

## **KALIDAS'S SHAKUNTALA: A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **Abstract**

Abhigyan Shakuntalam is also known as *Shakuntala*, *The Recognition of Shakuntala*, *The Sign of Shakuntala*, and many other variants, is a Sanskrit play by the ancient Indian poet Kalidasa, dramatizing the story of Śakuntalā told in the epic *Mahābhārata* and regarded as best of Kālidāsa's works. Its exact date is uncertain, but Kālidāsa is often placed in the 4th century CE. Shakuntala fell in love with Dushyant and married him secretly. After sometime, she became pregnant but Dushyant left her. Due to the curse of monk Durvasa, Dushyant has forgotten Shakuntala. This paper is a sincere attempt to present Shakuntalam in today's perspective.

**Keywords:** Shakuntala, Kalidas, Dushyant, Durvasa, Social, Perspective

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The story of Kalidasa's *Abhigyan Shakuntalam* is taken from the *Mahabharata*. This story is also found in the *Puranas*. Kalidasa has presented this story in a unique way. Monk Kanva went on a pilgrimage to Somatirtha, handing over the entire responsibility of the Ashram for the alleviation of the evil in the life of his daughter Shakuntala. King Dushyanta, who is out for a bird hunt, comes to Kanva's ashram. Shakuntala and Dushyant's romance blossoms. Shakuntala surrenders everything to Dushyanta in Gandharva marriage.

On returning from a pilgrimage to Somatirtha, Monk Kanva found his daughter pregnant through the power of yoga and sent her away. The sages of the ashram Sharanava, Shardvat and Arya Gautami go with Shakuntala. Due to the curse of Durvasa, Dushyant refuses to recognize Shakuntala. He is not even ready to believe Shakuntala's argument. The young monk is not even ready to take Shakuntala back.

*Abhigyan Shakuntalam* is important not only from a dramatic point of view but also social point of view. There are eight types of marriage in Indian culture. Gandharva marriage is one of them in which a man and a woman join together with the each other's consent without the permission of the family. Thus, in this type of marriage, the consent of the young man and the young woman is important, but sometimes inappropriate situations are created in the lives of these characters that are connected without the permission of the family.

Through this event, the red signal has been shown to the girls who 'give their all without thinking'. According to the story, Dushyant has forgotten Shakuntala due to Durvasa's curse, but there are also many lustful men in the society who cheat girls and have sex with them. They take advantage of such gullible girls and make them go away. When Shangrav tries to explain to Dushyant, Dushyant says clearly that 'so I was married to this lady in the past.' After making up his mind, there are youths in the society whose answer matches the above answer of Dushyant. To which Shangrav gives the answer. “क कृत कार्य दवेषो धर्म प्रति वमुखता कृतवजा”

Don't you like what you did before? Is it alienation from religion? Or to ignore after enjoying? The society also demands a similar answer from such a cheat man.

Amorous girls join a young man without the consent of family. And her condition deteriorates as the young man refuses to accept her in the delicate state of her pregnancy. The mistake of entrusting everything to unknown man without knowing him and later she wants to return to her father's house. Although the society is improving in the modern era, it is still not fully ready to accept or forgive such a girl. Kalidasa has beautifully presented this state of mind of the society here. Shakuntala wants to go back to her ancestral home but Saradhvat clearly addresses the king and says, 'This is your wife, give up or accept.' Shangrav directly says to Shakuntala that “इत्थमात्म कृतम प्रति हतं चापक दहति.” “Man's misdeed burns himself” The unbaked food made by himself beats like this.

Shangrav's speech gives a direct message to the young women of the society, especially that sexual intercourse should not be done in solitude, the friendship of a stranger rejects in this way it turns into enmity. This statement given by Shangrav is a warning for the young women in love in today's era. Through the character of Shakuntala, Kalidasa gives the message to society that a girl in love should think about the future and deal with her lover in

any situation because such a girl is neither accepted by her lover/husband nor accepted by society.

## **REFERENCES**

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