

The Position of Women in the Rig Vedic Era

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Abstract- In the early period of civilization, women played a significant role, underscoring their contribution to societal progress. In the Vedic Period (1500-1000 BC), women were revered as mother goddesses (Shakti), a representation of life with a great capacity for sacrifice and tolerance, and as such, they occupied a respectable position in society. In that era, women were seen as educated scholars and teachers who were writing and explaining the Vedas playfully. Women can participate in daily religious activities with men and also show heroism on the battlefield. Vedic texts and literature are evident in all areas, including family organization for an incoming person. Thus, society gives honour to their opinion in all aspects. However, incidents of oppression of women were not an exception in that era, but in a limited form. In later ages, the position of women in society became increasingly painful. The social system of the post-Vedic period, the epic time, and the later age has systematically curtailed women's rights and subjected them to patriarchy for centuries. Women have been denied their fundamental rights and excluded from participating in the broader social progress. Where all power was wielded to suppress women, evil practices such as child marriage, sati, the caste system, and other inhumane oppressions were forced upon women. As a result of the role of women in society, they have been minimized for thousands of years. Throughout this article, the position of women in social, religious, educational, economic, and state power will be determined in the light of the Rig-Veda.

Keywords- 1. Women Education 2. Rig-Vedic Education 3. Manusamhita
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I. Introduction

Gender equity is a crucial issue in today's world. Women are now well aware of their rights. Society has changed positively over time. The state reserved all rights and privileges for all its citizens, regardless of caste, class, and religion. Women's empowerment has also achieved tremendous milestones.

The origin and development of human civilization are the result of the joint efforts of men and women. The contributions of men and women are equal in building civilization. Although both genders share a joint responsibility for development, discrimination against women has persisted since ancient times. This inequality varies across time and different societies. The nature of this inferior position of women was sometimes unclad, sometimes tolerable, and sometimes absolutely intolerable. This abhorrent form of women's oppression was a casual thing in medieval and early modern society, and it is a matter of great concern even today.

The picture of the rise of civilization was different. During this period, women made significant contributions to various socio-economic activities, including crop production, herb planting, pottery making, Ayurvedic medicine practice, and handicrafts. (Nazneen, 2009, p. 10) But over time, with the strengthening of patriarchal society, women's external activities stopped. They became destined to family boundaries, and their careers were limited to domestic work, childbearing, and rearing. As the social organization and state structure become complex in the development of civilization, the gap in rights and status increases between men and women, and it becomes a tool for exploiting women over time; however, the extent of this exploitation varies from time to time. There are two types of positions of women in the context of Indian civilization. On the one hand, Hindu scriptures and books represent women as Shakti. Shakti is the symbol of fertility and the growth of civilization. (Mishra & Sharma, 2014) Female deities are often depicted as majestic destroyers of evil forces. According to Hindu mythology, all the deities of Shakti are female, including Gauri, Padma, Savitri, Medha, Jaya, Vijaya, Debasena, Chamunda, Brahmani, Maheshwari, Vaisnavi, and Indrani, who are notable. (Bhattacharia, p. 28) According to the Varaha Purana, each male deity has a corresponding female Shakti, such as Brahma's Shakti, Brahmani; Maheswara's Shakti, Maheshwari; Kumar's Shakti, Kaumari; Vishnu's Shakti, Vaishnavi; Varaha's Shakti, Varahi; Indra's Shakti, Indrani; and Yama's Shakti, Chamunda (Tarkalankar, 1906, p. 156).

These female Shakti deities later became the deities worshipped by the Shakta sect of Hinduism. The existence of female deities is also evident in Vedic society, as seen in figures such as Usha and Aditi. Currently, in Hindu culture, these female deities are widely worshipped, including Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Parvati. Purana states that these gods have enlightened society by destroying the evil forces. According to Purana, female deities are symbols of

auspiciousness, wealth, knowledge, and purity. (Chandi) The Bhagavad Gita mentions the names of eighteen great women. According to another Hindu scripture, five women are considered very holy: Ahalya, Draupadi, Sita, Tara, and Mandodari. By remembering these names, people can erase their sins. (Wikipedia)

Although women and deities hold a respectable position in scripture, a different picture emerges of women's position in society. The abundance of female deities in the scripture could not help improve the status of women in society. All evil practices such as cohabitation, adultery, child marriage, polygamy, virtue tradition, and women are the direct victims. What is the reason for women's subordination in society? Why have women been oppressed in society for thousands of years? This question is logically relevant to feminists. Foreign invasion and the rise of the caste system are the primary reasons for this. Post-Vedic scriptures unilaterally took away women's rights to strengthen patriarchy and preserve blood purity. In the era of the epic Ramayana and Mahabharata, women's independence was evident in some respects, but they lacked formal rights. In this era, the oppression and condemnation of women are obvious in society. **Manusamhita**, the most influential text of religious law, gave legal legitimacy to the deprivation of women's institutional rights. After the epic period, women were largely absent from other aspects of society, except in the roles of domestic work and childrearing.

The period during which the Vedas were composed is generally known as the Vedic Age. The word Veda means 'knowledge' from the root 'vid', to know, and so was used to designate the sacred lore or collection of sacred literature. The Rigveda means the Veda of hymns. (KEAY F.E., 1918) The Aryans are the founders of the Vedic civilization. The Rig Veda is the largest and oldest of the four Vedas, and the Vedic age refers to the period during which the Rig Veda was composed—the period of writing for the remaining three Vedas is referred to as the later Vedic age. Although historical evidence is not available to understand the age, the Rig-Veda highlights the various conditions of society at that time. All the social, political, and religious aspects of the people of that time have been perfectly revealed in the hymns of the Rig-Veda in the form of metaphors. It comprises 10 mandalas, 1028 sukta, and 10552 rik. The respectable status of women in the pre-Vedic society reached its highest peak during the Vedic period. In the Vedic period, women achieved exceptional excellence in various aspects of education and culture, maintaining their strong position despite facing severe societal obstacles.

SOCIAL STATUS

Rig-Vedic society was patriarchal. Family was the important and basic foundation of society. Society primarily deserves sons. There are several hymns of the Rig-Vedas where women pray for a son to protect their heredity. Nevertheless, the daughter was not undesirable. The daughter of a Vedic family is called **Duhitri**. The family provides equal value, and the parents did not distinguish between their son and daughter. Hymns of the Rig-Veda bear witness to the enlightened social position of women, where they shared an equal standing and liberty with men. Women are considered half of men because, without a wife and children, a man is not truly complete. Men need women, and women need men to produce children. Hence, in the Taittiriya Samhita (6/1/8/5), it is said that a male is incomplete without women. (Bhattacharji, p. 32)

In Vedic society, the wife and mother were always given an honourable place. The respectable presence of female deities demonstrates the significant role of women in Vedic society. Usha (The goddess of dawn and wife of the god Sun), Aditi, the mother of many gods, such as Mitra, Varun, Rudra, and Aryaman. (Dwivedi & Malik, 2022) Usha and Rati are the daughters of Haven. Those female deities were influential as male deities.

In some cases, goddesses play a more important role than gods. In the Rig-Veda, the goddess Usha placed before the Sun. Usha, go ahead. The Sun illuminates the world. Several verses of the Rig Veda attest to the respectable status of the goddess Usha. Such as- *O Usas, strong with strength, endowed with knowledge, accept the singer's praise, O wealthy Lady. Thou, Goddess, ancient, young, and full of wisdom, movest, all-bounteous! As the Law ordaineth. Shine forth, O Morning, thou auspicious Goddess, on thy bright car, awaking pleasant voices. Let docile horses of far-reaching splendour convey thee hitherward, the golden coloured. She, dropping sweets, hath set in heaven her brightness, and, fair to look on, hath beamed forth her splendour.* (3/61/1-5). (The Vedas, 2002) In the Rig-Vedas, Usha's praises have come up again and again. Usha and other goddesses represent the general women of Vedic society.

In the Vedic era, there were no restrictions on women's education; women could easily receive excellent higher education. In this way, women could become well-versed in Vedic literature and philosophy. Viswavara, Lopamudra, Apala, Roshma, Kadru, Juhu, Vagambhruni, Paulomi, Jarita, Sradhakamayani, Saranga, Devajami, etc, are known as the seers of Vedic hymns. (Datt, p. 72) They were not only the composer of the Vedas but also the explainers of the hymns of the Vedas. Obtaining proper education and benefits enables women to achieve a higher level of intelligence and empowerment.

During this period, there was no obligation to marry, but it was regarded as a sacred duty. In the matter of marriage, women's opinions were of the utmost importance. Even women can choose their preferred husband. This custom is called **Swayamvara**. In this tradition, women can choose a desired groom from many invited Bachelors. There are many hymns in the Rig Veda where women are praying for the groom of their choice. For example, women *feel good hearing flattering admiration from men. Those who are gracious and beautiful get to choose the man of their choice. Some women are trapped, into accepting a man by his sweet/talk, but those who are smart, are careful in selecting their husband.* (R.V-10/27/12) (The Vedas, 2002, p. 450)

A woman sage is praying in another place for a husband of her choice-

Thoughts ancient, seeking wealth, with adoration, with newest lauds have sped to thee, O Mighty. As yearning wives cleave to their yearning husband, so cleave our hymns to thee, O Lord most potent. (1/62/11). (The Vedas, 2002, p. 87)

From these hymns, it seems that the practice of **Swayamvara** was well-practiced in the society. In this tradition, women often have the opportunity to assess a man's strength and intelligence when choosing a husband. There are many such instances in Vedic and later times. Even in the age of Ramayan and Mahabharat, we see similar instances, where Sita and Draupadi took a test of men's intelligence to select their husbands. Although this custom was mainly observed in royal families, women of subordinate stages gained the right widely in this period.

In the Vedic age, marital relationships were considered of utmost importance, as happiness was associated with good and perfect relationships. The Vedic society considered the bride as an ornament of the family to emphasize the marital relationship. In early Vedic family affairs, women enjoyed both autonomy and could play a role as wives, where they were considered as an ardhangini (better half) and sahadharmini (equal partner). (Bhaswati, 2019) In this regard, Dr. A.S. Altekar argues that the supreme authority in the family is vested in the husband; the wife's position is one of honourable subordination. We can also see in the epic society that women treated with utmost courtesy and respect. Hymns of Vedic marriage also show the dignity and depth of married life. 'O bride! I accept your hand to enhance our joint good fortune. I pray to you to accept me as your husband and live with me until our old age. (1/79/872) To excavate this relationship, married men and women together were called **Dampati**, which means "two joint proprietors of the household. (Dwivedi & Malik, 2022)

Vedic hymns of welcome have also made women dignified in various ways. It is evident in the Rig Vedas that when a Vedic family welcomed a bride into the family through marriage, she enters, 'as a river enters the sea' and 'to rule there along with her husband. (moitree) Furthermore, in the 10th mandala, 85 slokas have satited - *O Bride! May your father-in-law treat you as a queen. May your mother-in-law treat you as a queen. May the sisters and brothers of your husband treat you as a queen.* (The Vedas, 2002, p. 478)

There were no instances of child marriage in Vedic society. Although there is no explicit instruction regarding the age of marriage for girls, the Yajurveda (8/1) and Atharvaveda (11/5) suggest that marriage should be considered after completing **the stage of Bramacharya**. There is another instruction that the marriage of a girl can only be done when she has matured. (Women in Vedic.doc 10) The document provides instructions about the responsibilities of women and men in a union. Most likely, society places a high value on education and the quality of Women, and believes in their empowerment; for this reason, education is accessible to everyone.

There was no clear boundary between education for the subordinate classes. So women from all stages can get knowledge. Society gives them their deserved respect because they got the proper education and knowledge before marriage. Even the Rig Veda mentions marrying a daughter to a worthy husband and adorning her with various precious clothes and ornaments. (10/39/14) (The Vedas, 2002, p. 457) During that time, marriages were celebrated with pomp.

There were no obligations for marriage in the early Vedic age. We find many unmarried, educated women. They could live with respect in society without marrying. Among the seers of the Vedas Gosha, Apala, Lopamudra, Saci, and Vishvavara were unmarried. Even without marriage, they used to get the right to property in their father's house. Many virgin daughter underwent **Brahmacharya** discipline in their parents' house. Some hymns of the Veda evaded the daughter's right to the father's wealth. (R.V- 2/17/7) Virgin daughter not only lived in the father's house but also got a share of the father's wealth. Nowadays, the issue of women's right to wealth is legislated in Hindu society, but it was well practiced in Vedic society.

There was no widespread practice of dowry and violence against women due to the dowry system in Vedic society, so the father did not have to suffer during the girl's marriage. Instead, in exceptional cases, the bridegroom had to marry the wealthy daughter. (1/109/2).

In Vedic society, such abominable practices as sati-immolation did not exist. (G.Paranthaman, 2019) Widows could remarry in this era. In many cases, the woman can marry her husband's brother. There is numerous evidence of widow marriage in Vedic literature. A Vedic sage is advising a widow -

Who brings you homeward, as the widow bedward draws her husband's brother, as the bride attracts the groom? (10/40/2)

Another prayer in the Rig-Veda clarified the matter-

Let these unwidowed dames with noble husbands adorn themselves with fragrant balm and unguent. Decked with fair jewels, tearless, free from sorrow, first let the dames go up to where he lieth. Rise up O woman, to the world of the living. Your husband is dead. Take the hand of a new man and start your life again. (R.V-10/18/7,8) Remarriage of women was also recognized in the Atharva-Veda, but it became strictly prohibited in later scriptures. Simultaneously, the emergence of more inhuman practices in later ages, including sati-immolation, led to women losing their freedom and dignity in the post-Vedic society.

Despite all these favourable circumstances, the lives of women in the Vedic period were not entirely smooth in all respects. Polygamy was prevalent in Vedic society. The cruel effects of polygamy, the image of satin (husbands another wife) conflict found in the Rig-Veda is truly horrifying and curious. The intense desire of women to destroy satin and be loved by their husbands has been the subject of some verses in the Rig-Veda. One woman prayed that- *Destroyer of the rival wife, Sole Spouse, victorious, conqueror, The others' glory have I seized as 'twere the wealth of*

weaker Dames. I have subdued as conqueror these rivals, these my fellow-wives, that I may hold imperial sway over this Hero and the folk.(10/159/5-6)

At that time, women were not free from jealousy, competition, and opposition. Many women thought of cruel ways to torment Satin. Sometimes women had to strive not only to be the most beloved of all satins to their husbands but also to their daughters. (10/159/3)

There was some evidence of adulterous women in Vedic society. Numerous verses mentioned about women's adultery and prostitution, Such as (4/5/5), (10/40/6), and (10/34/5).

Many Vedic men were addicted to other women, and they spent a lot. Several instances stated that sometimes unmarried women give birth to children.(8/46/21) As a result, incidents like the abduction of women also happened in society. (7/55/5-8).

ECONOMIC STATUS

In the Vedic age, women were economically independent and self-reliant. Many women established themselves as scholar, many of them work as teachers. According to **the Satapatha Brahmana**, Ordinary women were responsible for clothing, spinning, and weaving at home. These were produced and sold at home. (12/7/2/11) It likely added a significant dimension to the Vedic economy, creating demand for clothing. This cottage industry empowers women economically, enabling them to become self-reliant. The **Arthashastra** of Kautilya advised the state to provide special facilities to destitute women, enabling them to earn a living by spinning. (Women in Hindu civilization) Women also help their husbands in their agricultural endeavours. The practice of women assisting men in the agricultural fields was prevalent during this period, where women played a vital role in the production sector.

During the Vedic period, many women had personal property, such as jewelry, clothing, and gifts, which was recognized as their own. Such kinds of wealth was called **Stridhana**, which she received at the time of marriage. Women had absolute rights over the Stridhana; the husband had no right to spend this wealth. Only in the direst of circumstances might a husband use **Stridhana** with the wife's consent. After the death of a woman, only her daughter would inherit the property. Laterly the limit of **stridhana** was fixed at 2000 panas in Manu samhita. According to Manu, there are two sources of Stridhana, one is the gift of brothers and parents during the marriage, and the other is the wealth earned by the woman's own art.

In Vedic society, if a person died without a son, the widow inherited his property. An unmarried woman used to get a share of her father's wealth. In the absence of the brother, the unmarried daughter could own the entire property. Sons and unmarried daughters will inherit Mother's property. Married women had no claim to their father's property. From the later Vedic period, women's economic independence gradually decreased. Women are deprived of all their rights and confined only to housework. Manu also denied women's economic rights in his scriptures. Manu said about the daughter that- The father protects her in infancy; the husband, in youth; and sons, in old age; a woman does not deserve independence. (9/3) (Nath, 1909, p. 315) It means that women will be dependent on someone at different stages of life. All subsequent scriptures have opposed women's individuality. In this way, women lost the individuality they had gained through Vedic education. Later scriptures bound women to childbearing and housework. As a result, women's economic identity is erased among other rights.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

The female education glorified the Rig Vedic period. The quality of education and the favourable environment enabled women's scholarship to reach its highest peak. In the Vedic education system, there was no distinction between men and women; moreover, women's education was traditionally highly regarded. The external and social deep knowledge of women of that time proves the excellence of education. Due to the status of education, women were able to showcase their skills in all social, religious, and political fields of Vedic society. The best examples of which are women authors of Vedic hymns, such as Viswavara, Lopamudra, Apala, Roshma, Kadru, Juhu, Vagambhruni, Paulomi, Jarita, Sradhakamayani, Saranga, and Devajami. (Radha, 1947, p. 51)

These seers-sages were not only the authors of the Vedas but also their interpreters. Many sutras mention women as sages in the Rig-Veda, such as Lopamudra as the sage of 178 suktas of the first mandala, Viswavara as the sage of 28 suktas of the fifth mandala, Apala as the sage of 96 suktas of the 8th mandala, Ghosa in 39 and 40 of the 10th mandala, Savitri Surya in 85 suktas, Bak in 125 suktas, and Indrani as the sage of 145 suktas. (Altekar, 2014) The range of knowledge of these female professors was vast. Even in the post-Vedic period, we find learned women like Batsi, Gargi, and Maitreyi whose knowledge was under a dire threat to patriarchy.

Goddess Saraswati was revered as the goddess of wisdom during the Vedic period. That is, women were at the highest level of knowledge, to whom all men and women prayed for knowledge and wisdom. Even Brahma, the creator of the whole universe, looked at her to obtain knowledge. During the Vedic era, a variety of honorific titles existed for learned women. The women scholars and seers of the Vedas were known as Rishikas. Women studying in the highest branch of knowledge were titled Brahnavadini. Mimamsa Shastra (epistemological analysis of knowledge) refers to learned women as kasakritsnas. (Altekar, 2014) Women teachers were known as Acharyanis. In Vedic society, women not only received higher education but also attended seminars and lectures. Khema had an excellent reputation among Acharyanis. Women scholars of a particular subject were referred to as Vidushi.

At that time, the Upanayan custom was also common for women. (S, 1944, p. 23) In Vedic society, education began with initiation, and Upanayana marked the culmination of this process. Through Upanayan, the expansion of

education and knowledge, as well as the practice of celibacy for women, is initiated. (Singho) Brahmacharya is the first stage among the four Vedic ashrams, where women, like men, had to acquire knowledge with great effort and patience. (Radha, 1947) In the later Vedic period, this trend of women's acquisition of knowledge can also be found in a limited form. Many, such as Gargi, Barwa, Sulabha, and Maitrei, were some of the post-Vedic sages. Their range of knowledge was so vast that many male sages would lose to them in argument.

In this age, there were two types of female students. First is the Sage Bride, and second is Brahmavadini. The sage bride used to study and observe celibacy until marriage, and Brahmavadini continued to learn throughout her life. Mainly, Brahmavadini were lifelong students of philosophy and theology. (Roy S. , 2017) Panini, known as the father of linguistics, mentions a school for women teachers. Commenting on the words Kathi, Kalyapi, and Brihadrishi, he says that the learned women of the **Katha** branch of the Vedas are known as Kathi. A female scholar of the **Kalyapa** branch is known as Kalyapi.

Women of this era not only taught but were also skilled in dance, vocal music, and instrumental music. Although both men and women practiced music and dance, the fine arts were considered to be taught by women. (Roy S. , p. 40) In this way, Vedic education created a distinct self-identity for women. This superiority of women maintained its strong position in society for a long time.

A liberal and caste-free nature characterized the Vedic society; however, the rise of the caste system in the later Vedic period confined education to the Brahmin class. As a result, along with other castes, women's education and extracurricular activities were interrupted. In some cases, Women of the upper class got limited education while ordinary women completely deprived of education and other outdoor activities. In this way, in later times, women lost their education and became confined to the house. Manusmriti did not recognize higher education for women. During the period of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the condition of women became more deplorable.

RELIGIOUS STATUS

Men and women participated together in Vedic rituals. Women's special rights were reserved in the conduct of religious rituals outside the daily housework. Shatapatha Brahmana mentions that an unmarried person has no right to sacrifice, as the sacrifice is incomplete without a wife. Similarly, any Vedic religious activities are incomplete without the wife's participation. In Vedic times, sacrifice was the only means of sadhana. The role of women in sacrifice was vital. (Radha, 1947) It is also cited in Shatapatha Brahmana that the husband is placed on the eastern side of the sacrifice and the women on the northern side. In the 173rd sukta of the first mandala of the Rig-Veda, note that the husband and wife perform a sacrifice together to please the god Indra. A ritual called **Potnisambad** was performed at every main sacrifice. Even more, sometimes the wives can perform religious sacrifices on their own. (Goswami, 2021)

Furthermore, women's involvement in all religious activities was mandatory. Even women had active participation in religious debates. In Vedic society, women's religious and spiritual practices came to the fore. After composing the hymns of the Vedas, women sages became adept at reciting Vedic mantras in tune. Brahmanvidya, the most excellent science of that age, was also mastered by Vedic women. In the post-Vedic period, we see intelligent women like Gargi and Maitreyi. Viswamitra takes the place of a rtvik. Since the Vedic age, wives have been called Sahadharmini because they help their husbands in religious practice.

The respect and dignity of women continued to decline from the later era. The religious scriptures of later times unilaterally deprived women of education and other rights. During the Ramayana and Mahabharata period, the status of women decreased further. The unique dignity of women in the Rig Vedic period was surprisingly suppressed in later times. Manusmriti confined women to the house and household work. Manus also fixed women's religions on husbands' service and boundness. He established rules and regulations in society that provide women with some protection within the family. Manus says the deities smile on the family where the females are honoured (held in respect); fruitless are the acts in the family where women are dishonoured. (3/56) (Nath, 1909, p. 92) Manus, however, believed that the progress of the family depends on women. He also said prosperity reigns supreme in the family where females do not grieve; the family in which they grieve, suffers a speedy destruction (3/57) (Nath, 1909, p. 93). Basically, in Manus's imagination, women are the Lakshmi of the house only. His law transformed women into dependent creatures instead of freedom and empowerment. Throughout this process, women started disappearing from society and history in later times.

POLITICAL STATUS

The advanced political position of women is widely recognized in Vedic society. In Vedic civilization, the king was supreme in decision-making, but there were two powerful public councils in the Sabha and the Vidathanam. Women had the power to voice their opinions in those important organizations. It seems that women had a view on the political affairs of that time. As a result, they could highlight various issues in public meetings. Atharva Veda mentions women as very important members of society. According to an Atharva Vedic Scripture, a newly married girl was privileged to be a member of the Vidatha. Women acted as messengers at the time.

Some mantras of the Rig-Veda certify that military education was prevalent among girls. Vedic accounts depict women's heroic deeds on the battlefield. At the command of the Vedic king Namuchi, his wife participated in the most remote yet terrifyingly prolonged battles. The heroic story of Rani Bishpala of Raja Khel is illustrated in Asvini Sukta of the Rig-Veda. In the war, Bishpala lost her leg and cured by the Asvins with the addition of an iron leg. The heroic story of a Mudgalani is mentioned in the Vedas. She used a mugal on the battlefield, with this weapon,

he won the war. Sasiyasi was a famous protagonist in this period. Women also participated in sacrifices associated with increasing the status and power of the state.

Sacrifices such as Rajasuya, Vajapeya, Asvamedha, Purusamedha, and Sarvameha reflected the politics and society of the country. The Asvamedha sacrifice was performed to increase the extent of a king's empire. Only mighty kings used to perform these sacrifices. The important role of the deity Savita is the central theme in this sacrifice. So it can be seen that there was no shortage of women's boldness in that era. The post-Vedic epic period also outlines some mighty women. Megasthenes mentions later Pandya women in India who ruled the government. In this continuity, the names of women rulers like Nayanika, Prayabati, and Vijaybhattarika can be seen in the Maurya and Gupta periods as well.

II. Conclusion

The early Vedic society blessed women in all perspectives, including social, educational, economic, political, religious, and cultural aspects. In this era, a woman can easily flourish through existing opportunities. They can reach the highest position and play a dignified role in social development and well-being.

However, with the changing times, women lost their position and honour drastically. The time of the other three Vedas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, the glorious position turns into pitifulness in all aspects of life. We see the disrespectful position of Sita in Ramayan, Gandhari, Kunti, and Draupadi in Mahabharata. They become the products of giving birth and entertain family members.

The Dharmasastras of Manu strengthened the Brahmanical society and established a caste based society. Manu introduced laws based on patriarchy, foreign invasion, and preserving the purity of blood, which mandatorily confined women to the house, depriving them of all rights. Women become dependent on patriarchy in every aspect of life. Every post-Vedic script emphasizes women's chastity duty and cleverly denies their overall identity and personality. On one hand, society associates women with deities and circulates numerous female worshipers. On the other hand, it confines women to family boundaries, limiting their scope to learn, earn, and make social contributions. Moreover, different male practices like Sati immolation, early marriage, and overwhelming religious customs were introduced for women. As a result, the female essence has been lost for centuries.

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