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NATURE AND HUMAN BEING: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF KALIDASA'S ABHIJNANA SHAKUNTALAM

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Abstract: 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam' is the greatest drama in Sanskrit poetry written by Mahakabi Kalidasa. There are seven acts in Abhijnana Shakuntalam play. The basic source of this drama is Mahabharata (Adi Parva) from sixty seven chapters to seventy four chapter. And the very same narration is found in Padma Purana. The main characters of the drama are Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Dushyanta is the king of Hastinapur and hero of the drama. Shakuntala is Heroine and she is the daughter of Apsara Menaka and sage Vishwamitra. Apsara Menaka relinquishes her in a forest, after her birth. There Shakuntala is saved by shakunta birds. Therefore, her name is Shakuntala. Maharshi Kanva takes her to his monastery. There she grows up in the embrace of nature. Animals, daws, plants and ascetics are her comrades. Shakuntala also symbolizes the universe of serenity and Nature itself. The cordiality between Shakuntala and Nature is unimpeachable. Not only Shakuntala, but also the hermits of kanva's hermitage were deeply connected with nature in Abhijnana Shakuntalam.

Keywords: Mahakabi Kalidasa, Nature, Humans Love to Nature, Nature's Kindness for Human Being, Relationship Between Man and Nature, Poet's Descriptive Skill.

Introduction: - Mahakabi Kalidasa is one of the greatest poets, dramatists and writers in Sanskrit literature. Undoubtedly, he is the greatest master mind in Sanskrit poetry. His composition 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam' is the number one drama in Sanskrit poetry. Though Abhijnana Shakuntalam is composed by Kalidasa in Sanskrit language but this drama was translated by different Western poets in different languages, i.e. this drama was translated by Sir William Jones from Sanskrit to English in 1789. It is acknowledged that Kalidasa's Abhijnana Shakuntalam drama is the first Sanskrit drama to be translated in different Western languages. The play, Abhijnana Shakuntalam has seven acts. Among the seven acts in this drama fourth act is the best act of this play. Because there is a cordial relationship between human being and Nature that complement each other in fourth act. Kalidasa has used nature in this drama. Nature is helpful in advancement of the tale. In this drama on the one side, the love of human being towards Nature can be seen, on the other side, the kindness of the Nature towards man. Shakuntala as a daughter of Nature in Kalidasa's description. Shakuntala is compared with Jasmine flower. In this drama, Nature has played an important role in the development of the tale. 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam' play is an excellent presentation of man's love and Nature's love. In this drama, where we can find a perfect harmony between human and Nature. The entire story of the drama takes place in the laps of nature. Kalidasa is a worshipper of Nature. He has beautiful described the influences of Nature. Nature's internal and external compounding is the specialty of Kalidasa's art. In this play Shakuntala is an integral part of the flora and fauna. She had heavenly beauty. She is pure, innocent, and natural as the other animal of the Kanva's ashram. She never put on diamond or gold jewels. Different colours flowers are Shakuntala's necklaces, bangles and earrings. In this way Kalidasa has used Nature in his drama.

Objectives

The important objectives of the study are

- To know the kindness of Nature for man and human's love to Nature.
- To study the outstanding description of Nature by Kalidasa.
- To know the relationship between human and Nature.
- To study unconscious Nature manifests it self as conscious.
- To know the description of rural environment and urban environment in Kalidasa's Abhijnana Shakuntalam.
- To observe that the violent wildlife leaves their violent nature.
- To increase human's awareness about nature.

Review of the literature: Review of literature is an imprescriptible part of any research article. It is phase where the researcher positions her/him research work among other researcher in the similar field.

Dr. Basu(2003) in his book "Abhijnana Shakuntalam" brought into the notice that the fundamental notion of Sanskrit drama 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam' such as nature, human being, the relation between nature and man, man's love to nature and the kindness of nature for human provide the conceptual frame work which influence the classical formulation of other system of literature. The



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reference book of M.R.Kale, similarly the influence of the drama as propounded over many ages to the areas namely as psychology, law, pharmacology. This study refers a new interpretation of dramatic significance to the 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam'.

Methodology: This article is a documentary study. It is based on primary source and secondary source. Some discussion of the study is based on both sources and other materials. Some discussion of article is based on own concept. The conclusion of the article is made by the both sources and own concept. The primary sources are books. The secondary sources are abstract, article, and journal of 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam'. Some related information's were extracted from various website and related to national and international seminar paper. This article is presented through Descriptive method.

Discussion of the study: Abhijnana Shakuntalam is an extraordinary story of romance between Dushyanta and Shakuntala. In one Kalidasa has described the romance of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, on the other side he has expressed outstandingly nature's description in this play. Nearly all the acts of the drama have settings admits nature where we find a faultless harmony and deep sincerity between Nature and human being.

There is hermit's (Vaikhanasa's) affection for deer in the first act of the drama. When the king Dushyanta added arrow to kill the deer, then Vaikhanasa said "O king, to the hermitage belongs this deer, he should not, he should not, be killed." (The Abhijnana shakuntalam of Kalidasa, Act-1) (M.R.Kale, P-19)

“नखलुनखलुवाणःसन्निपात्योऽयमस्मिन्
मृदुनिमृगशरीरेपुष्पराशाविवाग्निः।
क्वबतहरिणकानांजीवितंचातिलोलं
क्वचनिशितनिपातावज्रसाराःशरास्ते”॥

(Abhijnana Shakuntalam , Act 1, Verse-10)

Another beautiful scene of nature is described by Kalidasa in the first act. When the king Dushyanta entered in the hermitage, he saw the cordial relationship between hermitage's nature and hermits. He saw the deer's trust to human. Then he was sure that it was an ashram. The cityscape of the hermitage was like this –

“नीवाराःशुकगर्भकोटरमुखभ्रष्टास्तरूणामधः
प्रस्निग्धाःक्वचिदिङ्गुदीफलभिदःसूच्यन्तएवोपलाः।
विश्वासोपगमादभिन्नगतयःशब्दंसहन्तेमृगा-
स्तोयाधारपथाश्चवल्कलशिखानिष्यन्द-रेखाङ्किताः”॥

(Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Act -1, Verse -14)

Shakuntala hermitage daughter is seen in the first to third act. Whenever Shakuntala is appeared by Kalidasa in the drama, she is accompanied by nature in her different forms. She represents nature in her beauty and feminine grace. Her permanent companions are hermitage's plants, birds and animals in the ashram. She loves the plants of the hermitage. Ashram plants and animals, are very dear to her. Shakuntala had a natural affection for the saplings of the ashram. So she said –

‘ अस्तिमेसोदरस्नेहःअपि एतेषु ’।
(Abhijnanashakuntalam -1stAct)

When the dramatist describes Shakuntala's beauty, then he prints images from nature. Oft Shakuntala is compared with a flower or a soften creeper by Kalidasa. Shakuntala has established human relationship with hermitage's plants, birds and animals in the hermitage. She has given names to animals and plants of the hermitage. She calls a fawn in the hermitage as 'Deerghpanga'. She fondled a 'Navamallika' vine and named it 'Vanajyotsna'. Even she marries this 'Navamallika' vine to a mango tree. So, Shakuntala's confidante Anasuya said – "Friend Shakuntala, here is the Jasmine creeper, the self selecting bride of the mango tree to which you have given the name Vanajyotsna. You have forgotten it." (Abhijnana Shakuntalam 1st act) (M.R.Kale.,P-29). In reply Shakuntala said 'तदाआत्मानमपिविस्मरिष्यामि'। Ever she has established a relatedness with nature. Always the little deer child follows her. The little fawn does not drink water from Dushyanta's hands.



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In the forth act of the play Mahakabi Kalidasa establishes a spiritual link between nature's freshness, animal life and human society. Nature has been a witness to all the main improvements in this drama. In this act, the nature's genuine love for Shakuntala becomes evident. During the journey of Shakuntala to her husband's house hermitage's nature also bestowed ungrudgingly various ornaments on Shakuntala.

“By a certain tree was put forth(i.e. offered) a fine silk garment white like the moon, and suited to this auspicious occasion; by another was exuded the lac-dye for application to this feet (&); the ornaments were presented from other trees by the hands of sylvan deities put forth as far as the wrist (lit. the joint) and vying with the bursting of tender sprouts from there.”(Abhijnanashakuntalam, 4th act, 5)(M.R.KaleP-139)

Father Maharshi Kanva, Shakuntala sought permission from the ashram trees during her journey to husband's house. Shakuntala never efforts to drink water without watering hermitage's trees. Ashram residents never plucked their new leaves for ornaments. The first blossoming of the trees seemed like a festival to her. Tapavana trees were so dear to her that -

“पातुं नप्रथमंव्यवस्यतिजलयुष्मास्वपीतेषुया
नादतेप्रियमण्डनापिभवतांस्नेहेनयापल्लवम्।
आद्येवःकुसुमप्रसूतिसमयेयस्याभवत्युत्सवः
सेयंयातिशकुन्तलापतिगृहंसर्वैरनुजायताम्”॥
(Abhijnana Shakuntalam, 4thAct, Verse-9)

Shakuntala begs permission from hermitage's living and non –living elements during the journey of her husband Dushyanta's house. She permitted to depart by the plants of the ashram. The Tapavana's plants are answering kanva's prayer in cooing cuckoo -song.

“अनुमतगमनाशकुन्तलातरुभिरियवनवासबन्धुभिः ।
परभृतविरुतंकलयथाप्रतिवचनीकृतमेभिरीदृशम् ”॥
(Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Act 4th, verse 10)

In this fourth act of the play, where Shakuntala leaves Tapavana and goes to Hastinapur, she is anxious about the impending separation, the animals and plants of Tapavana are all in the same condition.

“The female deer have dropped down their cud of darbha – grass; the peacocks have given up their dancing; and the creepers, with their yellow leaves falling off, seem, as if to be shedding tears.”(M.R.Kale , P-147)

“उद्गलितदर्भकवलामृग्यःपरित्यक्तनर्तनामयूराः।
अपसृतपाण्डुपत्रामुञ्चन्त्यश्रुणीवलताः”॥
(Abhijnanashakuntalam, Act 4th, Verse 12)

Another tragic scene is depicted by Kalidasa in fourth act of the drama. Where a Motherless fawn, whom Shakuntala had brought up with son's love. This fawn was holding Shakuntala's coat when she leaves Tapavana and going to her husband's house. “This fawn here regarded by Shakuntala as her son, whom she affectionately reared with handfuls of rice, and to whose mouth when wounded with the sharp points of the Kush grass. She applied the healing oil of the ingudi , he does not leave Shakuntala's path”.(M.R.Kale ,P-149)

“ यस्यत्वयाव्रणविरोपणमिङ्गुदीनां
तैलन्यषिच्यतमुखेकुशसूचिविद्धे।
श्यामाकमुष्टिपरिवर्धितकोजहाति
सोऽयंनपुत्रकृतकःपदवींमृगस्ते”॥
(Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Act 4th, Verse 14)



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During the journey of Shakuntala to her husband Dushanta's house, invisible beings, prophecy of sky to Shakuntala –

**“May lily-dotted lakes delight your eye;
May shade- trees bid the heat of noonday cease;
May soft winds blow the lotus – pollen nigh;
May all your path be pleasantness and peace.” 11.
(Abhijnana Shakuntalam 4th Act) (Arthur W.W. Ryder, P-46)**

Shakuntala entrusts priyasakhi Priyambada with responsibility of taking care of the ashram’s coolness and animals while going to Hastinapur. In this way Kalidasa describes Shakuntala’s journey to husband’s house and her deep connection with nature in this act of the drama.

In the fifth act of the play, the description of the urban environment of the Hastinapur did not escape the dramatist Kalidasa’s attention. Shakuntala tries to evoke Dushyanta’s memory by telling the event of the deer in the hermitage. The little fawn does not drink water from the hands of king Dushyanta. And the sixth act of the drama shows that the cuckoo of spring has also remained silent as Shakuntala’s separation from the king, bans the festival of spring. In this act, the trees of spring and the birds residing in the trees have obeyed the king Dushyanta’s command.

**“The mango branches are in bloom,
Yet pollen branches does not form;
The cuckoo’s song sticks in his throat;
Although the days are warm;
The amaranth – bud is formed, and yet
Its power of growth is gone;
The love-god timidly puts by
The arrow he has drawn.”4.
(Abhijnana Shakuntalam, 6th Act 4 Verse) (Arthur W.Ryder, P- 66)**

Dushyanta is called by Indra in Olympusto fight the demons, he returns victorious. On his way back, he stops on Hemkoot mountain. He was surprised to see the adobe of adepts and realized souls. In the Seventh act, Shakuntala appears as a perfect embodiment of ideal womanhood. She gives birth to a son on Hemkoot Mountain, the abode of sage Marich. This place represents the ideal nature surroundings where everything exists in repletion. Kalidasa gives a animated description of the mountains, caves, waterfalls, forests, flora and fauna.

In the seventh act of the drama, Dushyanta meets his son Sarvadamana, and his wife Shakuntala in a wonderful heavenly nature environment in the hermitage of sage Marich. This act also shows that the impact of quiet Nature. The violent wildlife forget their violent nature. Dushyanta becomes surprised to see that a little child forcibly attracts a lion cub that has half -fed its mother’s breast to play by beating it by its tusks. Then the child said to lion cub – “open thy mouth, O lion, I will count thy teeth.”(Abhijnanashakuntalam, 7thAct) (M.R.Kale – 267)

**"अर्धपीतस्तनं मातरामर्दक्लिष्टकेसरम्।
प्रक्रीडितुंसिंहशिंशुवलात्कारेणकर्षति।।
(Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Act 7th,Verse 14)**

Nature has been a witness to all the major enhancement in the play. It plays an essential and vital role in this drama. Shakuntala is essential a daughter of mother Nature. Her connection with natural environment is idiosyncratic. In this way Mahakabi Kalidasa has made the unconscious nature conscious in his drama ‘Abhijnana Shakuntalam’. Such spiritual relationship between human being and nature is rare in the history of world literature.

Finding

It has been found from study review that unconscious nature is conscious. Nature appears as a perfect embodiment of ideal Mother in this play. Dramatist portrayed nature as a mother and human as the child of Mother Nature. Also find that nature is the components of empaneled. Dramatist describes that the Darva grass, the Ingudi nuts etc. as medicinal plants, which he shows that how a human can be benefitted by the plants of nature. Man is always dependent on nature. So human should be raise awareness and take



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care of nature. Whatever Nature has been used as an inalienable part of life imparts a new strength to the background. This drama establishes the unity between Nature and human world.

Conclusion

Admittedly Mahakabi Kalidasa is a poet of nature. Nature has a sincere and cordial relationship with human. In this way no poet, dramatist other than Kalidasa could have established the relationship between man and nature. An unparalleled love of nature is seen in all the literature of Kalidasa. The relationship between human and nature is seen in his drama 'Abhijnana Shakuntala', which is unmatched anywhere in the world literature.

Kalidasa gained world fame by giving life to nature in this drama. With the magic touch of the dramatist's writing, everything in nature, conscious and unconscious, seems to have become one. All the seven acts of the play are rich in description of nature. The only comparisons for Shakuntala's beauty are to be found only in nature. Shakuntala and nature represents each other in their attributes. Her individuality consists in her harmony with nature. Nature has played a significant role in this play. Shakuntala, Dushyanta, Kanva, Anasuya, Priyambada like them, nature is also a special character. In this drama, where Kalidasa shows that Nature and man complement each other. He impressed nature as a mother and Shakuntala as a daughter of nature. There is ashram's animals trust to humans at the hermitage. Namely fawns mingling in trust with hermits at the kanva's ashram in the first act and in the seventh act, where, Dushanta's son Sarvadaman, for the playing purpose, by force drags away a lion cub from lion and counts lion cub's teeth. Kalidasa has made the unconscious nature conscious in his drama. There is a spiritual relationship between Nature and human being in this play.

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