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Vedic Aged Women Empowerment

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Abstract

It is observed through Vedic literature that one time in India – in the ancient Vedic period women enjoyed equal rights. In fact, they were placed above men. Vedas have given evidences that Vedic women weren't helpless, powerless, timid, weak or poor. It is said that when men became helpless (Vedic age) then women in the form of Durga, Chinnamastika, Bhavani, Dhrumawati, Kali, Jagdamba etc. gave a new rise to the world. Vedic Aged women were very capable and were given all due respects. From Adishakti to Sati Anusuiya, Savitri, Bihula, Gargi, Maitrayi etc. like many women powers blessed the human kind with all their ability, Capability, wisdom strength. Even in that time Gargi and Maitrayi contributed in creating social order for society. Sati Anusuiya created the unstoppable waves of Mandakini by her left feast attack on the earth. Because of their individual freedom Vedic Aged women had their social position as high as men, and this was all through equally at all levels.

Keywords: Vedic Culture, Women Empowerment, Righteousness.

Our culture is an ancient culture. It is a culture beyond time. From the ancient age we have dedicated ourselves for others goodness and also for the betterment of mankind and the world. The layer of thinking we had and have, has been prepared by the women from Vedic age such as Brahmani, Shivani, Rudrani, Durga, Parwati, Sarsawati, Laxmi etc.

Women are not helpless, powerless, timid, weak or poor. Vedas have given evidences that when men become helpless then, women in the form of Durga, Chinnamastika, Dhrumawati, Chamunda, Kali, Yagyawarahi, Narsinghi gave a new rise to the world. The Durga Saptasati is a great example of that. From Adishakti to Sati Anusuiya, Savitri, Bihula, Shabri, Gargi, Maitrayi etc. like many women powers, women potentialities blessed the human kind not only with their wisdom but also with their ability, capacity, potentiality, simplicity, beauty and strength in

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battlefield.

The great wife Sati Anusuiya created the unstoppable waves of Mandakini by her left breast attack in the earth, when her husband the great hermit, Maharshi Atri got sweat in his forehead due to tiredness he felt in coming a long after Gangasnan. She is also well-known for turning the trideva – Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh into little infants while they were testing her Pativrata Dharma.

Savitri and Bihula have shown the powers and capabilities of a true wife when they brought back the lost lives of their husbands who knows they might have vast knowledge of such botanical plants, vegetations, medicinal plant with the application of which they could save their husbands. Gargi and Maitreyi were masters of Vedas and Upanishads and it is said that they defeated many male philosophers in Sastrartha. Bharti, the legend woman figure in Mithilanchal defeated Adiguru Shankracharya in debate when she found her husband was about to lose in the debate with Shankracharya. The Rig Veda has long conversations between the sage Agasthya and his wife Lopamudra that testifies to the great intelligence and goodness of the latter.

In Treta, Urmila, the newly married daughter of Maharaja Janak, sacrificed fourteen very very important years of her young age without any complain for the goodness of the world surpassing her Virah-vedna. Shabri, who has been referred in the Ramayana as a simple bhiloni but if you observe the verses of The Ramayana carefully, you will find her a woman of strong thoughts and high level of excellence. When Ram goes to meet her, she asks him:

Pampa sirhi jahu raghurai

Tahn Hoihi Sugriva Mitai (Aranya Kand)

She gives Ram a few rare ideas and knowledge which helped him in finding Sita. It has been being told that Balram's wife Rohini was nine-fold taller than her husband but the real meaning of this statement is that she was nine times well behaving and wise than her husband in formulating ideas, pouring thoughts and making decisions. She is considered as the strongest women in Dwaper.

Kayadhu, the great mother of Bhakta Prahlad, thought her husband Hiranyakashapu was evil, she birthed Prahlad who later became a legend. Maitreyi, Gargi, Anusuiya etc. are regarded as the most learned and virtuous women of ancient India, and symbolize intellectual women in India.

Women from Vedic Age were super in every aspect and each art. They were the best in

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everything not only in battle field but in debating, wisdom efficiency etc. They were really complete in themselves. We don't need any proof that in this daily changing world, with several variations existing, whenever the time has shown its worst, the great women powers have shown the direction to the mankind with better thoughts, feelings, imaginations, creations, control and excellence. In Indian culture, disrespect and ignorance to women has never been tolerated and if it ever happened it resulted in very big destruction, whether you talk about The Ramayana, The Mahabharata or the loss faced by Yadawas when women were insulted by Samb, the son of Lord Krishna.

In the medieval age, the conditions of women became pathetic and dreadful. They lost their rights. Yes, the modernity again knocked on their closed doors but due to leading a cursed life. for a very long period, they lost the pride from their persona and the very determination, will power which were present in the women of Vedic age. They estimated themselves weak comparatively to men and became blind and impatient in competing with them. They even forget that they are super, incomparable, they are the creator and the mother of the whole universe. Mahabharata as the fifth Veda, which explains in simpler terms the messages of the Vedas. Our vast religious literature has been polluted by the hypocritical behavior and selfish intents of some so-called pundits (the Matsyapurna says that these people are rakshas (demons) born in Kaliyuga in the family lineage of Brahmans) and centuries of subjugation by colonial forces. It is likely that the Manusmriti has also been affected thus, just to create the ambiguity.

This is evident from some other passages in the Manusmriti extolling the virtues of women. Manusmriti clearly indicates the preservation of women's dignity and their respect. Women are worthy of worship. They are the fate of the household, the lamp of enlightenment for all in the household. They bring solace to the family and are an integral part of righteousness (dharmic) life. Even heaven is under the control of women. The gods reside in those households where women are worshipped and in households where women are slighted all efforts at improvement go in vain. It is really a dichotomy to imagine that the same Manu who wrote this passage would write the passages denigrating women in other parts of the Manusmriti. Obviously, since Manusmriti has been supposed to guide the social conduct of Hindu society therefore the Manusmriti would be a natural choice for distortion to create ambiguity and disparity in the traditional social fabric of the Indian society — by someone to serve their narrow selfish ends or

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by the invaders to denigrate Hindu culture and society. Moreover, the reflection of this practice continues even today in India partially if not whole. To investigate honestly the beginning of deterioration of women in India it is necessary to find out whether there is any link between Sanatana Dharma and the treatment of women. It is difficult to understand without investigating the basic scriptures the Vedas and the Mahabharata. In the article to analyze the status of women efforts have been made to explore the Vedic literature to discover what Sanatana Dharma has to say about the general status of the women. Therefore, to illustrate their position such as marriage, family, education rights, the role of women in society etc. have been investigated in this analysis.

The authority of Veda is unchallenged in Sanatana tradition and beyond any doubts. Extolling the virtue of the Vedas Lord Krishna says in the Srimad Bhagwat Gita, "And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge, as well as their loss: I am verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas; I am indeed the author of the Vedanta as well as the knower of the Vedas." To illuminating the authentic position in the Vedic culture it genuine and unavoidable to note the passages about the role of women in the consecrate texts of the Vedas and the Mahabharata. And after a thorough and sincere reconnaissance, indeed there are no contradictory passages. It is better to quote some of the passages to illustrate this point clearly. Atharvaveda clearly states that the woman leads the man: "The sun god follows the first illuminated and enlightened goddess Usha (dawn) in the same manner as men emulate and follow women."

On social and family life women are clearly instructed to earn knowledge then only go forward for family life. Women were subject to earn knowledge and practice them and also women were considered to be the embodiment of great virtue and wisdom. "O bride! May, the knowledge of the Vedas be in front of you and behind you, in your centre and in your ends. May, you conduct your life after attaining the knowledge of the Veda; May you be benevolent, the harbinger of good fortune and health and live in great dignity and indeed be illumined in your husband's home."

There is no distinction observed between men and women for performing righteousness and other related rituals during the prayers. Parallel to the men, women were allowed full freedom of worship, Especially the married women are expected and guided by the Vedic literature to perform all necessary holy rituals to make the house live from any kinds of bad effects when the

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husband is out due to some reasons. The wife should do Agnihotra (yagna), Sandhya (puja) and all other daily religious rituals. If, for some reason, her husband is not present, the woman alone has full rights to do yagya.

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