



Original Article

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES OF KALIDASA AND BHAVABHUTI

Bhavesh Chandrakar¹ & Dr. Sarika Sinha²

¹*Research Scholar, Department of English, MATS University, Raipur*

²*Guide & Associate Professor, MATS University, Raipur*

Manuscript ID:

IJAAR-130215

ISSN: 2347-7075

Impact Factor – 8.141

Volume - 13

Issue - 2

November - December 2025

Pp. 84 - 89

Submitted: 14 Dec 2025

Revised: 22 Dec 2025

Accepted: 30 Dec 2025

Published: 1 Jan 2026

Corresponding Author:
Bhavesh Chandrakar

Quick Response Code:



Website: <https://ijaar.co.in/>



DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.18205367

DOI Link:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18205367>



Creative Commons



Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0), which permits others to remix, adapt, and build upon the work non-commercially, provided that appropriate credit is given and that any new creations are licensed under identical terms.

How to cite this article:

*Bhavesh Chandrakar & Dr. Sarika Sinha. (2025). Narrative Techniques Of Kalidasa And Bhavabhuti. International Journal of Advance and Applied Research, 13(2), 84–89.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18205367>*



In order to create a dramatic masterpiece an author must be provided a complete freedom to use his talent of creating but there are many rules provided for dramatic art and dramaturgy in the field of Indian English Literature. Whenever a playwright creates something new, he has to follow a free will or a free-flow of his thought but he was never allowed to do so, due to the instructions provided by our ancient masters. Mostly the Indian dramatists followed the rules laid down by Bharata in his dramatic treatise *Natyashastra*. Every minute details related to the creation of plays, acting, music, stagecraft, characterization has been nicely described by our ancient sage Bharata in *Natyashastra*. The present part of the research tries to study about the two famous playwright Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa's narrative techniques in famous works:

- *Malti Madhava* (Bhavabhuti)
- *Vikramorvashi* (Kalidasa)

According to the dramatic standards as laid down in our ancient Indian dramatic treatise *Natyashastra*, the play *Malti Madhava* of Bhavabhuti comes under the category of 'Prakarna'. In simple language a Prakarna means the division of the play into various acts, basically the ancient plays have to be divided at least in five acts but a few dramatists include more than five acts. While composing *Malti Madhava* Bhavabhuti has fully observed the dramatic rules of Prakarna. The name of the play is given according to the names of the male and female protagonist. The subject matter of the play is also concerned with the earthly human beings or we can say the love story of

Malti and Madhava. Bhavabhuti has designed *Malti Madhava* as per the rules of dramaturgy. He has also mentioned at the beginning of his play all the religious rites performed before the starting of the play. In the ancient times people used to worship Nandi. Many offerings were made to Nandi in order to receive the blessings.

Scriptures says that Bhavabhuti lived near eighth century. He was a very famous poet and author of Indian Literature. In the history of Sanskrit literature Bhavabhuti was famous as he contributed many dramas, poetry and philosophical writings to Indian literature. His plays perfectly display the different Rasa's mentioned in the treatise of dramaturgy *Natyashastra*. His famous work *Uttaramacharita* placed him on the top as the poet of Karuna rasa. In his portrayal of characters and events he uses to add extra suspense and was able to attract more and more readers. In our present research we are concentrating on Bhavabhuti's *Malti Madhava* and Kalidasa's *Vikramorvashi*. Both were contemporaries and the historians and men of letters use to compare Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti on various grounds. *Malti Madhava* by Bhavabhuti is a literary piece which presents a beautiful love story of Malti and Madhava. Bhavabhuti has collected the story of Malti and Madhava in total ten acts. Malti's father was a minister from the city of Ujjain and Madhava was related to a minister from the Vidarbha. Bhuri vasa father of Malti and Devarata's father of Madhava were very good friends from their childhood, both of them were classmates. Both of them decided that in future if they will have a son and a daughter,



they would have arranged the marriage between them. Time passed quickly and Bhurivasu had a daughter named Malti and Devarata had a son named Madhava. But an obstacle came in their marriage when suddenly the king asked the father of Malti to marry his daughter Malati to his friend Nandana. Bhuri vasa was in a critical situation, he was not able to decide what to do and he also does not want to go against the desire of the king. He personally wishes to marry his daughter to his friend's son Madhava. To escape from the king's wrath Devarata took the help of a Buddhist nun and order her to plan a secret marriage of the two lovers Malti and Madhava. This is how the story starts. Bhavabhuti has taken the plot of *Malti Madhava* from *Kathasaritsagar*. He has taken the plot from *Brihatkatha*. The *Brihatkatha* was actually written in the Prakrit language. *Brihatkatha* was an ancient collection of fables taken from the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. Following the stories or fables of *Kathasaritsagar* Bhavabhuti constructed the plot of *Malti Madhava*. Actually, there were two stories found in *Kathasaritsagar* from which Bhavabhuti has derived his plot for *Malti Madhava*.

The first story is about a Brahmana named Yasasakara, who used to live in the country of Kalinga. He was living with his wife and son. When a terrible flood came at Kalinga this Brahmana along with his wife and son shifted to Visala and started living there. His son became a good friend of the Kshatriya, named Vijayasena. Vijayasena had a sister named, Madiravati. Once Madiravati met Yasaskara's son and both of

them fell in love. In between another incident happened in Madiravati's life. A kshatriya youth asked for Madiravati's hands from her parents and got her father's consent. The son of Yasaskara was very disappointed at this incident and he tried to end his life by hanging himself, unfortunately he was saved by a stranger. Both these persons shared their unfinished love tales with each-other. In the ancient times it was a tradition for the new brides to enter the temple of Kamadeva and do some traditional practice in the temple. When Madiravati came to the temple of Kamadeva for this practice, , his lover the son of Yasaskara was advised by his stranger friend to hide himself and watch the proceedings of Madiravati. The bride discloses her heart to Lord Kamadeva and prays to him to unite his Brahmana lover in the next birth at least and then she tries to end her life by using her upper garment. On seeing this hidden lover came forward and rescues her. Both the lovers returned their home and at the end of the story they get married.

The second story is the story of Vidushak, which Bhavabhuti has used in the fifth Act of *Maltimadhava*. The story says that King Aditya Sena was returning to the town at night time and the gates of the town were closed so he took the shelter in a monastery. As the Brahmanas saw that this person got all the qualities of a Kshatriya, they treat him nicely. The next morning the king entered his own capital. As a gift to all the services provided to him by the monastery the king offered thousand villages to this monastery. He also appointed a purohit in the town. After sometime quarrels



started between the Brahmanas and the people forgot the generosity of the king. One day in the city there came a mendicant Brahmana and he was very outspoken. He said the Brahmanas to prove their strength. If we compare the plots of *Maltimadhava* with these two stories, it was very clear that that the poet got the various elements from these two plots.

Maltimadava is a love play, and it is Bhavabhuti's masterpiece. The play is filled with Bhavabhuti's Karuna rasa. Bhavabhuti has not based the plot of *Maltimadhava* on any historical event but it is a work of his poetic fancy. According to his free poetic imagination Bhavabhuti has given each and every minute details of dramaturgy in *Maltimadhava*. The language use by the poet is very rare and elegant and in the whole play throughout the language is very conversational type. By presenting the incidents like the escape of the tiger from the cage, the scenes of the cemetery, the midnight scene of ghosts and the flight with the policemen makes the play more interesting. Bhavabhuti has utilized the 24 different metres filled with music. He has employed 238 slokas. The similes used by him are often good and happy.

A very interesting thing about the play is that Bhavabhuti has very nicely merged the two events the marriage of Makaranda and Madhyantika. These events were so skilfully blended by the author in the main play that it looks just like a part of it. The poet has skilfully showed the love marriage between Makaranda and Madhyantika. By doing this Bhavabhuti has strongly showed his desire to show the

delineating love condition of a lover. This part of the play perfectly supports the bhavas like Bhibhasta and Adhahuta. The VII th and VIII th acts carry the plot to a happy ending as it says:

Enter Bhuddharakshita:

Buddharakshita— “So far so good, Markanda, wedded to Nandana who was imposed upon by the beautiful and well-fitted disguise of Malati was well taken care of in the mansion of the minister, Bhurivasu, according to the instructions of her reverence. To-day we too came to the residence of Nandana. Her reverence then took leave of Nandana and went home. Now this evening time, in which the whole body of servants is busily engaged in celebrating the untimely Kaumudi festival in the shape of the entrance of the bride into the house of her husband, will be favourable to the execution of our plans. It was now that the son-in-law, as he, his passion inflamed, besought again and again his wife, with prostrations at her feet, but afterwards proceeded to do violence, was severely repulsed by Makaranda. Then he, his words flattering through rising excitement, exasperated and exceedingly grieved, and his eyes rolling through intoxication, declared on oath that he would have no more to do with the wanton girl and left the inner apartment. So, seizing this occasion I will get Madhyantika and unite her with Makaranda.”

[Act VII. P.139-141]

Another point which makes *Maltimadhava* an unforgettable romance is the credit to our playwright Bhavabhuti that he has only presented his male characters



who knows one love only. The love of Malati and Madhava are pure and checked with a proper sense of honour and dignity. Madhava is very bold and faithful lover. He has always protected the sense of family honour and followed his good manners. Malati was also affected by the power of love but she has never allowed her passions to override her good manners. Makranda was very brave and sincere for Madhava and he always helped him. Alokita, Lov and Buddha show a charming mixture of affection and shrewdness both. The heroine of the drama is loved as a woman, she was presented by Bhavabhitii like common human beings, he has never tried to present her as a love goddess. Although both the lovers loved each other intensely but at the same time they have a sense of traditions in their minds. Their love story proceeds within the boundaries of Indian society.

On the other hand, Kalidasa's Play Vikramorvashiyam is not the common love story of two earthly lovers, the play presents complicated love between a heavenly nymph and a mortal being. A few fragments of the story can be found in the Rigveda. In Rigveda it was mentioned that once a beautiful celestial nymph was kidnapped by a demon. The king Pururavas rescues her and both of them fall in love with each other at the first sight. Urvashi used to live in heaven and when her duty on earth completed, she again followed the instructions of Lord Indra and she returns back to heaven. She was performing in the court of Gods. In the act II of the play it was shown that king Pururava was talking about Urvashi's beauty with the jester Manavaka and Urvashi comes to

earth with her friend Chitralekha. She heard whatever Pururava said to the jester concerning her. She was present on the scene but in an invisible manner. Afterwards she uses her power of invisibility and responds to the king with a love letter. She wrote a letter on the leave of a birch tree. But when she actually comes in-front of the king there was a call from the heaven for a dance performance so both the lovers were unable to meet at that moment. Pururava got distracted with the incident and she handed over that love letter to Manavaka to keep it safely but Manavaka lost that letter due to heavy wind. The letter moved with the wind blow and king Pururavas queen Ausinari got the letter. She came to know about the love affair of Pururavas and Urvashi. Urvashi also committed a mistake during her performance in the heaven. While singing the lyrics she calls the name 'purravas' instead of 'Purusottama'. Lord Indra was very angry at this and he banished Urvashi from her celestial position and she was expelled from the heaven towards the earth. Lord Indra says that Urvashi has to live on the earth with the king Pururavas but only until the face of the child born to them must not be seen by Pururavas. After this Urvashi goes to the earth and spends a sufficient amount of her life with the king Pururavas. After Kalidasa has created the episode of the Kumara forest. It was told that Kumara forest was forbidden to women. If a woman enters this forest he would be transformed into a creeper, and she should not be restored. Urvashi when came to this earth in search of Pururava, enters the forest unknowingly and she becomes a creeper and



disappears. On approaching Pururava searches for her:
(Approaching)-

“O blue-necked peacock, with eyes white in the corners, have you seen my love-lorn lady of broad big eyes in this forest? For her charms deserve your gaze”.

(Reflecting) Well I have it.

“Owing to the disappearance of my love, his beautiful, thick phmage, divided by the gentle breeze, is now without a rival; but where would be his boast, before the excellent tresses of her hair decked with flowers when loosened in amorous sport? “

[Act IV. P.109- 10]

Thus we have seen that there is a similarity in the presentation mode of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, both have beautifully used the poetic language in describing the lovelorn female characters. The passions of Malati and Urvashi were just same for their male partners. Both these ladies intensely love their partners. The over-elaborated and fantastic style of Bhavabhuti in *Maltimadhava* has produced an artificial and pure literary style. Both the playwrights have beautifully followed the rules of dramatic expression and they have given us life-like characters. The narrative techniques of both the authors were appreciated even by the present playwrights. Both of them have set an example for the forth coming authors.

References:

1. *Bhavabhuti's Maltimadhava*, Translation, M. Ramchandra Kale, Motilal Banarsi Das, 1996.
2. Rajan Chandra, translation. *The Complete Works of Kalidasa* (Vol.2) New Delhi : Sahitya Academy, 2002.
3. *Vikramoryasiyam of Kalidasa*, translation, C.R.Devadhar, Publisher: Motilal Banarsi Das, 2003.