CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to summarise and pinpoint the observations already made in the earlier chapters.

A venture has been made here to highlight the significant aspects revealed through the status and activities of the female characters portrayed by Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, the two great dramatists, in the plays composed by them and also to show the relevance of those aspects in present perspective.

The characterisation of the female figures in the plays of both Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, reveals the greater outlook of the dramatists towards the women in general. It appears that through the delineation of female characters, the dramatists have made an attempt to elevate the then society. Through a careful study of the female figures, depicted in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, it appears that they have been idealised by both the dramatists. The various roles of woman such as the mother, the wife, the daughter etc. are met with in the plays of the two dramatists. Most of the female figures are found ideal in their respective roles. Their ideal outlook may be a source of inspiration to elevate the society even today.

It appears from the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa that, the birth of a daughter was considered as a matter of joy. The daughters were treated with love and consideration. They were given proper education and training in various branches of music and fine-arts. They engaged themselves in sports also.
Here it may be mentioned that today, in the twenty first century also, when the women have been able to prove their efficiency in different fields of activity equally as man, the killing of female-embryo has appeared before us as one of the most shocking problems of the society. Such a shocking news may be cited as example, where Nita, a house-wife of twenty-five years old and pregnant for six months, has been burnt to death by her mother-in-law and husband in Saurastra region of Gujarat, when the killers came to know, through ultra-sound test that Nita is carrying a female child. This attitude of the society possibly does not reflect the love of the parents to their female child rather it indicates probably the cruel mentality of the society towards the whole womanfolk. Thus, looking from this point of view, it may be said that the attitude and concern of the parents towards their daughter, as depicted by Bhāsa and Kālidāsa in different plays may show the path for improving the mental set-up towards the female child, for the betterment of the society.

Another important feature of the society, met with in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, is the absence of child-marriage. Child-marriage has been a major social problem, prevailing in some parts of our country like Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc. even today. But significantly enough, this has not been observed in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa. Rather, they would get married in a quite grown up and matured age.

It seems that though the arrangement of the marriage of their daughters was the main concern of the parents, the consent of the girls also was given equal importance. In the Svapnavāsadatta of Bhāsa, the maidservant tells Āvantikā that though the king Pradyota is anxious to make Padmāvatī his daughter-in-law; the princess herself is not in favour of making such a relation. It shows the liberal outlook of the dramatist and also the society towards the female figures. This incident also perhaps reflects Bhāsa’s sense of honour for the ‘swayamvara’ system prevailing in ancient India, especially in the epic age.

There is a reference in the Pañcarātra which perhaps hints at the deteriorating condition of the female figures in the society. In reply to the query of the charioteer as to what should he describe about the captor of Abhimanyu, beauty or valour, Bhīṣma says that women are known by their beauty and men are known by their valour. This statement of Bhīṣma probably show that, in those days beauty perhaps played a prominent role in recognising the woman.

Here in this context it may be mentioned that in modern time also a similar type of idea is prevailing in the society in an indirect way. In the various kinds of beauty contests, which are going on now a days in different parts of the world, the female figures are mainly judged on the basis of their beauty.

The prevalence of the custom of Niyoga i.e., levirate can be gathered from Dūtavākya of Bhāsa. Duryodhana makes the

2. Cetā-bhartṛdārikā tena rājñā sāḥ saṁbandhaṁ necchati-Svap, Act II.
3. Sūtaḥ - kimabhidāsyāmi rūpaṁ vā parākramaṁ vā i Bhīṣma-rūpeṇa striyaḥ kathyante parākrameṇa tu puruṣāḥ- Pañca, Act III.
query about the right to kingdom, which is lying in Pāṇḍu's share, would be of the sons, who were born of Pāṇḍu, his uncle, after he had became disabled to get the children. At this Kṛṣṇa retorts by asking Duryodhana how Dhṛtarāṣṭra could have a right to the kingdom of Vicitravīrya, since he was born of Vyāsa after the death of the former? All these perhaps testify the prevalence of Niyoga system in those days.

The purpose and objective of the Niyoga system probably is to get a child. This concept, perhaps, has been reflected in the modern test-tube-baby system. In the modern time the childless parents, with the earnest desire to get a child, are going for test-tube-baby system, which, in some extent, may be compared with the Niyoga system, of course, in a refined way. Here, it may be mentioned that, in the Niyoga system, the sentiment of the women, possibly, were not taken into account all the time. But now a days both the wife and husband take the decision of having the child through the process of test-tube-baby.

Here, in this regard the position of the female figures possibly, do not appear to be satisfactory in the plays of Bhāsa.

4. Duryodhanaḥ-
   vane piṭṛyo mṛgayāpraśaṅgataḥ
   kṛṭāparādhau muniśāpamāptavān/
   tadāprabhṛtyeva sa dārānipṛhaḥ
   parātmajāṇāṁ pitṛtāṁ kathāṁ vrajat//
   DV, I, 21.

5. Vāsudevaḥ - purāvidaṁ bhavantaṁ pṛcchāṁ
   vicitravīryo viśayī vipattim
   kṣayena yātaḥ punarambikāyāṁ /
   vyāsena jāto dhṛtarāṣṭra esa
   labheta rājaṁ janakaḥ kathāṁ te //
   DV, I, 22.
Much reference about the position of the widows are not met with in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa. Yet an indirect reference in the Dūtaghaṭotkaca of Bhāsa, testifies the fact that the widows had to wear separate dress, which was meant for widow only. When Duḥṣalā comes to know that Jayadratha, her husband is responsible for the death of Abhimanyu, she apprehending the death of Jayadratha says that she also would go to console Uttarā. Then being asked about the reason as to why she was willing to console Uttarā, she replies that she will go to tell her that she is also nearing the fate of taking the widow’s garment like Uttarā very soon⁶.

In the present day also this practice of wearing separate dress by the widows to large extent has been observed in vogue in our society.

The inter-caste marriage, which is happening at large in modern times, appears to be prevalent at the age of Bhāsa also. The marriages between Avimāraka and Kuraṅgī, and Sajjalaka and Madanikā may be regarded as proof in this connection. In the plays of Kālidāsa, however, no direct reference, in this regard, can be met with. But an indirect reference is met with in the Mālavikāgnimitram, which informs us that, the queen Dharinī has a low-caste brother named Viśasena ⁷. This perhaps hints that Viśasena is born of either the Vaiśya or the Śūdra wife of the father of Dharinī. So, it seems that even though the caste system was in vogue, rigidity of this system perhaps was not there in the age of Kālidāsa.

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6. Duḥṣalā-evaṁ ca bhaṣiṣyāmi-adya kālikaṁ ca te veṣagahaṇaṁmahamapiyuddhārayiṣyāṁiti - DG, Act I.

7. Bakulāvalikā-asti devyā varṇāvaro bhrātā viśaseno nāma - Māla, Act I.
In the age of Kālidāsa, though the daughters, in general, were treated with great affection, the female child born of an illegal relation was perhaps not treated with affection. Thus it is found in the Abhijñānaśakuntalam that, Śakuntalā, the illegal daughter of the sage Viśvāmitra and the heavenly nymph Menakā has been forsaken by her parents, and then it is the sage Kaṇva who fosters her as a real father.4

Now-a-days also this trend of thought appears to prevail in the society. The illegal child either male or female are often look down upon with disregard. Very often the news of the abandonment of the illegal child are also heard.

The anxiety of a father for the marriage of his grown up daughter can be met with in the plays of Bhāsa as well as Kālidāsa. In the Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa of Bhāsa, it has been observed that, the king Mahāsena, the father of Vāsavadattā, cannot fix up his mind in the marriage of his daughter, because of his great affection for her and also for want of much qualification with regard to the bridegroom.5 The whole of the second act of this play gives an idea about the conceptions of the duties of the parents towards their daughters. In the Abhijñānaśakuntalam of Kālidāsa, it is known form the speech of Priyarhva that father Kaṇva has the intention to give his daughter Śakuntalā to a suitable bridegroom.6 This is further proved from

8. Anasūyā-asti ko'pi kauśīka iti gotraṇāmadheya mahāprabhāvo rājarṣiḥ
   tvam āvayoḥ priyasakhiyāḥ prabhavam avagaccha i ujjhitāyāḥ
   śarīrasaṃvārdhanā'ndibhih tāta kāśyapāḥ asyāḥ pitā - Abhi. Ś, Act I.
9. Rājā-atilobhadvaragunānāmatisnehācca vāsavadattāyāṁ na
    šāknomi niścayaṁ gantum-Prat. Yau, Act II.
10. Priyarhva-guroh punarasasyāḥ anurūpavparaṇādānā saṅkalpaḥ -
    Abhi. Ś, Act I.
the speech of Kaṇva in the fourth act. While Śakuntalā was taking leave from Vanajyotsnā, her foster-sister, Kaṇva expresses his satisfaction saying that he has been free from all anxieties concerning both of them: because Śakuntalā has obtained a suitable husband as desired by him, and the creeper also has been united with the mango tree. Again the words of Kaṇva at the end of the fourth act, highlights the idea of the society that, by sending the daughter to her husband's abode, the father gets relief, as because the maiden is really a property of others and having sent her to her husband, the father feels relieved like a man who has returned to the owner the trust left with him.

In the present day society also the concern of the fathers for the marriage of their daughters is often met with. It may be said that this kind of feelings of the fathers towards their daughters appears to be universal is relevant forever. The same idea, which was prevalent in the ancient society, which is current in the modern society, appears to remain in vogue in the future society also. Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, the two great dramatists have depicted this eternal aspect of the father's heart in a most touching manner.

In the age of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, another significant aspect may be noticed in the system of marriage that religious rites are necessary to give a complete shape of the Gāndharva or Rākṣasa forms of marriage. It may be observed from the plays of both Bhāsa and Kālidāsa that, though the Gāndharva and Rākṣasa forms of marriage

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11 Abhi. Ś, IV, 13.
12 Kāśyapaḥ-śakuntalāṁ patikulaṁ visṛjya lavdhāmidānīṁ svāsthyam kutaḥ artho hi kanyā parakīya ..........

..................pratyarpita nyāsa ivāntātma //
Abhi. Ś, IV, 22.

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marriage prevailed during the age of Bhāsa, and Gāndharva form of marriage in the period of Kālidāsa, religious rites were thought to be obligatory to give a complete shape of the marriage in those days. Reference of this aspect can be met with in the Avimāraka and Svapnavāsavatattā of Bhāsa, and in the Abhijñānaśakuntalam of Kālidāsa—which have been discussed earlier in the present dissertation.

In the recent times also this type of idea, more or less, appears to be in vogue, in the society. Large number of couples are getting married through registration in the court according to their own consent. But significantly enough, at the same time, the religious rites or customary rites are also being observed to give a complete shape of most of these marriages.

The female figures in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, has been noticed as having a great sense of duty. There the female characters, at large, can be found as dedicative enough, in their respective fields of activity. The women have been portrayed by both the great dramatists as being engaged in doing their respective duties with utmost sincerity. In this context, special mention may be made of Vāsavadattā, Nalinikā, Anasūyā and Priyamvadā. Vāsavadattā has done her duty to her husband Udayana, as best as she can. Nalinikā is a dutiful companion and attendant of her mistress Kuraṅģī. Anasūyā and Priyamvadā also are dutiful friends of Śakuntalā. Now-a-days, sometimes, it is found that the people are lacking of sense of duty, which undoubtedly effects the work culture of the society. If everyone is dutiful, then naturally the society
can make progress. So it may not be wrong to say that the female figures in these plays can be our source of inspiration in this direction.

Negligence in duty has been observed in Kālidāsa’s Abhijñāna-sākuntalam as severely punishable one. There Śakuntalā has been entrusted by the sage Kaṇva, her foster-father to show hospitality to the guests in the hermitage. But she is so much absorbed in the thought of Duṣyanta, her beloved husband that she could not notice the entrance of the sage Durvāsā in the hermitage, and thereby fails to perform her duty towards the revered guest. The result of Śakuntalā’s negligence in duty comes as bolt from the blue to her and she has been cursed by the sage to remain unrecognised by her husband¹³, wherefrom starts the ill-fate of Śakuntalā.

This incident perhaps teaches us to become responsible and sincere in respective field of duties. When everyone becomes sincere and committed to his or her respective duties, the society can make progress in the real sense of the term only. It appears that, here Kālidāsa keeping in view the allround development of the society, has given emphasis mostly on sincerity and commitment, which, perhaps will remain, as the most significant factor in bringing an appreciating work culture in the society, forever.

In the Svapnavāsavadatta the relation between Vāsavadattā and Padmāvatī presents the picture of mutual co-existence. Though they are co-wives, yet they have been depicted as having sisterly

¹³. Abhi. Ś, IV, 1.
affection for each other\textsuperscript{14}. Here, both the female characters have been presented by the dramatist as having the rare quality of tolerance, which is almost invisible in today's society.

The love and union between Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā, and Udayana and Vāsavadattā respectively in the Abhijñānaśakuntalam of Kālidāsa and Svapnavāsavadatta of Bhāsa, reflect the two dramatist's ideal of love. In both these cases, the upliftment of the earthly and lustful love to divine one, by means of sorrows and sufferings, can be met with.

The love that primarily existed between Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā has been noticed as mostly sensuous. But it is only due to the curse-episode that both the lovers suffer the pangs of separation from each other and ultimately the reunion that takes place between them is a perfect union of divine love. Here, it appears, that Kālidāsa, with a view to transform the earthy love into divine one, has introduced the curse-episode and thus has probably taught us the significance and greatness of the divine love for the welfare of the society.

In the relation between Udayana and Vāsavadattā also the gradual development of the sensual love into the ideal love can be met with. Both the husband and wife have been separated from each other through a political plan. But it is perhaps the separation that makes their love deep-rooted and gives the chance to realise the feelings of each other in a better way. As a result of this they have been united, later on, in the platform of divine love.

\textsuperscript{14} Vāsavadattā(svagatam) - rājadāriketi śrutvā bhaginikāsneho'pi me'tra sarñpadyate - Svap, Act I.
The most striking and significant aspect, noticed in Bhāsa’s play is the sense of honour towards the prostitutes. The delineation of the character of Vasantasena in the Cārudatta perhaps, may be cited as example in this context. The idea that a prostitute can love sincerely, as portrayed through the character of Vasantasena, is really appreciating and indicates the sympathetic attitude of the dramatist towards womanhood. The prostitutes are often looked down upon with negligence, irreverence and dishonour in the society. But the morality and goodness, which can be observed in the character of Vasantasena, a so-called prostitute, is really appealing. This aspect also reveals the progressive outlook of Bhāsa, the dramatist of the then century. Here, it may be mentioned that, when the modern mind of the present century, can’t be found as free enough to recognise and accept this category of female figures, then Bhāsa, a dramatist of the early century through the character of Vasantasena may show the way to change the mentality of the society towards the prostitutes, who are living a tragic life even today.

In the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa it is seen that, the female figures are engaged in the plantation of creeper and rearing of birds and animals which undoubtedly show their awareness about environment. The name of Padmāvatī and Kuraṅgī may be cited in this context. In the Pratimānāṭaka Sītā is found to sprinkle water on the small plants of the forest. There is an indirect reference in the Abhisekanāṭaka which shows that, the queen Mandadarī, even though fond of ornamenting herself, never plucks a tender

15. Sītā tavadimān bālavṛkṣānudakapradānanukroṣayisyāmi - Pratimā, Act V.
leaf of the Aśoka tree out of her great affection for it\textsuperscript{16}. In the Abhijñānaśakuntalam, especially, the attitude of Śakuntalā and Anasūyā and Priyavravadā, her two friends towards nature are indeed appreciating. Śakuntalā loves, as her kith and kin, the trees and creepers so much so that she can not drink even a drop of water without watering them; even though fond of ornamenting herself she never plucks a tender leaf, and her greatest festivity comes at the moment when the trees first put forth their blossoms\textsuperscript{17}. There are many more stanzas in the fourth act of this play, which reveal Śakuntalā’s great love for the trees and plants and animals. In fact, the whole of the fourth act of the Abhijñānaśakuntalam depicts the intimate relation of the human being with the nature.

Ecological awareness has become a matter of grave importance in the recent years. The experience of the maleffects of imbalances in the environment, caused primarily by increased consumption of the natural resources on account of excessive growth of populations and their unrestrained needs, and secondly by the different types of pollution due to massive use of scientific and technologically advanced equipments etc. have compelled us to think seriously about the importance of environmental purity and maintaining ecological balance. Governments, local bodies, non government organisations and also many other organisations all over the world have become more and more aware of the problem

\textsuperscript{16} yasyāṁ na priyamaṇḍanāpi mahiṣī mandadarī snehāllumpati pallavānna... Abhi, III, 1.

\textsuperscript{17} Abhi. Ś, IV, 9.
and are trying their best to combat and control various kinds of pollution such as water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution etc. But since it is directly related to our consumption patterns, we have to take our own efforts to prevent pollution and make a better environment. In this situation the statement of M.K. Gandhi that, 'Nature has enough for everyone’s needs but not for anyone’s greed’ appears to be more relevant.

In view of the environmental problems, which the modern world is facing today, the attitude of the female figures as depicted towards nature in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa can show the path of solution. Nature, which is inseparably related with the human civilization, can play a significant role in maintaining the ecological balance. As has been observed earlier, the attitude of the female figures is the well-being of the human life through the nourishment of the nature with its constituent parts like the trees, plants, animals, birds etc. The female figures in these plays have considered the objects of nature as their kiths and kins, shared their happiness and sorrows with a most affectionate touch. This aspect of the female figures in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, the two great dramatists, can show us new avenues in our endeavour of protecting the environment and to make the world a better place to live in.

One of the significant and appealing aspect, which can be observed in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, is the sacrificing nature of the female figures, where the married women can be met with as sacrifice everything with the sole object of the welfare of
their husbands. Here, the name of Vāsavadattā in the Svapnavāsavadatta, Brāhmaṇi in the Čarudatta, Dhāriṇī in the Mālavikāgnimitram and Auśinārī in the Vikramorvaśīyam may be referred to. The sacrifice of Vāsavadattā, especially, remains to be unparallel. For the well being of her husband and the greater interest to regain his kingdom, Vāsavadattā, the queen, sacrifices everything including her personal happiness, and easily accepts the most undesirable suffering in disguise. This kind of selfless duty on the part of a female figure is really appealing and rare in the present society. Such an unparallel and ideal sacrifice, for the greater interest, offered by Vāsavadattā, the dearest queen of Udayana, will remain written in golden letters in the history of Indian women.

In the Abhijnānaśakuntalam, Kālidāsa shows the path, following which a girl can become an ideal grhini i.e. housewife. Through the universal advice of the sage Kaṇva, given to his daughter Śakuntalā, Kālidāsa perhaps has highlighted the duties of a ideal Indian grhini\textsuperscript{18}, some of which perhaps hold good even today.

It appears that, Kālidāsa here, has not only suggested the means for attaining the goal of an ideal housewife, but also has reflected the picture of ideal Indian womanhood in the character of Dhāriṇī in the Mālavikāgnimitram. Dhāriṇī is the real Mahādevī i.e. the chief queen of the king Agnimitra, and the ideal house- wife of the household. Everyone around her, such as the king Agnimitra, the Vidūṣaka Gautama, the Parivrājikā, Mālavikā, the maid servants

\textsuperscript{18.} Abhi. S, IV, 19.
and even Irāvatī, her jealous co-wife seem to be tied up with her by a soft but strong chord of love and respect. Her moral support and loving care have been observed to be extended to all around her. Dhārīṇī, the queen, has been depicted by Kālidāsa as one, who is ruling with love and justice at the same time.

In the union of Duṣyanta, Śakuntalā and Sarvadamana in the Abhijnānaśakuntalam, Kālidāsa presents before the world his ideal of marriage, which probably has been clearly expressed in the words of Mārīca, “Fortunately the chaste Śakuntalā, this noble child, and yourself, like the famous triad—the Faith, Fortune and Sacrifice, are united”. The ancient scriptures, as well as the law-givers considered the second āśrama i.e., the gārhadhyāśrama as the best of all. It is probably because the gārhadhyāśrama only can provide scope to serve for others, to serve for the society. The union of the male and the female is essential for the perpetuation of the universe. Through the reunion of Duṣyanta, Śakuntalā and Sarvadamana, Kālidāsa, the great dramatist, possibly, has suggested that a family can be a noble family only with the combination of a noble wife, noble husband and noble children. As the gārhadhyāśrama is the only field to serve for the betterment of the society, and it is possible only by an ideal family having noble

19. Abhi.Ś, VII, 29.

20. (a) taddhi sarvasramāṇāṁ mūlamudāharanti - Mahā, Śāntiparva, 179, 17;  
(b) yathā vāyaṁ samāśritya vartante sarvajantavaḥ /  
    tathā gṛhaśtamāśritya vartante sarva āśramāḥ//  
    yasmāttrayopāyamāśrāminyo jñānenānannena caṇvaḥam /  
    gṛhasṭhenaiva dhāryante tasmājjyeṣṭhaśramo gṛhit //  
    Manu,III, 77-78.
ideas and mentality to serve for other's welfare. This aspect, perhaps, has been accomplished by the dramatist through the union of 'Faith, Fortune and Sacrifice.' Here, Kālidāsa, perhaps, has depicted the ideal of life, centering the ideal woman. It has also been observed in ancient scripture that 'gṛhini gṛhamucyate' i.e. the housewife plays a significant role in developing an ideal family.

In fine, it may be said that in delineating the ideal society and ideal female figures, both Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, the two great dramatists has appeared as the two philosophers also. As the aim of the philosopher is not only to reveal the picture of the present, but also to give the hints for the betterment of the future society. In a like manner both Bhāsa and Kālidāsa has not only depicted the picture of the contemporary society, but also have provided the hints to built a better society.