

## Sanskrit Literature – Women in the Perspective of Society and Culture

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Women is a unique creation of God. Women are the main support of the world. It is said in Manu Smriti that Gad has separated his body into two parts and created half of his body as Woman and the other half as Man. He has also created great man through women.

"दधा कृवाहत्मनो दध्वर्धन पुरुषोऽमवत ।  
अर्धन नारी तस्यां च विराजमसृजत् त्रेमुः ॥

To analyze what was the place of women in the society of the Vedic period and what material is available regarding it in the literature are necessary to consider different forms of women's life that is of Daughter, Bride, Wife, Mother, etc.

The first stage of women's life is of a Girl Child (KANYA). The word KANYA is derived from "KAMU KANTI" which means women is first recognized in the society as a girl and a daughter, to those who are dear to her. In some brahmin texts, there was expectation of girl, and more importance was given to sons.

It is also said in Mahabharata that Laxmi always resides in the form of a girl. According to Dr. Malti Sharma, joy at the birth of a son and momentary sadness at the birth of girl.

Girls were respected happily in the patriarchal house, if a girl cried sadly then the man was held responsible and was considered an accomplice in sin. To get rid of this sin, the man had to pray to Agnidev and the gods. Therefore, the feeling of affection, respect and reverence towards the girl child is relevant here.

The answer comes from the word 'bride'. Vadha means a woman who is brought into the family. According to the opinion of 'Delbuk', either a married woman who wishes for a husband or the bride in the marriage ceremony is called a bride.

It is said in Atharvaveda that the bride comes to her husband's house not as a slave but as an empress. She is an empress not only in the eyes of her husband but also in the eyes of her mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, etc. The husband takes care of all their comforts. Thus, in Atharvaveda the form of women was that of an ideal housewife.

If we look at the Samhita period, a woman was considered respectable only as a wife. Sage Vishwamitra was happy while drinking soma and prayed to Indra that

"हे इन्द्र आपने सोमपान किया है अब आप घर चाइए ।  
आपके घर आपकी कल्याणी पत्नि आपकी प्रतिक्षा करती हे ।"

Your well-wishing wife waits for you at your home." It is described in the Brahman Purana that Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh Sapatni Devi are worshiped.

In the Atharvaveda, the praise of Aditi as the embodiment of motherhood is a symbol of maternal power.

Only a son who has heartfelt devotion and worship towards his mother can say for the earth, "Mata Muniah Putrondha Prithivya." Mother's word is a storehouse of nectar for family life. There is a trinity of sacrifice, penance and love for the family. Family life seems best only as a reflection of the mutual love between mother and son. The place of mother in this world has been shown to be better than that of father and guru. Along with motherhood, qualities like affection, kindness, motherly tolerance etc. develop in her. Man and woman are the adornment of this creation.

नर और नारी इस सृष्टि का शृंगार है ।  
एक सुरक्षा है तो अन्य चन्द्रमाँ है ।

Even in Vedic literature, we find beautiful stories of jesters like Apala, Shaswati, Ghosha, Brahmajaya, Romshavahini, Lapamudra, Atreyi, Gargi etc. In the Middle Ages, the pride of Indian women was snatched away. At that time, evil practices like child marriage, purdah system, sati system etc. had started in the society and women had to suffer the most due to this. That's why the line of Chhayavadi poet Jaishankar Prasad comes to mind.

अबला जीवन हाय तेरी यही कहानी  
आँचल में है दूध और आँखों में है पानी ।

During the time of the Mughal Empire, the reason for the greater influence of purdah and sati system was the negative attitude of the Mughals towards women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy abolished the practice of Sati and Dayanand Saraswati introduced the ritual of sacrificial fire to women. He gave the right to recite the Vedas and accordingly women expanded their field of work and played their role in the freedom struggle before men.

Number of women in modern times decreases due to mentality and customs of male-dominated society. According to the 2009 census in India, the number of women per thousand men is 928. The woman who used to consider herself a perfect housewife is desperate to leave her home and make her place in the market. We should do something so that women can get respect and equal status with men in the society like in the Vedic period.

शुश्रूषस्व गुरुम कुर त्रियसखीवृत्तिं सपत्नीजने  
मर्तु विप्रकृताऽपि शोषणतया मा स्म प्रतीपं रामः ।  
मुपिणुं भव दक्षिणा परिजनं भाग्यध्वनुत्स कि नी  
यान्त्येवं गृहिणीयदं युवतयो वामा कुलस्थाथय ॥

If our daughters understand this ideal verse well, we can save our family from ruin.

Change is the soul of nature, there seems to have been a lot of change in the status of women in society in the latter part of the Middle Ages. This can become a ray of hope to enrich society and the world with values. Women like Chauhan and Shekhawat have shown their bravery to the world by becoming officers in the Indian Army on 26th January 2017. It is a matter of pride for the Indian society and the women of India. something said in the Vedas that it is beginning to seem truly that

यत्र नार्यस्तु पुज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।

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