

Status of women and their role in Ancient Indian Society

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Abstract: According to the Veda, marriage is a union between a masculine and feminine entity with commitments to pursue Dharma (duty), Artha (earning money and other possessions), Kama (physical and other desires) and Moksha (the eternal liberation) in unison. Scripturally, it is viewed as a celebration of sensual pleasure, progress, prosperity and joy as it is also a pyramid of elevation to the next level of one's Karmic experience. Society recognizes this and puts in place quality controls since it influences the social and cultural growth of society. According to Manusmriti, or Manu's text, there are eight different types of marriages. Not all eight are approved by Scriptures. The last four were not advocated and the last one was condemned. These are: Brahma marriage, Daiva marriage, Arsha marriage, Prajapatya marriage, Gandharva marriage, Asura marriage, Paishacha marriage. Marriage was not conceived as a noble institution but was considered a social and religious duty and necessity. As the Veda states, "an unmarried person was considered impure". That means if he remained unmarried from a religious point of view, he was not allowed to participate in religious activities. The Presently there are about 66 crore women in India. Their role is very important in the development of the family and the country, just as two wheels are important for a chariot, the role of men and women in society is equally important. Jawaharlal Nehru said, "If the entire population is to be made aware, it is enough to make women aware. Then the family, the village, the country will be made aware and move forward." The purpose of this paper is to know the status of women who have such power, as an example of this, in the society of Vedic times, women had a high position and had an equal position with men. During this period, girls also had upanayana samskara and had full opportunities to get education, so there were women sages, poetesses, Brahmavadinis like Lopamudra, Apala, Indrani, Niwavari, Sulabha, Shastrati who created many mantras along with Vedadhyana. She enjoyed religious freedom and equality as the Shatapatha Brahmana states that "a celibate may not perform the Pancha Mahayagnas or any other sacrifices".

Key Words: Upanayana, Mahilarishis, Gargi, Ghosha, Shaswati, Niyoga

I. Introduction:

The Saptapadi (Sanskrit "seven steps"/"seven feet"; sometimes called Saat Pher: "seven rounds" is the most important ritual of Vedic Hindu weddings, and represents the legal element of the Hindu marriage ceremony. The couple conduct seven circuits of the Holy Fire (Agni), which is considered a witness to the vows they make to each other. In some regions, a piece of clothing or sashes worn by the bride and groom are tied together for this ritual. Elsewhere, the groom holds the bride's right hand in his own right hand. Each circuit of the consecrated fire is led by either the bride or the groom, varying by community and region. Usually, the bride leads the groom in the first circuit. In North India, the first six circuits are led by the bride, and the final one by the groom. The topics covered in this paper are status of women, education, marriage, family, economy in Vedic times Secondary sources, articles, journals, research e-journals have been used for these topics. In the society of that time there was freedom to choose one's life partner and to remain unmarried. Monogamy existed, child marriage, satipaddhati and dowry did not exist. Widow marriages were allowed and there were rituals like delegation.

In Central India and Suriname, the bride leads the first three or four circuits. With each circuit, the couple makes a specific vow[clarification needed] to establish some aspect of a happy relationship and household for each other. When studying the society of any country, if the status, status and role of women is not studied, such study will be incomplete. Just as two wings are important for a bird to fly, the role of male and female in society is equally important. So woman is a sculptor in the construction of Indian society and family. The status and stature of such a woman was high in the Yadvedic period, her position in the society was good and women had opportunities to acquire higher education. Marriages took place at a mature age. Also there was freedom to remain unmarried, no social ills. The status of women during the Rigveda period is discussed in the following points.

Female sages: Indrani, Sulabha, Shraddha Kamini, Kade, Shaswati, Apala, Gargi Vachakavi, Vishwavara There were two categories of female students. They are Brahmavadinis and Sadyovvahasas. Brahmavadinis: Scholar through lifelong study of theology and philosophy Sadyoddhahas: Those who study Vedas till marriage. Philosophers: The greatest women philosophers of this period were Indrani, Gargi, Maitreya, of whom Gargi was not a yajna, not a yajna, a long philosophical dialogue between his wife Maitreya is mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Medha used to fearlessly participate in the grandeur and intellectual programs of Vistiya along with men. Also it is known that there is freedom of questioning.

During this time, education was probably conducted in the family under the leadership of elders with brothers, sisters and relatives. And then had to go to teachers in places far away from home to get higher education. But this number was less. From a historical point of view, it is known that up to 300 BC, financially well-to-do families were providing girls with a good level of education. Overall during this period women had full freedom to get education. During the post-Vaidik period, the status of women began to decline. As stated by Manu as 'Aputrasya Gatirnasti' as "Pita Rakshati Kaumare Bharta Rakshati Yauvvane/ Rakshanti Sthavire Putra na Streeswatantryamharhati", Abolition of Upanayana, obstruction of education, child marriage, satipaddhati, polygamy, widow practice, Parda system came to be practiced in status and Puranas, women are equated with property.

Status of women in marriage

Marriage was not conceived as a noble institution but was considered a social and religious duty and necessity. As the Veda states, "an unmarried person was considered impure". That means if he remained unmarried from a religious point of view, he was not allowed to participate in religious activities. The Atharvaveda opines that an uneducated bride as a brahmacharini has no marriage yoga with a good groom. Young women had complete autonomy in matters of marriage. But marriage was not compulsory, celibacy was allowed. Example: Ghosha, Sulabha become unmarried remaining female sages.

This step is a part of Kanya Varanam, where the groom-to-be (brahmachari sends two elders on his behalf to the father of a girl whom he wishes to marry. The elders convey the message of the brahmachari and ask for the daughter's hand. The two mantras in the form of brahmachari's appeal to intercede on his behalf come from Rg 10.32.1 ("pra sugmantha...") and 10.85.23. The first mantra begs the elders to proceed and return quickly with success back from their mission on his behalf. The second mantram ("anruksharaa Rjava:...") asks for the gods' blessings for the elders' safe journey to the house of the father of the would-be-bride. The mantra prays to Aryama and Bhaga for a marriage full of harmony. The father accedes to the request of the elders and the resulting agreement for betrothal (formal engagement to be married; engagement.) is known as vaak daanam. Marriage took place at an early age (16 or 17) and there was freedom to choose one's life partner. There is evidence in the Rigveda that beautiful girls chose their own partners. There was also a chance for love marriage. Swayamvara. Among the Kshatriyas, their spouses were chosen through the Swayamvar system.

Child marriage was not common, dowry was not generally practiced. But it is seen that rich and royal families used to give dowry or gifts to the groom at the time of marriage. Atharvaveda mentions that a prince received 100 cows as a gift but this dowry is mentioned with dhana or gift so this was not a problem. Monogamy was common. However, polygamy was allowed. It is known to have been in vogue among the rich and the Kshatriyas. Satipaddhati was not practiced. But there were opportunities for widow marriage and there were rituals like delegation. Pudhagala Malayam Sarama Vennu Kuku Elligatukuvadis had the knowledge of Srishnakaravada. Usually the birth of a female child in the family was not welcome. However, as mentioned in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (6.4.17) some parents performed special religious rituals to obtain an educated daughter. As boys and girls were also educated after 'upanayana' rites, there were many poets, female sages, philosophers and the mantras they composed are proof that they had a place of honor and scholarship.

Five Veda mantras are recited to sanctify the bride in preparation for the subsequent stages of the marriage. This aspect of the marriage is known as mangalasanam. The sun god (Surya), water god (Varuna), and other gods are invoked to purify the bride in preparation for a harmonious married life. Next, the bride wears the marriage clothes to the accompaniment of additional Veda mantras. The bridegroom then ties a darbha rope around the waist of the bride and leads her to the place, where the sacred fire is located for conducting the rest of the marriage ceremony. The bride and the groom sit on a new mat in front of the fire. The groom recites three mantras which invoke Soma, Gandharva and Agni to confer strength, beauty, and youth on the bride. Marriage was done as a young adult, usually at the age of 16 or 17, after completion of education. Educated girls had the freedom to choose the bridegroom of their choice and the women in the society were free to marry with their spouses or lovers without the Parda system. He had a place of honor in the family. Theoretically husband and wife were masters. Virtually the wife was subordinate to the husband. Unfortunately, widows had the option of remaining widowed

with their husbands or remarriage or remarriage. He had all these freedoms and privileges. A perusal of the Vedic literature mentions that 'women are fickle' while men of spirit can easily win over women and can sing and dance well.

The community as a whole showed proper care and respect for women. Considerable freedom was given in various activities of social and political life. When analyzing the status of women in a feminist context, women were subordinated to men. Tara Alibeg in her work 'Women Power of India' has analyzed that "In Vedic times upper caste women had all the opportunities to get higher education but lower castes did not". Upinder Singh also expressed the same opinion. Lingasamana Yarrallalla Ennu Vudna Yugadadalli Magasigagi Vathanagavia to Ma (10000 12000 15) mentions about 25 female sages indicating that learning was limited to only a few women then. Also, there is no record of original works by women philosophers or women sages. During the Yagreda period there were no women priests and it was said that it was imperative and necessary to participate in the religious functions with each other and not to perform any religious functions by himself.

II. Conclusion

In the society of Rigreda period, women held a respectable position without inferior knowledge. He had very high rights in social and religious fields as well as economic and had limited rights in political spheres. Overall status of women during this period. It can be said that it was satisfactory. So as Gandhiji opined "Unless women acquire education and knowledge, they cannot find an equal position in the social and economic spheres. Thus, they cannot have self-respect or self-sufficiency throughout their lives," he said. Therefore, providing systematic education to the girls of the backward communities will not only empower the women, but also help in the development of the family and the society.

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