CHAPTER V
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITION IN KALIDASIAN DRAMAS

Partly, already we have discussed about the political condition of State as reflected in Kalidasiyan dramas in previous chapters, but here it is an attempt to highlight both political and social condition of the State as well as public. These are the following points, which are under consideration.

1. Kingship:-

Kingship is an excellent combination of political and social life. In this context, Kalidasa’s Kings accompanied by all royal qualities and they ruled over their state with great care adopting their mighty power. They appear like Sun, blazing in the sky in the mid-day. They are also able to take more physical strain. They are naturally mighty, valourous, courageous and sovereign rulers. Always they help the God as giving their support in war. In other words we can say that they are naturally war-oriented. They had also more intellect in diplomacy and politics. King Agnimitra gives order to his army commander to take action against the enemy. He divides the State of VIdarbha into two parts between two cousin brothers and spreads his power over them. His decision is always being appreciated by his council of ministers. King Dusyanta protects the divine beings in heaven and Sages on the earth from the hands of demons. He repels the enemy with the mere sound of his bow. King Pururavas is always thinking about the welfare of his subjects. After getting his beloved, King Pururavas returns to his capital to see the welfare of his subjects.
2. Duties of King:-

The first and foremost duty of a King was to take care of his subjects from their distress. He has to take some primary precaution to stop future calamities, and to destroy all evils for the prosperity of the State and pleasure of his people. Poet Kalidasa has given more emphasis on this point. King Dusyanta shows great sympathy towards the childless merchant Dhanamitra. He declares to serve as a substitute relative for the destitute persons except the sinners. That’s why, the word ‘Rajan’ has been used appropriately for him by one of the disciple of Sage Kanva. King Pururavas rescues Urvasi from the demon Kesin. He helps Gods in war against the demon in protection of their creation. King Agnimitra also possesses same qualities in order to maintain his kingly duties.

3. King and his Subjects:

As we have discussed that the primary and pious duty of the King is to protect his subjects from all calamities. He should protect his people, their crops from dangers and misfortunes. King Dusyanta follows the same policy, regarding the protection of the Sage in Kanvasrama against the demons. Like Dusyanta, Pururavas and Agnimitra both are more conscious about the prosperity of their subjects.

4. Kalidasa’s Concept of Sovereignty:-

Poet Kalidasa likes the administration of the State under a Sovereign ruler. That’s why he has described about the race of solar, race of Puru in
his works. Always he wants to establish an ideal Kingdom ruled by an ideal emperor. According to the view of Sage Marica, Sarvadamana would be a sovereign ruler\textsuperscript{11}, the Sage blesses him of seven continents, crossing the ocean on his frequently moving of chariot\textsuperscript{12}. Finally he will be known as ‘Bharata’. In Bharatavakya of the drama Abhijnanasakuntalam represents the same idea about the conception of sovereignty and Kingship. Kalidasa’s King’s are completely ideal in their nature through the Poet’s high imagination.

5. Consecration and Succession:

The consecration or Abhiseka ceremony is a part of King’s rite. Naturally it is a sanction given to the King by his subjects. This consecration ceremony would be performed by the presence of a revered person and it will be held on day time, which is very much auspicious from the astrological point of view. The person will sit on the throne at the time of rite. In Vikramorvastiyam, Kumara Ayus consecration ceremony was conducted with a very good manner by the help of Sage Narada\textsuperscript{13}. Again in Abhijnanasakuntalam, Sarvadamana’s rite (Jatakarma) has been conducted by Sage Marica. Both the consecration and succession ceremonies are common for the King. Previously Kingship was hereditary in character. When a King wanted to take rest from Rajasasana and to do Tapas or penance at that time he has to hand over the Kingdom to his eldest son as his follower. So indirectly we can get this idea from the version of Sage Kanva to Sakuntala at the time of her farewell\textsuperscript{14}. This is the system of King’s coronation and succession in the period of Kalidasa.
6. Royal Practices:-

Naturally King had contact with the royal officials to carry out the State Administration. At the time of their royal trips to outside, they handed over the power to their Ministers to look after the public affairs as their representatives. In this context, both the King Dusyanta and Pururavas followed the same custom and handed over the King’s power in the hands of their ministers.

Other than this, the King’s maintained some sort of practices in royal palace. In King Agnimitra’s State the poor Brahmans were always rewarded by giving the dole or Nityadaksina. King also performed sacrifices for the development of his State and prosperity of his people. Agnimitra’s son prince Vasumitra arranged the Asvamedha sacrifice along with his grandfather Pusyamitra after defeating the Yavanas. Rajabhiseka is also another royal practice of the King’s palace where as Ayus coronation has been conducted.

There are many references to the King’s recreation in the Pramodavana along with the inmates of the royal harem. The King Pururavas had put the yoke of the Kingdom upon his minister and went to disport in Gandamadana groves along with Urvasi. The King Dusyanta and Agnimitra also passed their time with Vidusaka and other inmates for their refreshment.
7. Apartment of the King’s Palace:-

Although we are not getting any brief description about royal palace in the drama of Kalidasa, but we can presume about the description of the apartment of the King’s palace indirectly through the version of the characters. It is clear that the royal palace comprised so many apartments and each apartment is meant for a particular purpose. Now we shall discuss about these, which are reflected by the pen of Kalidasa in his drama.

i. Dharmasana or Pratisthana:-

It is the assembly hall where the King sits on his throne along with his council of Ministers for tribunal. King Agnimitra and King Dusyanta were seated on their throne, which are clearly narrated through the dialogue of Vaitalika and Vidusaka.

ii. Bhojanasala:-

It is a hall only meant for the King’s dining. Vidusaka\(^20\) directed towards the Bhojanasala and indicated to the King Agnimitra for the dining hour. He was also anxious to go there for food.

iii. Mantrasala:-

This is the place where as King was making consultation with the council of Ministers regarding the State affairs. King Agnimitra was secretly discussing his state matters with the council of Ministers\(^21\).
iv. Samgitasala:-

It was a place, where music, and dance performances were conducted. Malavika and queen Irvati were practicing dance under the guidance of Ganadasa and Haradutta respectively. In Samgitasala queen Hamsapadika\textsuperscript{22} was also singing song as her practice.

v. Antapurah:-

This is an apartment in the palace where the queens and their female attendants are dwelling. Queen Irvati was inviting the King Agnimitra by giving massage through her attendant to pass sometime.

vi. Prmadavana:-

The King’s palace was also attached with pleasure garden where King and his inmates were passing their time. King Pururavas passes the time with his beloved Urvasi. King Dusyanta and King Agnimitra also were passing the time with Vidusaka discussing about the separation from their beloved in the garden.

8. Inmate of Royal Harem:-

Bharata gives a list of inmates of royal harem. They are eighteen in numbers including queens of various grades\textsuperscript{23}. In other words we can say the queens, the princess, their friends (Sakhi), attendants, nurses (Dhatrika), Servant (Ceti), Hunchback (Kubjika) and Vamana were the inmates of the harem. Royal harem was strictly prohibited by the entrance of others. Here we shall discuss about the inmate of royal harem.
i. **Devi:**

King’s wife (queen) is called as Devi. Queen Dharini, queen Ausinari, queen Vasumati, is designated as the title of Devi.

ii. **Ceti:**

They are the attendants of the princess and queens. They are moving inside and outside the harem. They act as the messenger of queen and princess. Nipunika and Bakulavalika possess this character in *Malavikagnimitram*.

iii. **Vaitalika:**

*Vaitalikas*, generally are two in numbers. Like Ceti, sometime they also manage to work as a messenger. They always encourage the King telling about their victory.

iv. **Kancukin:**

Naturally, they are old and weak. Always they declare and inform about the timing\(^{24}\), Where as King can perform his duty properly. They declare the arrival of the King to the court. They also give information about the outsider who wants to meet the King. They keep sticks in their hand to make it support in walk.
9. Royal Employees:-

Royal employees play an important role in King's administration. They are very influential in royal court. Here is the detailed discussion on these employees.

i. Amatya:

Generally, Amatyas or ministers are learned, disciplined sincere and mostly Brahmin by caste. They are experts in the science of Statecraft. They always act for the welfare of their lord and remain obedient and faithful. They help the King by giving valuable suggestion and advice at the time of need. King Agnimitra holds meeting with the council of Ministers regarding state matter. They guide the King according to the view of Acaryas. King Pururavas and King Dusyanta leave the State affair into the care of Ministers as their representatives. Truly they are acting as the political adviser of their Kings.

ii. Purohita:

The Purohita hold a significant role in administration of the State and protection of the King. They are wellversed in Veda. They are very close to the King. They receive homage from the King. They give good suggestion regarding State matter. In case of Sakuntala the Purohita of King Dusyanta gives an opinion that till her (Sakuntala) delivery she will stay in his own house. Finally King Dusyanta accepts his suggestion.
iii. **Duta:**

Kings are exchanging their message from one place to another through themessengers. They are also known as *patravaha*. Agnimitra came to know about the feelings of the King of *Vidarbha* through a messenger.

iv. **Lekhavaha:**

Like Dutra *Lekhavahas* also perform their duty as messenger only inside the Kingdom. Kings keep contact with the queens and royal employees through them. A messenger gives a letter to the King Dusyanta about the dispute case of Merchant Dhanamitra.

v. **Pratihari:**

There are frequent references to *Pratihari* in each of the drama of Kalidasa. They are also called as *Dvarapala* or *Dvatvarika*. They guard at the gate of the palace. They inform the King about the arrival of any guest. A *Pratihari* informs King Dusyanta about the arrival of Kanka’s disciple ²⁷.

vi. **Vaidya:**

This post is naturally hereditary. If King feels that the son of royal physician is not competent, the King could appoint another person as royal physician. He will treat and give medicine to the royal officials.
The physician named ‘Dhrvasidhi’ has been called for the treatment of snakebite of Vidusaka in Malavikagnimitram⁷⁸.

10. Crime and Punishment:-

There was a systematic Judiciary to administer Justice in the Kingdom of Kalidasyan society. King was the supreme authority to prosecute or pardon a criminal and he had also right to make free to an accused person while he proved as innocent. This type of judiciary was formulated by the King along with other members, who were assisting the King in judicial matter. Crime and Punishment system was so strict in the period of Kalidasa. Moreover the punishment of a theft case was severe. The chief of city police and the two policemen arrested a fisherman, accused him as thief. When King Dusyanta found innocent in his character, then he made him free from death sentence⁷⁹.

11. Division of the Kingdom:-

To make convenience in administration a Kingdom may be divided into several parts and each part may be marked as particular name. We get such reference about the division of the State Vidarbha in Malavikagnimitram. The State Vidarbha has been divided into two parts between two cousin brothers Madhavasena and Yajnasena by the King Agnimitra. By dividing the State between the two brothers, King Agnimitra spreads his power over them³⁰. It is an ideal trick of a King where Kalidasa has reflected it in his drama Malavikagnimitram.
12. **Entertainment:-**

People were having several types of entertainment such as seeing drama, dance and attaining parties of drinking. At the time of tired and also in pleasure moment, people were involving and attaching with entertainment programme. Though the dance competition of Ganadasa and Haradutta is not clearly showing the entertainment programme of people, but partly it shows the period where the dance and music was a media of entertainment. Malavika, queen Iravati were having great skill in dance. Again queen Hamsapadika’s song attracts the mind of King Dusyanta and King himself appreciated it.

Further, when the fisherman got free and awarded by the King Dusyanta, suddenly chief of the city police and the other two policemen were making friendship with the fisherman. They have gone to a wine shop and pledged their first friendship over wine.

13. **Possition of Women in the society:**

"यत्र नार्यस्तु पृज्यते रमन्ते तत्र देवता" a famous saying which clarifies the importance and possition of women in Ancient Society. The Gods helps with blessings where women are worshiped. Ancient Indian Culture denotes the equal right of women with men. The women were played a significant role in the society. Manu describes about the life of women as they live under the care of their parents in childhood, after marriage they are put under the control of their husbands and after that, at the old age, they are supported by their sons. They never get freedom in their life. Yajnavalkya also support this view. From this discussion it is clear that the women were not
getting freedom in their life. This exact idea can be found from the character of Sakuntala. In fifth act of the drama, Sarngarava, a disciple of Sage Kanvas condemns Sakuntala and reminds her that, she cannot lead a life of independence. So Kalidasa has totally influenced by Smrtis in this respect.

14. Principles of Chastity:-

Ancient Scholars has been emphasized on the principle of chastity for women. A wife can get salvation by means of service towards her husband not by performing sacrifice, austerity and fast. Yajnavalkya also suggests that, due to the important of chastity, women can attain divine bliss after her death. Kalidasa was also a strict follower of these principles. All his heroines suffered while treading this hard path. Malavika suffers a lot. She was imprisoned by queen Dharini, but she does not leave the path of noble. Due to her true love, she got Agnimitra as her husband. The chief queen Dharini also represented as an ideal chaste wife. Queen Ausinari, a chaste Indian wife, sacrifices all her happiness for the joys of her husband. Like Malavika, Dharini and Ausinari, Sakuntala is also depicted as a faithful chaste wife. She practices hard penance to get her husband. Finally she wins Dusyanta by her self-sacrifice.

From these above discussion it is clearly acceptable that Kalidasa has presented the glorious ideals of chastity for women in his drama by adopting the views and opinions of the Smrti-s.
15. Marriage System:

The marriage is a heavenly bond between man and woman, which ties them in life-long union. Hindu mythology declares that the husband and wife have an eternal union from birth to birth. Our Ancient Sages have described about the category or division of marriage. There are eight types of marriages. Both Arthasastra\textsuperscript{41} and Manusmriti\textsuperscript{42} accept the eight division of marriage. Among all, Gandharva form of marriage only takes place with mutual consent of both the lovers. By this type of marriage the lovers, in flush of passion, promise in secrecy to live united life-long without observing any kinds of ceremonies. This type of marriage was only accepted by Ksatriya class of people. Poet Kalidasa refers to this type of marriage in his dramas. In the Malavikagnimitram, King Agnimitra and Malavika promise in secrecy for their life-long companionship. In the Vikramorvasiyam Urvasi remains as an unmarried consort of King Pururavas throughout the play. Although their marriage ceremony is not performed according to the rituals, but both the lovers live together as husband and wife. The Abhijnanasakuntalam gives us a clear cut idea about the Gandharva form of marriage. King Dusyanta confirms very forcibly his marriage with Sakuntala showing importance of this marriage. In this context, Kalidasa refers that the daughters of many Sages, who married according to this custom, approved by their parents\textsuperscript{43}. So according to the Arthasastra and the Smritis, Kalidasa has adopted the Gandharva form of marriage, among the eight which is suitable for Ksatriya class of people in that society.
Thus it is clear that, the poet Kalidasa has taken the political ideas, ethical codes, social traditions and customs from the text of the *Arthasastra* and *Manusmrti* and presented these matters by putting new colour through his own vision and highly imaginative power. Though these ideas and expressions are found in other texts like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, but it is sure that Poet Kalidasa has directly influenced by Kautilya, Manu and Yajnavalkya, the eminent law-givers.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Mala - II.12

2. अनवरतनुमोचनमिहिषु शवेदलेशरिमिनम्।
   अपवितराय गात्रं व्यायतक्षरलक्ष्यं
   गिरिचर इव नागः प्राणसारं विमतिः। | Sak.II.4

3. नैतिव्यतं वदस्मुद्धिश्यामसीमां धर्मीती
   मेकः कृत्सं नगरपरिधिश्वासुप्रजापुनं।
   आशंकान्ते सत्तिवृषु पुरान बद्दवेश हि दैत्ये
   रस्याधिक्यो धनुशब्धि विज्ञापृष्णहुते च वदेः। | Sak.II.15

4. अहो कल्यणी देवस्य बुद्धि। मन्त्रिपरिषदीयावमेव दर्शनम्। Mala - V

5. Sak.III.1

6. येन येन वियुज्यते प्रजास्तिः खेति बन्धुना।
   स स पापादुि तासा हुर्ध्यं इति धुम्भलम्। | Sak. VI.23

7. अर्घवान् खेति ने राजशीद। Sak. V

8. भवांश्च सांयुगीनः सहायो न। Vik - V


10. Supra - P.P.78-90.

11. तथा भाविकमेंच चक्रवर्तनमवर्ग्याः भवान्। Sak.VII

12. र्वेनानुत्तातितिमितिगतं तीर्णजलंधिः
   पुरासलदत्ताः जयति वसुधारमप्रतिरथि।
   इहां सतानं प्रस्थमनान्त्वतदमस्म।
   पुर्वास्थ्याङ्गं भरत इति लोकस्य भरणात। | Sak.VII.33
13. नारद - रथे उपनीतां स्वयं महेश्वरं संबंधी दुकायप्रयुक्तः सूक्ष्मवायुप्रयोगो वीरवायवस्थिप्रकः | Vik.V

14. शूला विराय चतुरान्तमणीपती
दौष्ट्यनमधध्यां तनयं निवेदयः
भरतं तद्विषठ्ठकुटम्परीण सार्षेः
शान्ते करिष्यति पदं पुनराभिमेड़सिनः | Sak.IV.19

15. मदचनादसायमायिनिम्भुं बूहि | Sak.VI

16. उर्वशी किलं तं रतिसहायं राजविमलमायेनु निवेशितराजपुरं | Vik.IV

17. मुनकुरिके वेदपांगणां जायसानां नियमद्विक्षा वातया | Mala - V

18. अतिमरे खलु सेनापतिना नियुक्तो मे पुत्रकः | Mala - V


20. विरुक्षस - विरोपण सोजनं त्वरयतु | Mala - II

21. ततः प्रक्षिपक्षाक्षिपरिभ्रमणो भनता न पत्तेनसीमास्थानो राजा | Mala - I

22. भो व्यस्त संगीतकालान्ते सर्वां देहि | जाने तत्त्र भवति हंसपदिकृ वर्णपरिचयं करोतीति | Sak.V

23. Natyasasta - XXIV.29-32

24.a) पत्रच्छायामुः हंसा मुक्तवितनयना दीर्घकाप्रमिन्नाः
शीतान्तर्भगच्छ नारायनतिलिपियो तुलसीप्ररोक्तानि
शिवरूपम्बमेन्नुणानयस्बिन्दुपाद्यं विषयस्मारकारः
सर्वस्त्रूपं नामस्वरूपमेव समस्तस्वरूपं नामपुरुषनीर्दीर्घस्तवारः | Mala - II.12

b) भा लोकान्ततः प्रतिलहतभोवृत्तिरानां प्रजानां
तुल्योगोगस्वं विदनकृतश्चाचिंतकारो भ्रमो नेष
तिठउन्ते क्षणमधधतिगतिर्यथं व्योगमयेः
षट्प्रागो लम्भवृद्धिदिवस्यालनश्चनुस्वरूपं | Vik.II.1

25. शाल्यदृढ्यानाप देव | Mala - I

26. पुरोहित - ताबदाप्रसवालमेत्तुः तिष्ठतु | Sak.V
27. प्रितारी - सुखरतिमन्निरो ऋषयों देवं सम्भारायिणिलुभितात्म ईति तर्कवाहि | Sak.V
28. राजा - संप्रति विथिप्रवैद्यात्म कर्मं जयसेनेन श्रीमाहृद्यपरम धर्मसिद्धि | Mala - IV
29. एवं शर्तांशुलीयकभूतसमिति प्रसादेः पिति दापिति | Sak. VI
30. Mala - V.14
31. As described in second act of Malavikagnimitram.
32. अधो रागपरिबाहिनी गीति | Sak.V
33. क्रादन्तरीसाक्षात्मकसाकं प्रथमसौहदमिभान्ते | Sak.VI
34. Manu - III.56
35. पिता रक्षति कीमारे भर्ता रक्षति धीमने।
 | रक्षित स्थिने गुमन्त्र स्री स्वतत्त्वार्थीति | Manu.IX.3
36. Yajnavalkya Smrti - I.3.85
37. किं पुरोभिरं, स्वातंत्र्यमवलम्बसे। | Sak.V
38. नासिस्त्रीणं पुण्यायोहो न विंत्य नायुच्योधित।
 | पतिः शुभृष्टे येन देन तेन स्वर्गम महीयते। | Manu.V.155
39. Yajnavalkya Smrti - I.3.87
40. दुन्यात् - कस पतितेवतान्त्रकं परामर्शुगुल्लंति। | Sak.VI
41. व्यवहारको व्यवहारं कन्यादानं कन्यामलंकुला भ्रातविवाहं | सहदर्शर्यपापाभयं
 | गोमिनादानार्थं | अन्तर्धात्मकमित्रेन दानान्त्रुवी | मिर्गसहस्रावाद गान्धर्वं | शुल्कादानादादाचुरं
 | प्रसादादानाद राशिः | सुरतदानाद पीघचा | Arthasastra - III.2
42. भ्रात्रो वैद्विवार्षिकं प्राणास्मकल्पासुरं
 | गान्धर्वयं राजसद्वैव पैशाच्चक्राष्ट्ररो सधमं | Manu.III.21
43. गार्धर्वेन विवाहेन बहुद्वो राजरिष्यनकनं
 | शुष्कते परिणीतात्र पितृधिशीभिमिन्नितिः। | Sak.III.20