or curds. Water is taken by every people in general as their drink.
These thirteen plays depict the various levels of food habit vegetarian and non-vegetarian prevalent in the society at the time of Bhāsa. Though people ate vegetarian and non-vegetarian items but we find vegetarian diet mostly. Some of these vegetarian items are Modak, Ghee, Molasses, Curd, Rice, Butter, Coconuts, Radish, Chana etc. (Pratijñā, Act III, pp 72,73,76,77,79; Cārudatta Act I, pp4,6,7,9). Hing is used in cooking for different flavor. (Ya-aham tatra-bhavatah Cārudattasya gehe-ahorātra-paryāpta-siddhāh-nānāvidhāh-hingu-vidhāh-udgāra-sugandibhih-bhrushepa-mātrapratisthathai-antarāpānīyaih-aśanaprakāraih-citakara iva bahumallakaih, Cār, Act I, pp9-10).

The smṛtis include the sin of wine-bidding among the five capital crimes Mahāpatakas and ordain seven punishments according the laws. According to the great epic, the Mahābhārata, he who drinks liquor unintentionally or when his life is in danger is purified by a fresh initiation.

During the Epic age flesh eating and liquor drinking was restricted to the twice borns (Rākṣasā manusyaṁ khādanti atasteśāṁ bhakshanārtham tādṛk-vastunah sajjikaranam-asmat-kṛte-asambhavam-ityādi tasya-āśayam buddhā vā śaṅkām-anudati, Pratimā Act vii p206, commentary from Bhāsa-Nāṭakacakra by Gangasagar Roy). A piece of meat mixed with ghee and salt placed in the drinking bowl. (Amṛtamallakena ghṛta-marica-lavanaruṣito māṇsakhando mukhe praksiptaśca, Pratijñā, Act IV, p107). Apart from flesh eating they enjoyed various kinds of drinks. These are Sura, Madhu, milk etc. (Surā iva madhurāni, Pratijñā, pp84, 106; Pitah somo bālyadatto nyogāt-chatracchāyā sevyate khyārasti, Paṅca, Act I, p30;
Phalāni gule gule madhu kiyad, duhyate khiram tävad eva
ghṛtam Bālacakṣita, Act III, p54). In the Pratijñā of Bhasa one finds
a corroborative reference to the sale of liquor in a public tavern.
It may be inferred that the public drinking houses are under the
superintendence and control of the government. None is allowed
to sell drinks without permit and this is sold outside the licensed
houses as those regulations are in vogue seem to be evident from
Kautilya.

(ix) DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

One does not get much light as regards the dress and
ornaments used by the Indians of Bhāsa’s time. Wood and
cotton is the popular dress material for the people of that time.
They generally wear two oblong pieces of garment known as
upper and lower garments.

In ancient time people use leaves bark or skin of various
animals to protect their body but as time passes away everything
changes and they discover garments. Before cotton comes into
persistence people wear a material consisted of leaves and grass
tied together.

According to Megasthenese, a Brāhmaṇa can wear muslin
dresses and descent ornaments only after the completion of his
thirty-seven years of student life.

Regarding an ascetic’s dress several opinions are found.
Gautama Dharmaśāstra states that an ascetic may wear such
garments as were worn by others while apasthamba
Dharmaśāstra prescribes that he should wear clothes thrown
away by others and some say that he might go naked. Vasistha
Dharmasutra says that he should cover his body with a piece of
cloth (Sati) or with deer skin or with grass cut down for cows. Baudhayana Dharmasutra requires that his garments should be ochre coloured. The Vayu Purana states that an ascetic should have a lion cloth to cover his private parts and kantha (patched garments or wallet) for protection specially against cold and he may have two Padukas (Sandals).

The upper garments i.e., the Vasas which also means the garment in a narrower sense and the Adhivasa that is an upper garment appear to have been the use during the days of later Samhitās. These two garments constituted the dress proper for the males and females of earlier times. In the drama Abhimāraka it is found that Kuraṅgi has used her own upper garment to commit suicide. (Bhavatu, uttarīya-vāsasā-ātmānam-udbaddhya vyapadayiṣyāmi, Abhim, Act V, p138). The city-bred young men like Čārubottana though has become poor by destiny but as because of the habits uses scents in his upper garments. (Anudāsīnam yauvanam-asya patavāsagandhah sūcayati, Čār, Act I, p41). So it can be said that during the days of Bhāsa both the males and females wear both upper and lower garments respectively.

The earlier wearing materials seem to have consisted of leaves and grasses tied together and hang round the waist. This leaf and bark garments are used by people living in the jungles. In the drama entitled Pratimā -Nātaka of Bhāsa; Rāma, Lakshmana and Sitā are mentioned as having worn the bark robes before setting out for the forest. It is also found in this drama that some wear such garments for the purpose of penance. (Ādarśe vākvalāni-iva kimete sūryaraśmayah/ Hasitena parijñātam kriñeyeram niyamasprṛhā// Pratimā, Act I, sl 9, p28).
The same drama refers that this valkala is the dress of all the old people of Ikśvāku race. \textit{(Ikśvākunām vṛddhālamkārah-tvayā dhāryate, Pratimā, Act I, p29).}

The mendicants use separate garments. They donned red garments. The institution of red garment of such mendicants does not appear to have been taken from the Buddhism but have been of Brāhmanical origin (Banerjee S.C. Social Customs As Notified By Foreign Writers, p 34). In the Abhimāraka also one can find Vidoṣaṅka who declares himself as a mendicant who wears red donned garments. \textit{(Civarena raktapatah, Abhim, Act V, p143).}

People of rich origin wear decorated embroidered garments. In Cārudatta one finds Śakāra and Karṇa puraka who wear lond and grandy coloured dresses. Married women also wear two garments and exceptionally use a veil to cover their head. They are not allowed to appear before other male persons except their husband without this veil. They can remove it only in marriages, sacrifices and in the forests. \textit{(Svairam hi paśyantu kalatram-etad vāṣpākulākshaih-vadanaīh-bhavantah/}

\textit{Nirdoṣadṛṣyā hi bhavanti nāryo yajñe vivāhe-vyasane vane ca/ // Pratimā, Act I, sl 29, p52).}

Ornament, which is the basic requirement for the ladies till today to make themselves looking beautiful to others. During the days of Bhāsa not only women but some rich men also wear ornaments. Gold ornaments are in vogue but poor ladies use palm made ornaments also. Use of gold jewels like ear rings, bangles, necklaces, nupura etc. are found. \textit{(Karna vantarāpahṛta-

\textit{bhūṣana-bhugnaapāśau samsramsitābharana-gauratalau ca hastau/}
Etāni ca-ābharana-bhāranatāni gātre sthānāni naiva samatām-upayānti tāvat// Pratimā, Act I, sl 8, p27). Kavacakundala has played a predominant role in the Karṇabhāra.

The male people use turbans on their head. (Rājaśyālah samsthānah sapattena śīrṣena-anubandha vijñāpayati, Cār, Act I, p43). The Royal person adorns several precious jewels in their turbans.

(Yātah kṛtartha-gananām-aham-adya-loke
Rājendra-mauli-mani-ranjita-pādapadmah/
Vipendra-pāda-rajasā tu pavitramaulih
Karno bhavantam-aham-eṣa namaskaromi// Karṇa , sl 16, p22).

These gems are not only used by persons to decorate themselves but also used as a means to decorate their royal palace or buildings of rich people.

(Kanaka-racita-citra-torana-āddyā manivaravidruma-
śobhita-pradeśā/
Vimala-vikṛta-sancitaih-vimānaih-viyati mahendra-puri-iva
bhāti lankā// Abhis, Act II, sl2 p26);
(Hamsāh svapanti manirata-śilātaleṣu
Vaidurya-mauktikakṛtah sikatāpratānāh/
Stambhāh pravālavihitāh kimīha pralāpaīh

So it is clear to say that gems are used to form various beautiful designs for ornaments, palaces and turbans.
The Royal personals also use garlands and tiaras with precious stones which adorn their head and their bodies are adorned with rings, bracelets, necklaces and lot more jewels.

(Mani-viracita-maulih-Cārutāmrāyatākṣi
Madasalalitāgamī māttamātangalilīh/