

CHAPTER –V

FEMALE FIGURES IN VEṆĪSAMĪHĀRA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction:

Almost all major dramas (nātakas), based on love sentiment or otherwise contain a heroine character and other female characters of similar or lesser importance. Barring only the *Mudrārākṣasaṃ*, other dramas contain magnificent heroine characters. Sometimes the female characters surpass their male counterpart in radiance and glory. To name a few are characters like – Śakuntalā, Vasantasenā, Vāsavadattā and the like. But none the less the heroine is pushed to a position where she is at best shown complimenting the hero in a hero-centric tale.

Veṇīsamīhāra, however is an exception. Here, the story revolves around the braiding of dishevelled lock of the heroine¹

“The name so happily selected for his play by the poet expresses all that is required of it. It has a triple meaning; viz, (i) Veṇyā Samīhāra (Samīhāraṇaṃ Draupadīs being dragged into the public assembly); (ii) Veṇyā Hetubhūtayā Samīhāra (destruction of the Kauravas); and (iii)

¹ *I.Cf. Intro to V.S. Ed. By M.R. Kale- MLBD -2004 (p. xv).*

Vaiṣyā Saṁhāra the tying up of the hair. So the choice of the name is a happy one”.

Andal N also observes that in the ancient Indian literary works it was the issues related to women which caused the overturn of kingdoms - “Whether it is the abduction of Sitā, the insult to Draupadī, the stories of Nala Damayanti, the abduction of princess of Canoj, almost always the causes which overturned kingdoms committed to the scepter and the pilgrim’s Staff and formed the ground work of all the grand epics, were women”².

Apart from the heroine Draupadī, other major female characters found in Veṅīsaṁhāra are – i) Draupadī ii) Bhānumatī iii) Gāndhārī iv) Vasāgandhā, the rākṣasī v) Duḥśalā vi) Jayadratha’s mother vii) Buddhimatikā, the cetī of Draupadī viii) Taralikā ix) Suvadana x) Hiḍimbā xi) Vihaṅgikā xii) Pratīhārī xiii) Kuntī xiv) Subhadrā xv) Uttarā

Different shades of female characters are discussed below extensively and sequentially:-

Draupadī:-

Draupadī is the female protagonist of the drama Veṅīsaṁhāra. She is an epitome of sensibility, love and care and at the same time adhered to

² Cf. W.A.I.S.O.A.C.A.N.,R. Publications,Jaipur and Delhi.

her resolve. As shown in the drama Draupdī's psyche has been afflicted severely in an unprecedented manner and she herself turns into an avenger. Draupadī's nuptial knot has been tied to five men and it has been legitimized, so there is no point of giving special weightage on that. However, it is certainly not an easy task to deal with the temperaments of five men. Though an impulsive person, Draupadī has to remain always cautious about maintaining harmony among her sibling husbands. Her caution is reflected in the statements –

*hañje buddhimatike bhavatyetad yadi mahārājasya pratikūlo bhaviṣyati.*³

Draupadī has a very clear insight. All she wants is avenging her insult, she underwent in the court of Kauravas years back. She strongly solicits solidarity and has a very strong urge of affiliation. When her need of affiliation is addressed she even overlooks minor insults. These are reflected through her statements-

*hañje yadyevaṃ tadavadhīraṇāpyeṣā māmāsvāsayati. tadupaviṣṭā
bhūtvā śṛnōmi tāvannāthasya vyavasitām.*⁴

*nātha udāsīneṣu yuṣmāsu manyurna punaḥ kupiteṣu.*⁵

³ Cf. V.S. - 1st Act p 15, Ed. M.R. Kale

⁴ Cf. V.S.- *ibid*

⁵ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 18, Ed. M.R. Kale

As stated earlier, Draupadī's psyche has been badly afflicted, she is a confident wife. She has full faith on her husbands and specially on second Pāṇḍva Bṛkodara Bhīma. Despite being running through an ordeal of excruciating experiences, she enjoys the comfort and confidence of the solidarity of her husbands. Her spontaneous comments cited below approve these-

*nātha kimudvega kāraṇam yuṣmāsu sannihiteṣu.*⁶

*kiṁ nātha duṣkaram tvayā parikupitena, anugṛhṇantvetadvyavasitām te bhrātarah.*⁷

Draupadī is totally engrossed with the conviction of avenging, but she is not totally bereft of feminine tenderness and timidity. She feels shocked when hears the thundering drumbeats of announcement of war and screams –

*nātha kimidanīmeṣa pralayajaladharastanitamāṁsalaḥ kṣaṇe kṣaṇe samaradundubhistāḍyate.*⁸

She is a very responsible wife, kṣatriya lady and a queen. She does not forget to wish goodluck to her husband marching towards battlefield. She

⁶ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 18, Ed. M.R. Kale

⁷ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 21, Ed. M.R. Kale

⁸ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 25, Ed. M.R. Kale

boosts up his confidence comparing him with parameśvara Śiva. Her statement -

*nātha asura samarābhimukhasya hareriva maṅgalaṁ yuṣmākaṁ bhavatu*⁹ also reflects that Bhīmasena and all are marching to fight for a good cause against demon like treacherous people. The spirit of a kṣatriya is to welcome the war- affair and to send her near ones to the battlefield with a smile. Draupadī exhibits that spirit and bid good bye to Bhīmasena, who is proceeding to the battlefield with the following words-

*anyacca natha punarapi yusmabhih samarādāgatyāham samāśvāsavitavyā.*¹⁰

Apart from all this Draupadī is a sensible, rational and prudent individual. She is fully aware of the requirements of time and place. She enjoys Bhīmasena concern for her but knows pretty well that the requirements in a battlefield are too high. A warrior has to be both physically fit and mentally alert and one cannot have the luxury of a perturbed mind. Hence she suggests Bhīmasena to maintain his cool in the following words-

⁹ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 26, Ed. M.R, Kale

¹⁰ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 26, Ed. M.R. Kale

*nātha mā khalu mā khalu jajñasenīparibhavoddīpitakopanalā
anape(ve)kṣitāśarīrāḥ saṁcarīṣyatha. yatopramattasaṁcaraṇiyāni
ripubalāni srūyante.¹¹*

The sixth act of the drama shows different shades of the character of Draupadī. Her pain and exhaustion in the first Act transforms to haste in the final Act, for that she even has to digest mild scoldings from anxious Yudhiṣṭhira. Her happiness knows no bounds when she is reported about the satisfying efforts made by Bhīma in the battlefield by pāñcālaka. Her psyche is so satisfied that she hastily does not bother about the death or living of atrocious Duryodhana. She hurriedly waits to meet Bhīma. This haste of Draupadī is reflected in her statements-

*nātha apanīto me manyuryadi punarapi sulabham darśanam
bhaviṣyati.¹²*

Draupadī is an abiding wife and a very good homemaker. She makes sure that as a king Yudhiṣṭhira be relaxed by entrusting Draupadī her share of stuffs.¹³ She is a very efficient and responsible homemaker. Even in her most busy schedule and worst mental state she does not forget the

¹¹ Cf. V.S.- 1st Act p 26, Ed. M.R, Kale

¹² Cf. V.S.- 6th Act p 135, Ed. M.R. Kale

¹³ Cf. draupadī- (sabaṣpaṁ) yaddevastribhuvanātho bhaṇati tatkathamanya thā bhaviṣyati. V.S.- 6th Act p 138, Ed. M.R, Kale

important household duties and rituals. Her words in the following sentence affirms this shade of her character-

*halā buddhimatike bhaṇa mama vacanena priyasakhīm Subhadrām. adya
vatsāyā Uttarāyācchaturtho māsaḥ pratipannasya garbhasya
tvamebaitam kulapraṭiṣṭhāpakam sāvadhānam rakṣa kadāpītaḥ
paralokagatasya śvaśurakulasyāsmākamapi salilabindudo bhaviṣyati
iti.*¹⁴

This statement also shows that her co-wife is a darling friend to her. Thus it can be easily stated that she is a lady of integrity and free from jealousy and hatred. It may be rightly mentioned here that Draupadī is an epitome of Kalidāsīan homemaker. In the fourth Act of Abhijñanaśakuntalām Kālidāsa suggests a newlywed woman to behave in a friendly manner with her co-wives in her husband abode –

*śuśruṣasva gurūnkuru priyasakhīvrīttim sapatnijane, bhartṛviprakṛitāpi
roṣanatayā mā śma pratīpaṃ gamaḥ bhūyiṣṭham bhava dakṣiṇā parijane,
bhāgyeṣvanutsekinī yāntyevam gṛhiṇīpadaṃ yuvatayoḥ vāmāḥ
kulasyādhayaḥ.*¹⁵

Draupadī as behaves exactly in the said manner. She is a straight forward and impulsive person. She does not believe in ambiguity and

¹⁴ Cf. V.S.- 6th Act p 153, Ed. M.R, Kale

¹⁵ Cf. A.S.- 4th Act Sl. No. 18. M.R. Kale

unnecessary risk involvement. Thus she reacts about Bhīma's offer to Duryodhana to select anyone among the siblings as his war-partner-

mahārāja kinnimittam punarnāthabhīmasenena sa durācaro bhaṇitaḥ:- pañcānāmapyasmākaṁ madhye yena te rocate tena saha te saṁgrāmo bhavatu iti. yadi māḍṛīsutayorekatarena saha saṁgrāmastena prārthito bhavettato ' tyāhitaṁ bhavet. ¹⁶

The most debilitating aspect of Draupadī's character is that she believes Tom, Dick and Herry. She does not apply reasoning and is carried away by the white lies of Rākṣasa Cārvāka. She gets fainted now and then apprehending mischiefs of Bhīmasena-

hā nātha bhīmasena hā mama paribhavapratikāraparityaktajīvita jaṭāsuraḥkaḥiḍimbā kirmīrakīcakajarāsaṁdhaniṣūdana saugandhikāha raṇacaṭukara dehi me prativacanam. ¹⁷

She is a loving wife and possesses knowledge about ksatriyas. Draupadī, who never wants downfall of her husband, which is observed in the statement –

nātha bhīmasena tvayā kila me keśaḥ saṁOyamitavyāḥ. na yuktaṁ vīrasya kṣatriyasya pratijnātamm śithilayitum. tatpratipālaya mām yāvadupasarpāmi. ¹⁸

¹⁶ Cf. V.S.- 6th Act p 139, Ed. M.R, Kale

¹⁷ Cf. V.S.- 6th Act p 144, Ed. M.R. Kale

Bhānumatī:

Bhānumatī, the better-half of Duryodhana is another important female character of Veṅṅisamhāra. This character is an innovation of Bhaṭṭanārāyana and is very well-painted by him in the second Act of the drama. No where in the Mahābhārata does the observance of ritual get priority, it is the creative intellect of the dramatist which is instrumental in shaping the character of Bhānumatī a vital and vibrant one. She represents svadhina Patikā and Sviyā type of woman. According to Viśvanāthakavirāja in the third chapter of Sāhityadarpaṇa Sviyā is-

vinayārjavādiyuktā grhakarmaparā pativratā Sviyā I cf.S.D.3rd chapter,p 111,sl-57,K.M.Sastri. And a Svādhina Patikā is-

kānto ratigunākṛṣṭo na jahāti yadantikam |

vicitravibhramāsaktā sā syātsvādhīnabharṭrkā || cf.S.D.3rd chapter, p126, K.M.Sastri ,sl- 74

She is a Pativratā, a wife very much devoted to the well-being of her husband. Addressing her as a most devoted wife, chamberlain comments-

Sādhu pativrate sādhu strībhavē 'pi vartamānā varam bavatī ¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. V.S.- 6th Act p 147,Ed. M.R, Kale

¹⁹ cf.V.S-2nd Act p 29,Ed.M.R.Kale

Regarding the word “Pativratā” in the Pativratādharmakathanam of Śivamahāpurāṇa has stated--

dhanyā pativratā nārī nānyā pūjyā viśeṣata /

pāvanī sarvalokānām sarvapāpaughanāsinī || ²⁰

hr̥ṣṭā hr̥ṣṭe viṣaṇṇa syādvīṣaṇṇasye priye priyā /

pativratā bhaveddevī sadā patihitaiṣiṇi. || ²¹

Bhānumatī being the wife of Duryadhana enjoys the status of a queen, honoured by all and leads a luxurious life, which is reflected by the statement of the sakhī of Bhānumatī-

*sakhī bhānumatī kasmādidānīm tvaṃ svapnadarsanamātrasya kṛte
abhīmānino mahārājaduryodhanasya mahiṣībhūtvaivam
vigalitadhīrabhāvātimatram samtapyase.* ²²

She is an impulsive person. She confides her feelings to her attendants without much hesitations. Her misgivings,²³ about Duryodhana finally come out to be a reality and that somehow warrants the purity of her inner self which may very well be defended by the Kalidasian statement –

²⁰ cf.S.M 213154

²¹ cf.S.M 213154 *ibid*

²² cf.V.S-2nd Act p30,Ed.M.R.Kale

²³ *hañje evametad, kiṃtvayam svapno timatrāmakuśaladarśano me pratibhāti. cf.V.S-2nd Act p30,Ed.M.R.Kale*

*sataṁ hi sandehapadeṣu vastuṣu
pramānamantaḥkaraṇapravṛttayaḥ*²⁴

She has inadequate mental strength alike a common lady, which is not appropriate to an woman holding the position of a queen. Bhānumatī in her statement –

*halā bhayena vismṛtāsmi, tattiṣṭha yāvatsarvaṁ smṛtvā kathayiṣyāmi*²⁵

She is less aristocratic and less formal as a queen, who considers her maids as her soulmates. She discusses raw matters with her two maids Suvadana and Taralikā . Which is noticed in her expression-

*halā aham tatastasyātīśayitadivya rūpino nakulasya darśanotsukā
jātā.*²⁶

Bhānumatī is a concerned wife, who alerted herself in her duty. She is awoken from her sleep in a particular time which is set up for a queen At the same time she has shown her quality as a queen towards a king in a kingdom. As it is proved in the utterance of Bhānumatī-

*tatohamāryaputrasya prabhātamaṅgalatūryaravamiśrena
vāravilāsinīsaṅgītaśabdena pratibodhitāsmi.*²⁷

²⁴ cf. A.s 1st Act Sl 20, p30 M.R.Kale

²⁵ cf. V.S-2nd Act p31 Ed, M.R.Kale

²⁶ cf. V.S- 2nd Act p35 Ed, M.R.Kale

²⁷ cf. V.S-2nd Act p38 Ed, M.R.Kale

She is really a frank lady, who relies on her maids and listens to their views and advices. In return she enjoys adoration from her aides. They remain helpful in all tasks of their queen and go to the extent of exploring means to solve all her problem. A good relation between the maids and queen is seen. Bhānumatī has full faith on her maids and their goodwill, so she asks for their suggestion in the words –

*halā kathaya kimatra śubhasūcakam.*²⁸

Bhānumatī is a pious and dutiful wife. She remains engrossed in offering to the Sun God leaving all sorts of earthly enjoyment for larger interest of her husband, which is similar to Vāsavadattā of Svapna-Vāsavadattām, where Vāsavadattā sacrifices all sorts of earthly enjoyment and happiness being a queen for her husband regaining the lost empire.²⁹ However, Bhānumatī waits for her attendant to come with oblations-

*hanje taralike upanaya me'rghyabhajanam yavatbhagavatah
sahasrarasmeh saparyam nivartayami.*³⁰

Bhānumatī is a very good wife and a queen. As a wife of an elder brother, she is also concerned about the lives of other brothers of Duryadhana. As she proceeds to offer oblations for retrieving the fortunes of Duryadhana

²⁸ cf. V.S-2nd Act p39 Ed, M.R. Kale

²⁹ cf. bhavaṭi .evamanirjñātāni daivatānyavadhūyante, Vasavadatta- Arya.tathā pariśramah parikhedam notpādayati, yathāyam paribhavaḥ. S.V-1st Act p43 Ed, Prof.A. Śāstrī

³⁰ cf. V.S-2nd Act p41 Ed, M.R. Kale

along with his brothers. She has shown her earnest trust on God. God will do away all the evils from Kauravas. Hence she offers prayers to the Lord-

*bhagavan ambaramahasaraekasahasrapatra
purvadisavadhumukhamandalakunkumavisesaka
sakalabhuvanaikaratnapradipa yadatra svapnadarsane kimapyatyahita
tadbhagavatah pranamena sabhratrakasyaryaputrasya kusalaparinami
bhavatu.*³¹

Bhānumatī is an authoritarian queen. As a queen she has the power to use her attendant and right to rule when ever is necessary. She orders her maids even to pass flowers for oblation to the Sun God. In slightest of carelessness from the part of her attendants she rebukes severally-

*(saroṣam) aho pramāḍah parijanasya.*³²

She is a graceful wife, who appeases her husband even when it becomes difficult to do so. She is so sober as a wife that even in her righteous efforts she requests her husband to be kind enough to leave her and let her offer necessary oblations and states-

*āryaputra abhyanuññātāyāstvayā asti me kasminnapi
niyame'bhilāṣaḥ.*³³

³¹ cf. V.S-2nd Act p41 Ed, M.R. Kale

³² cf. V.S-2ND Act p42 Ed, M.R. Kale

As an woman belonging to the by gone days Bhānumatī had strong faith in observance of rituals. Though she had full faith and confidence on her husband's ability and valour, she greatly valued the accomplishments of rituals she observed with an intention of overall accomplishment of her husband approval and for that she sought her husband approval and co-operation.³⁴

She is a commanding lady i,e she has full authority over the employees of the king . She does not spare someone who violates loyalty norms and sharply reacts when she overhears chamberlain making some imprudent comments-

*ārya kimanarthaṁ mantrayase.*³⁵

Besides all this she is a sensible, rational and prudent lady. When she heard the oath of Arjuna to kill Jayadratha in a day she became serious. But in another side Duryadhana is not at all serious like her. Rather he tries to console Jayadrathas mother and wife with the criticizing words of Pāṇḍvas. She is intelligent enough to judge people and their factual abilities. She knows Arjuna and his influence and hence remarks-

³³ cf.V.S-2nd Act p42 Ed,M.R.Kale *ibid*

³⁴cf *āryaputra na khalu kimapi me saṅkā kāraṇaṁ yuṣmāsu sannihiteṣu.kimtvaryāputrasyaiva manorathasampattimabhina ndāmi .V.S-2nd Act p43 Ed,M.R.Kale*

³⁵ cf.V.S-2nd Act p47 Ed,M.R.Kale

*āryaputra yadyapyevam tathāpi gurukṛtapratijñāābharo dhanañjayah
sthānam khalu śaṅkāyāh.*³⁶

In the first Act of the drama, the reference of Bhānumatī is made in a superfluous manner. There she is portrayed as a very ordinary lady lacking any depth of thought and thus insults Draupadī with the words that why Draupadī has not yet braided her hair, whereas Yudhiṣṭhira already sent the proposal to make peace exchange of five villages.³⁷

The character of Bhānumatī, through all her variation of temperament comes out to be a very attractive and adorable one in the Bhaṭṭanārāyana's play.

GĀNDHĀRĪ

The character of Gāndhārī portrayed in Bhaṭṭanārāyana's Veṅṣamhāra is but a disheartened mother . The character in the drama disappoints a Mahabharata admirer. As per Mahabharata Gāndhārī is the most lustrous woman one can have come across peeping into world literature. That very Gāndhārī is confined to a weak and apprehensive mother in the drama. As in the Veṅṣamhāra she does not say yatha dharma tatha jayah, rather she

³⁶ cf. V.S-2nd Act p50 Ed, M.R. Kale

³⁷ *Cetī- ayi yājñaseni pañcagrāmāḥ prārthayanta iti śrūyate tatkasmādidānīmapi te keśā na saṁyamante. V.S.- 1st Act p 20, Ed. M.R, Kale*

leaves no stone untouched to save Duryadhana when he remains as the only survivor among her hundred sons-

jāta etadeva sampratam prabhutam yattvamapi tavadeko jivasi /

*tajjāta akālaste samarasya. prasīda. eṣa te śirṣāñjaliḥ nivartyatām samaravyāpārāt. apaścimaṁ kuru me vacanam.*³⁸

She is a very practical kind of person. She knows her limitations. She knows pretty well that her husband is a blind old helpless man and she herself has voluntarily left herself deprived of the sight of the world as a mark of solidarity with her husband. She does not want to afford the extra-vagance of the life of her only survived son Durydhana. For that she is prepared to be blamed as a poor unlikely queen-

*jāta alam paridevitena. tvamapi tāvadeko'syāndhayugalasya mārgopadeśakaḥ. tacciram jīva. kiṁ me rājyena jayena vā.*³⁹

As an woman next door Gāndhārī is a typical Indian woman who always appeases her husband and wants her off springs to obey and honour the decisions made by their father for the common interest of the family. The same is evidenced by her statement-

*jāta yatpitā te viduro vā bhaṇati.*⁴⁰

³⁸ cf. V.S-5th Act p111 Ed, M.R. Kale

³⁹ cf. V.S-5th Act p110 Ed, M.R. Kale

Every child is special for a mother. Same is true for Gāndhārī, the mother of hundred sons. Though she makes enormous efforts to make Duryodhana, sole survivor among her hundred sons stay alive, she always laments and her heart cries for the loss of life of her ninety nine sons.

A mother is said to be a disguised God in human form on earth. “Her affection to her child bears no comparison and it is rewardless. In the “Manusmṛti” it is stated that “the teacher is more important than ten instructions, the father is more important than hundred teachers and the mother is more important than thousand fathers.” P.O.W.S.C. Vol-I Part-II, Ed Prof. V. Upadhyay. In the 2nd chapter of Manusmṛti as it is found –

upādhyayan daśacarya ācaryānām śataṁ pitā |

sahasram tu pitṛn mātā gauravenatiricyate || M.S sl.145, ch.72.

She soothes her child in all possible manner. No matter how much hardships she goes through, how much pain she suffers, she wants her children to remain calm and comfortable. Same is noticed in the movements and activities of Gāndhārī-

*jāta samāśvasiḥi samāśvasiḥi.*⁴¹

⁴⁰ cf. V.S-5th Act p112 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁴¹ Cf. V.S-5th Act p 117 Ed, M.R. Kale

Vasāgandhā:-

The character Vasāgandhā is introduced in the praveśaka of the third Act of the drama Veṅīsamhāra. A praveśaka is characterized to be a part of the drama where the important incidents between two acts are exhibited and enacted normally by inferior characters. Thus Vasāgandhā is expected to be an inferior character and as per expectation she represents a demoness who is considered as lesser graceful. However, graceful or otherwise Vasāgandhā is a woman, a homemaker, a loving wife, a prudent and systematic lady and a loyal subject.

Vasāgandhā, wife of Rudhirapriya is a good home maker, who makes saving and keeping food materials collected, she feels delighted and free from anxiety.

hatamānuṣamāmsabhārake kumbhasahasravasāvīḥ samcīte

aniśam ca pibāmi śonitam varṣaśatam samaro bhavatu⁴²

Even the husband praises her with the epithet sugṛhiṇī. In the Śāntiparva of Mahābhārata, it is stated that a wife amplifies a home: gṛhiṇī gṛhamucyate. Vasāgandhā reminds a reader such kind of a wife. For every household needs her husband Rudhirapriya depends on her and seeks her help. Beyond her family works she discharges some social

⁴² Cf. V.S-3rd Act p53 Ed, M.R. Kale

duties and duties as a subject of demon society on her own. She is kind hearted and decisive in nature. She feels complete solidarity with Hiḍimbā for the loss of her lone son and feels happy and proud if she or her husband can do something for their lord Bhīma or mistress Hiḍimbā. However she lacks knowledge of spiritualism. So far spirituality and scriptural knowledge is concerned she is led by the guidelines of her husband.

She represents a common Indian wife who does not think of enjoying anything by herself. For all kind of consumption and enjoyment she waits her husband to arrive.

*rudhirapriya adyāpi svaminyā hirimbādevyā ghatotkacasoko
nopaśāmyati.*⁴³

Generally, wife is considered as the real friend of a husband, she is the mistress of the household. “The earlier Sanskrit poets believed House is not really the house, but it is the house-wife that makes it. On the other hand this will result in the mutual love between wife and husband. The female characters in the dramas of classical Sanskrit poets visualize that if husband and wife work together with mutual understanding and unity

⁴³ Cf. V.S-3RD Act p55 Ed, M.R. Kale

they both can jointly lead the Universe the greatest bliss.” P O W S C-
Vol-I,Part-II Ed,Prof.V.Upadhyay⁴⁴

DUḤŚALĀ:-

Duḥśalā, the sister of Duryodhana and the wife of Jayadratha is another female character mentioned in the drama Veṅīsamhāra. She has entered with her mother-in-law in the last part of the second Act of the drama. She does not have any particular dialogue but she just weeps and wails for the life of her husband Jayadratha. Perhaps because of the custom that younger women should not talk in front of their mothers-in-law, brothers and other elders. She is very careful and worried about the life of her husband.

MOTHER:-

Jayadratha’s mother is also another female character found in the Veṅīsamhāra. She and her daughter-in-law both of them are frightened about the life of Jayadratha. So in the mouth of fearful mother ---

*paritrāyatām paritrāyatām kumaraḥ.*⁴⁵

She becomes very apprehensive and very much concerned about her son’s life. Obviously the mind of a mother could not tolerate any harm of

⁴⁴ Cf.P.O.W.S.C-Vol-I,P-II ED,Prof.V.Upadhyay

⁴⁵ CF.V.S-2nd Act p48 Ed,M.R.Kale

her son. Jayadrathas mother also becomes very emotional, when she has to hear the vow of Arjuna to kill Jayadratha within a day i,e before sunset then she has become apprehended about the life of her son Jayadratha. Which is followed in the statement----

*(sāsaṅkam) adya khalu putravadhamarsoddīpitena gāndīvinā
anastamite divasanāthe tasya vadhaḥ pratijñātaḥ*⁴⁶

She is a well informed woman, she takes detail informations about the developments in the battlefield and informs Duryodhana about the intention of Arjuna towards Jayadratha. She is well acquainted with the power of Arjuna. Thus a very disheartened mother makes the comment-

*jāta te hi putrabandhuvadhāmarṣoddīpitakopānalā
anapekṣitāśarīrā vīrāḥ parikrāmanti.*⁴⁷

*asamāptapratijñābharasyātmavadho'sya pratijñātaḥ.*⁴⁸

Jayadratha's mother is a wise woman. She knows which one is good or bad. She has also the ability to judge people. She is also eloquent and reveals her thoughts properly. So she appreciates Bhānumatī for her true remarks on Arjuna, the great archer. Therefore indicating to Bhānumatī, mother says-

⁴⁶ Cf. V.S-2nd Act p49 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid*

⁴⁸ Cf. V.S-2nd Act p50 Ed, M.R. Kale

*jāte sādhu kalocitaṃ tvayā mantritaṃ.*⁴⁹

BUDDHIMATIKĀ

Buddhimatikā is a maid-servant of Draupadī and another female character delineated in the drama. She is a suitable attendant of her queen Draupadī. She is appeared only in the first Act and sixth Act of the drama. She is always had seen as a supportive maid. It reflects in the expression of her-

*samāśvasitu samāśvasitu bhṛṭṭinī. apaneṣyati te manyuṃ
nityānubhaddha kurubairah kumāro bhīmasenaḥ.*⁵⁰

At a glance she is not any lesser than a high class lady. Perhaps staying for a long association with a lady like Draupadī, she derives all the aristocratic qualities. She has a very strong sense of observation. As a true dutiful maid she reports to her mistress about Bhīmasena as he might be in an enraged mood. By which it is indicated the positive action for Draupadī in another side. She feels happy whenever she has to convey any good message to Draupadī . As in the statement of Buddhimatikā—

*bhṛṭṭini parikupita iva kumārah lakṣyate*⁵¹

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid*

⁵⁰ Cf. V.S-1st Act p14 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁵¹ Cf. V.S-1st Act p15 Ed, M.R. Kale

Moreover she has the quality to explain something very systematically. She informs about the custom of bowing down to the feet of elders of the royal family in this way—

*śṛṇotu kumāraḥ. adya khalu devī ambāśahitā
subhadrāpramukheṇa sapatnīvargeṇa parivṛtā āryāyā gāndhāryāḥ
pādavandanam kartum gatāsīt.*⁵²

She is a good informer. As a supporting person of her queen, she also feels bad for her queen Draupadī. When Draupadī is insulted by Bhānumatī with some words, hurting Buddhimatikā informs to Bhīmasena by repeating the words of Bhānumatī—

*ayi yajñaseni pañcagrāmah prarthayanta iti śruyate.
tatkasmādidānīmapi te keśā na saṁyamyante.*⁵³

Buddhimatikā is an intelligent attendant. She managed all the things very carefully. She discharges her duty without any complain. Moreover she carefully guards the dignity of her mistress. So in her expression-

*kumāra yadi parijanahīnā bhavettadā devī bhaṇati*⁵⁴

⁵² Cf. V.S-1st Act p19 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁵³ Cf. V.S-1st Act p20 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid*

She is a smart maid, who makes full observation of her mistress. When she thinks that her queen need not answer any person particularly to someone who belongs to the opponent side and specially, when maids are near with their mistress. For that reason she has replied very intelligently in the question of Bhānumatī. Where the merit of Buddhimatikā is highlighted by the following statement—

*mayā evaṃ bhaṇitam. ayi bhānumatī yuṣmākamamukteṣu keśeṣu kathamasmākaṃ devyāḥ keśāḥ saṃyamantaiti.*⁵⁵

In the sixth Act of the drama nothing is special, she is portrayed merely as a good attendant. She accomplishes all the works whatever is ordered by her lord and queen. She is also seen to console her queen in her distress. And she also becomes delightful whenever she gets a chance to give any good news to her queen. So, there is a spontaneous happiness in her expression—

*(draupadīmaliṅgya) devi nivṛtyatām nivṛtyatām, eṣa khalu pūritapratijñāābhāro nāthaste veṇīsamhāram kartum tvāmevānviṣyati.*⁵⁶

SUVADANĀ AND TARALIKĀ

Suvadanā and Taralikā are the other two female attendants of Bhānumatī, Suvadanā Taralikā are more like friends maid–servants. Both

⁵⁵ Cf. V.S-1st Act p21 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁵⁶ Cf. V.S-6th Act p163 Ed, M.R. Kale

of them are very honest and well wishers of their queen. So they share common thinking about the matters related to their mistress Bhānumatī. Suvadanā feels proud for friend, Taralikā also has similar feelings and thus she agrees with Suvadanā. These are reflected in the statement—

*sakhī- sakhī bhānumatī kasmādidānīm tvam svapnadarśanamātrasya kṛte
abhīmānino mahārājaduryodhanasya mahisī bhūtvaivam
vigalitadhīrabhāvātīmātram samtapyase. cetī-bhaṭṭini śobhanam bhaṇati
suvadanā. svapañjanaḥ kim na khalu pralapati.*⁵⁷

Both of them are theists, who believe in the religious performance to remove the evils from their queen. So also they extend suggestions and help their queen, whenever necessary. Here is quoted such a suggestion-

*sakhī- priyasakhī, yadyaevam tatkathaya svapnam yenāvāmapī
pratiṣṭhāpayantyaū dharmaprasāmsayā devatāsankīrtanena
dūrvādiparigraheṇa ca parihariṣyāvaḥ.*⁵⁸ *cetī- śobhanam khalu bhaṇati
suvadanā. akuśaladarśanāḥ svapnā devatānām prasāmsayā
kuśalapariṇāmā bhavantīti śrūyate.*⁵⁹

They are very sincere in their nature and also wise in their character. They always wish well-being for their queen. Both of them never want to conceal anything rather they prefer to speak the facts prompted by a

⁵⁷ Cf. V.S-2nd Act p30 Ed, M.R.Kale

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid*

⁵⁹ Cf. V.S-2nd Act p31 Ed, M.R.Kale

genuine feeling of love and good will to their queen. Really they are truthful which may be proved through the following lines-

*sakhī cetī ca –(anyonyamavalokya apavārya) atra nāsti stokamapi
śubhasūcakam yadyatrālikam kathayiṣye tatpriyā sakhyā aparādhinī
bhviṣyāmi. sa eva snigdho jana yoḥ pṛṣṭaḥ paruṣamapi hitam
bhaṇati.(prakāśam) sakhī sarvamebai
tadaśubhanivedanam.taddevatānām praṇāmena dvijātijanapratigraheṇa
cāntaryatām .na khalu daṁṣṭṛino nakulasya vā darśanamahiśatavadham
ca svapne prasāmsanti vicakṣanāh.⁶⁰*

HIḌIMBĀ

Though the character of Hiḍimbā is not portrayed in the Veṅīsamhāra it is an important character which referred in the drama. Her character is found not less significant than the character of Draupadī. The character of Hiḍimbā is placed in a higher position though there is no direct dialogue of her in the drama. About her it is from the words of Rudhirapriya, the demon in the praveśaka of the third Act of the drama. According to Indian thought and evidences of Bhāgavata Purāna Rakṣasas and Yakṣas are brought under eight devasargas⁶¹ so they are treated as superior species of creation of the creator. Here in

⁶⁰ Cf. V.S-2nd Act p39 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁶¹ Cf. devasargaścaṣṭavidho vivudhāḥ pitaro'suraḥ |
gandharvapsarāḥ siddha yakṣaraksāmsi caraṇaḥ || Bhāgavata 3/10/27.

Veṅṣamhāra, it is found that the idea of a super wife of Bhīmasena in the character of Hiḍimbā. As she disposed the demon Rudhirapriya always to follow Bhīma in the battle field for helping whenever Bhīma would be drinking blood of Duhsasana from his chest. Being a human being Bhīma could not drink the blood of Duhsasana in absence of raksasabhava. This superior thought of Hiḍimbā towards her husband Bhīma indicates her as a true devotee sympathetic and well wisher wife of Indian culture. Though she was shocked by the death of her only son Ghatokaca and console by Draupadī and Subhadrā. Moreover she is a good administrator who satisfies her subjects and awes respect.

VIHAṄGIKĀ

A minor yet important female character of Veṅṣamhāra. As revealed from the dialogue of the chamberlain, Vihaṅgikā is not just a mere attendant of Bhānumatī consort of Duryodhana, rather she is her confident. She is an untiring and duty-bound attendant who takes pain in knowing every detail of daily activities. She goes to the extent of observing minutely even the mental state of affairs of her mistress. Through the very little reference made about Vihaṅgikā in the second Act of the drama, it may very well be assumed that Bhānumatī largely depends on Vihaṅgikā for all her works to be done and to a large extent she even seeks emotional solace as well.

PRATĪHĀRĪ

Pratīhārī is a gatekeeper and the office-bearer is so called by virtue of being posted in the pratiharabhumi, the gate of a harem or the royal court—

*mahārāja eṣā khalu jāmātuḥ sindhurājasya mātā Duḥśalā ca
pratīhārabhūmau tiṣṭhati.*⁶²

The post of a Pratīhārī is generally held by a woman. The Kathāmukham of Kādambarī extends a thorough description of a Pratīhārī, where it is said that a Pratīhārī wears a tight outfit and very less make ups. She always holds a sword and is expected to be precise, intelligent and wise. Because, it is the Pratīhārī who reports to kings or queens about the arrival of dignatories. She very often confronts the kings emotions and dilemmas but behaves in a very rational rather in a professional manner. The Pratīhārī in Bhaṭṭanārāyana's Veṅīsamhāra has exhibited some kind of concern and excitement. Might be she intended to butter up her master Duryadhana exhibiting extra loyalty and concern in her actions-

*(sodvegamupasṛtya) jayatu jayatu mahārājah.*⁶³

And finally as expected the Pratīhārī appeases the royal order and says-

⁶²Cf. V.S-2nd Act p48 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁶³Cf. V.S-2nd Act p48 Ed, M.R. Kale

*yanmahārāja ajnapayati.*⁶⁴

KUNTĪ, SUBHADRĀ AND UTTARĀ

Except the above characters there are some characters like- Kuntī, Subhadrā, and Uttarā which are referred only in the drama Veṅṣamhāra. Kuntī, the mother of Pāṇḍvas is referred only in the first Act and sixth Act of the drama. In the first Act as a royal mother and a head of the family Kuntī leads the rest of her family members in the customary rites- Like paying a formal visit to Gāndhārī, the incumbent queen and her elder sister-in law who is in great trouble. In the drama the same is learned from the dialogues of cetī which is displayed as a reporting to Bhīma-

*adya khalu devī ambāsaḥitā subhadrā pramukheṇa sapatnīvargeṇa parivṛtā āryāya gāndhāryāḥ pādavandanam kartum gatāsīt.*⁶⁵

In the sixth Act also Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī make reference to Kuntī very frequently and are shown to be very concerned about Kuntī's feelings and take caution while reporting something unfortunate and painful.

The name of Subhadrā is referred in the first, third and sixth Act of the drama. In the first Act she accompanies other co-wives and mother-

⁶⁴ Cf. V.S-2nd Act p48 Ed, M.R. Kale

⁶⁵ Cf. V.S-1st Act p19 Ed, M.R. Kale

in-law to pay obeisance to the feet of Gāndhārī. In the third act also she accompanies Draupadī to console Hiḍimbā, who has lost her lone son Ghatotkaca. It is great generosity on the part of Subhadrā, who has also already lost her son Abhīmanyu to come forward to share the grief of others. Her solidarity with Hiḍimbā indicates that she is a sympathetic and a broad minded lady. Again in the sixth Act of the drama where Draupadī in her message to Subhadrā, has entrusted her the responsibility to look after the womb of Uttarā, who carries in her womb a four month grown foetus. From that it may be considered that Subhadrā is a responsible lady next to Draupadī to take and discharge responsibilities of the family affairs. Subhadrā is considered be capable to protect the generation-old family heritage and the next progeny of Pāṇḍvas.

The character of Uttarā is referred only in the sixth Act of the drama. She is the widow of ABhīmanyu. In the drama She is shown to carry the foetus. She is a very tender woman and is very important for the family of Pāṇḍvas. Though there is not a single dialogue of her in the drama Veṅṅisamhāra, by no means she is lesser important.