



## Female bonding in Kalidasa's Play The Abhigyanshakuntalam

### KEYWORDS

Female bonding, Affection, Everlasting knot, Inseparable companions, Dearly devotion

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**ABSTRACT** *In the present scenario, in all most all popular and high TRP TV shows and serials role of female characters are shown with a touch of intrigue and conspiracy. Modern literature is presented on the screen in a particular angle. How can we forget the high slandered sensibility and bonding among female drawn by the world's most renowned playwright cum Mahakavi Kalidasa? The Abhigyanshakuntalam is the world famous literary dramatic gift by him. This research paper explores female bonding by Kalidasa in the light of legendary play, The Abhigyanshakuntalam. It is well said by Arthur Schopenhauer Friends and acquaintances are the surest passport to fortune. The concept of sisterhood has always been a central tenet of Women's Movement. The recent wave of literature and films dealing with female friendship, mother-daughter relationships, and biological sisterhood testifies to the influence that feminist concept of female bonding has had on the popular thoughts*

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The key figure of this play is the female protagonist Shakuntala. The daughter of a celestial courtesan by a well-known monarch who had taken to penance and asceticism, brought up from her very birth in the spiritual and sacred surroundings of a hermitage, cherished by the sage Kanva with deep parental affection. She, as the daughter of Menaka, the divine character, possesses the unparalleled beauty. The playwright has taken great pains to delineate fully the two friends and forest-playmates of Shakuntala. They are both lovely and playful but each has some special traits. Henri Nouwen rightly says:

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand.

Anasuya and Priyamvada are the inseparable companions of Shakuntala. They are of the same age; they speak and act in the same manner. The two companions play a most vital part in the love of Shakuntala. But for their active help and support, their dear Shakuntala would certainly have been left in despair, with hardly any hope of being united with Dushyanta.

When Shakuntala falls a victim to the curse of the sage Durvasa, due to these two friends that the curse is partly averted and Shakuntala is saved from getting completely lost? They feel so great a devotion for her that it looks as though they have hardly any existence apart from her. Till the end of the Fourth Act, we find Shakuntala is never present unless in the company of her two friends. When they suddenly drop from the scene in the Fifth Act, we feel indeed all the liveliness and mirth of the play gone and the tragedy of Shakuntala begins.

Shakuntala, bonding with her two companions, is the most beautiful picture ever drawn by an artist, and their talk, so sweet, so lively and so innocent, will remain the most exquisite in the literatures of the world.

Along with the main heroine Shakuntala and her two dearly friends Anasuya and Priyamvada, Kalidasa has drawn her female bonding with Guatami, Aditi, Parbhrukita, Chaturika, Madhurika, Sanumati and Yavani. Other two female whom we can't see on the stage, they remain invisible are Menaka and Hansapadika. The female portrayal of Gutami is at some

extent seems with her motherly affection towards Shakuntala as she addresses to her;

Child, the sylvan goddesses of penance-forest, that are as loving (towards you) as your own kinsmen, have permitted you to depart; salute these divinities. (Act-IV.p.145)

Moreover she shows her dearly devotion for Shakuntala by questioning to Sarngrava;

Dear Sarangrava, here is Shakuntala following us, lamenting piteously. Her husband having cruelly repudiated her, what can the poor girl do?

Guatami shows her feminine sensibility in all most all her short conversation with any of the character in the play.

Sanumati is a very good friend of Menaka. She visits Dushyanta's kingdom to get the situation and observes all the happenings secretly. By seeing the picture of Shakuntala, painted by the king,

She is the only proof of Dushyanta's true love after rejoining the memory of his beloved. She keenly notice the pain of the king's love in separation and says;

Oh, such is one's devotion to one's duty, that I rejoice at his affection! (Act-VI.p.221)

The female deer plays an impassionate role at the farewell of Shakuntala in Act IV. Priyamvada executes the condition of the female deer in the forest and says in poetic tone,

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. (Act-IV.p.147)

Even the Nature (Prakruti) plays its role as the female and shows the feminine sensibility in Act IV, when Shakuntala addresses Vanjyotsna as her creeper sister, father Kashyap approves her sisterly affection and drowns her to Vanjyotsna. Before departing to her Shakuntala impresses the creeper and says;

O Vanjyotsna, although you are united with the mango-tree, do you embrace me, in return, with your arm-like twigs that point in this direction. From today I part from you. (Act-IV.p.147)

To conclude this paper, it is very clear that almost all the female characters have an everlasting emotional knot among them. Kalidasa has deliberately drawn the characters of female in his all plays. Chaturika, Yavani, Pratihari have very little scope to show their existence in the play, but on the

whole they all seem as helping hands to the leading characters. Present play and its female characters are totally free from female vs. female conspiracy; on the contrary female bonding is at the pick of height from the very beginning.

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