

“POSITION OF WOMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MANUSMRITI”

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Introduction

For centuries, women have played the secondary role to man. She was never held in esteem; only a mention about her pathetic status was mentioned here and there. But the advent of science and technology, growth of democratic ideas and impact of modern industrialization and general awareness and conscience among the masses has paved way for the emancipation of women. As per Encyclopedia of Women “women is as much human being as man; as she is equally entitled to develop her abilities, all her abilities, to choose the sort of life she wishes to lead and carry on all the activities and assume all the responsibilities that go to make up human dignity”.

The Manusmriti (MS) of Manu is also called Manusamhita or Manavadharmasastra. It is a standard and the most authoritative work on Hindu law and present the normal form of Hindu society and civilization. It is a store house of information on the cultural, social, religious, ethical, educational, political, judicial and geographical life of the period and this is perfectly natural. Manusmriti has been upheld as the ultimate guide to lead a moral life, the digressing of which is to be treated with serious negative sanctions.

The unique story of the Manusmriti was subdivided into twelve areas. Originality of our universe, origin of law, division and dharma of the four varnas, the formation of principles for law, normal administrators in real life, fourfold dharma of a Brahmin, rules of action for a king, rules of action for Vaisyas, Sudras, rules of action in times of adversity, rules relating to penance, determination regarding engagement in real life, fruits of action these are discussed in the Manusmriti.

The ubiquitous presence of women in Hindu texts can never be overlooked. Manusmriti (MS) has been single-handedly responsible for the derogatory position accorded to women in the post Vedic period. Women have always been regarded as the guardians of dharma, custodian and transmitter of patriarchal values. The Vedas and the Upanisadas are replete with anecdotes of how gods and sages from time to time immemorial have created, used and controlled women for their own benefits and other's

destruction. Manusmriti imparts detailed knowledge of the rite and duties to be performed by married women and being subservient to her husband tops the list.

In the MS, one can happily hear witness to that there is perhaps no other substance in world, beside Vedas clearly, that accords such a lot of respect and rights to women. The overall population that gives respect and balance to women flourishes goodness and achievements. The law of nature is material to a family, society, religion, nation or entire mankind. People advanced toward getting to be slaves paying little heed to all their centrality since they expelled this direction of Maharshi Manu. They didn't notice to this direction for an extensive time span even after instructions and therefore their condition abandoned terrible to all the more horrendous.

Hindu religious realists think about the MS as the heavenly arrangement of acknowledged guidelines and appropriately, the status of women as depicted in the substance has been deciphered as Hindu perfect law. While shielding MS as celestial set of principles for all including women, defenders often quote the verse-

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः (MS.3.56)

This means where women are honored divinity blossoms there, and where ever women are dishonored, all action no matter how noble it may be remains unfruitful.

Beginning of Human Beings :

The universal decide is that the human progeny started from the association of man and woman since the beginning, which is advocated by Manu with the accompanying verses -

पृथोरपीमां पृथिवीं भार्या पूर्वविदो विदुः ।
स्थागुच्छदस्य केदारमाहुः शल्यवतो मृगम् ॥ (MS. 9.44)

This means History specialists say that this called Prithivi from the reality of her initially being the spouse king Prithu; a field is named after the individual who first clears it of the wilderness, and a diversion has a place with him who hits it first. Manu again compared man as an arrow 1. Manu has mentioned women as the source of procreation for bringing up of children, who must be honored properly 2.

Women as a Mother :

The role of mother as conceiving progeny is compared with goddess of fortune who should be honored with presents and ornaments. In the Manusmriti Manu said that the place of mother is prevalent than father and than an Acharya .The following verse is mentioned in this context -

उपाध्यायान्दशाचार्य आचार्याणां शतं पिता ।
सहस्रं तु पितृन्माता गौरवेणातिरिच्यते ॥ (MS. 2.145)

This means an Acharya excels ten Upadhyayas, a father excels a hundred Acharyas, and a mother excels a thousand father, in respect of veneration. It was the responsibility of the mother as well as the parents to bear the troubles for bringing up their children, as the verse elaborates-

यं मातापितरौ क्लेशं सहेते संभवे नृणाम् ।
न तस्य निष्कृतिः शक्या कर्तुं वर्षशतैरपि ॥ (MS. 2.227)

This means even in the core of a hundred years a son cannot repay the trouble which his parents have undergone for the purpose of bringing him up.

Woman as a Procreator of Children:

Women are the procreator of children. In the event that the spouses were discovered who were not in an ability to conceive an offspring of a youngster was not respected. Manu said that a woman is like a field whereas man is like a seed, the union of the seed and the soil then, create all creatures in origin³. Manu also said that in some cases the pre-eminence is of the seed, and in others the dominance is of the dirt, estimable is where the seed and the dirt are similarly dominant⁴. Various types of seeds, sown in a similar field by planters in the best possible season, are believed to grow up indifferent structures according to varieties of their species. It is just with his better half and offspring that a man ends up plainly total. Subsequently ,the astute call the couple as indistinguishable. For conceiving offspring ,spouse resembles the lights of household, favorability and ought to be regarded. There is no distinction amongst Lakhmi and the spouse. In the unlucky deficiencies, a woman wishing to obtain a descendants, should rests, under an appointment, with a younger brother, or with a sapinda connection of her better half for the reproduction of a child.⁵

Autonomy of Women :

Manu has mentioned that women should be provided autonomy and leadership in managing the finances, maintaining hygiene, spiritual and religious activities, nutrition and overall management of home.

अर्थस्य संग्रहे चैनां व्यये चैव नियोजयेत् ।

शौचे धर्मेऽन्नपक्त्यां च परिणाहास्य वेक्षणो ॥ (MS. 9.11)

It means they ought to be utilized in storing and spending cash, in maintaining the cleanliness of their people and of the house, and in looking after the beddings, wearing clothes and family unit furniture. Ladies are not completely anchored by confinement in the house and observed eagerly by their male if the person who is ensured was awful in nature. It infers one who is tricky nature, acknowledge open way to amuse their pernicious tendencies. A lady who is kept constrained in home by honorable men (spouse, father, child) is as yet insecure. Consequently it is pointless to confine ladies. Security of ladies would come just through her own particular abilities and mindset.

Women's Property Rights :

Manu also said about property right of ladies. A little girl alone has straightforwardly finished individual property of her mom. Hence, as per Manu, while little girl has square with share as her sibling over property of her dad, she has specific rights over property of her mom. In the event that a man has no families or spouse, at that point his riches are spread similarly among his siblings and sisters. In the event that senior sibling decays to give due offer to different siblings and sisters, he is deserving law. To additionally ensure security of ladies, Manu proposed brutal controls for the people who scour away abundance of a lady, paying little respect to whether they are her relatives. A lady is distinct from everyone else on the grounds that she has no paternal or maternal estate among themselves, during his or her lifetime they are not the lords thereof means they have no right therein.

ऊर्ध्वं पितुश्च मातुश्च समेत्य भ्रातरः समम् ।

भजेरन्यैतृकं रिक्थमनीशास्ते हि जीवतोः ॥ (MS. 9.104)

Brother shall separately give quarter parts out of their particular shares to their unmarried sisters and failing to give them such shares, they shall wind up plainly degraded in life⁶. The position of one of co-wife of the same caste is said to accord to their births ,are

not according to the need of beneficiary separate mothers. The mother's settlement shall be the bit of her daughter, and his daughter's child shall take the whole estate of a sonless man. On the death of a sonless daughter, her husband shall unhesitatingly take the whole estate left by her.

अपुत्रायां मृगायां तु पुत्रिकायां तु कथंचन ।
धनं तत्पुत्रिकाभर्ता हरेतैर्वा विचारयन् ॥ (MS. 9.435)

Here are some of the celebrated derogatory comments about women in the Manusmriti .Manu said that it is the nature of women to seduce men in this world; for that season the wise are never unguarded in the company of females.⁷ Women, true to their class character are capable of leading astray men in this world not only a fool but even a learned and wise man. Both become slaves of desire⁸. Wise people should avoid sitting alone with one's mother, daughter or sister. Since carnal desire is always strong, it can lead to temptation .One should not marry women who has reddish hair, redundant parts of the body ,one who is often sick ,one without hair or having excessive hair and one who has red eyes⁹. One should not marry women whose names are similar to constellations, trees, rivers, those from a low caste, mountains, birds, snakes, slaves or those whose name inspires terror. Wise men should not marry women who doesn't have a brother and whose parents are not socially well known. Wise men should marry only women who are free from bodily defects, with beautiful names, grace like an elephant, moderate hair on the head and body, soft limbs and small teeth .Brahman man can marry Brahman, Kshatriya Vaisya and even Sudra women but Sudra men can marry only Sudra women.¹⁰ Although Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra men have been allowed inter caste marriages, even in distress they should not marry Sudra women .

Manu also said that one should not accept meals from a woman who has extra marital relations, nor from a family exclusively dominated or managed by women or a family whose 10 days of impurity because of death have not passed. A female child, young woman or old woman is not suppose to work independently even at her place of residence. Manu also said that girls are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, women must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son as widow. In no circumstances she is allowed to assert herself independently¹¹. Men may be lacking virtue, be sexual perverts, immoral and devoid of any good qualities

and yet women must constantly worship and serve their husbands¹¹. Women have no divine right to perform any religious rituals, nor make vows or observe a fast. Her only duty is to obey and please her husband and she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven¹². At her pleasure after the death of her husband let her emaciate her body by living only on pure flowers, roots of vegetables and fruits. She must not even mention the name of any other men after her husband has died.

Any woman violating duty and code of conduct towards her husband is disgraced and becomes a patient of leprosy. After death, she enters womb of jackal¹³. In case women enjoy sex with a man from a higher caste, the act is not punishable. But on the contrary, if women enjoy sex with a man of lower caste, she is to be punished and kept in isolation. It is the duty of all husbands to exert total control over their wives. Even physically weak husbands must strive to control their wives. The husband, after the conception of his wife, becomes the embryo and is born again of her.

This explains why women are called Jaya¹⁴. Consuming liquor, association with wicked persons, separation from her husband, rambling around, sleeping for unreasonable hours and dwelling -are the six demerits of women. According to MS such women are not loyal and have extra marital relations with men without consideration for their age. Because of their passion for men, immutable temper and natural heartlessness, they are not loyal to their husband. In performing namakarana and jatakarma, Vedic mantras are not be recited by women, because women are lacking in strength and knowledge of Vedic texts.

Women are impure and represent falsehood. Any women who disobey orders of her lethargic, alcoholic and diseased husband shall be deserted for three months and be deprived of her ornaments. A barren wife may be superseded in 8th years; she whose children die may be superseded in the 10th years and quarrelsome may be superseded without delay¹⁵. In case of any problem in performing religious rites, males between the age of 24 years and 30 years should marry a female between the age of 8 years and 12 years.

Ancient and medieval era Hindu texts present a diverse picture of duties and rights of women in Hinduism. The texts recognize eight kinds of marriage, ranging from father finding a marriage partner for his daughter and seeking her consent to the bride and groom finding each other without parental participation (gandharva marriage).

Conclusion :

New challenges demand new talents. In order to stay competitive for potential career development, women have to be continuously exposed to new development challenges, such as transitions to new organizational roles and work environments that are comparable to developmental challenges received by their male counterparts. An emotional competence is a learned capability based on Emotional Intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work. Women, who are well equipped and understand the necessity of acquiring Emotional Intelligence and the world of work, can reduce the work-family conflict.

At the same time we should not forget the fact that most of the women's jobs are clustered in female occupations that pay poorly. She has to play the roles of wife, mother, facilitator, counselor, manager, administrator and earner too. She needs mental and physical assistance. Men should understand this and help her in her household chores.

References :

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- 4) visistam kutrachid.....prasutih prasasyate//ibid,9.34
- 5) devaradva sapindadva.....santanasya pariksaye//ibid,9.59
- 6) svebhyo.....patita syuraditsavah//ibid,9.118
- 7) svabhava eva narinam.....vipaschitah//ibid,2.213
- 8) avidyamsamalam.....kamakrodhavsanugam//ibid,2.214
- 9) nodvahetkapilam.....na pingalam//ibid,3.8
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- 12) nasti strinam.....svarge mahiyate//ibid,5.155
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