

## CHAPTER III

## SECTION I

MARRIAGE

Introduction : Marriage is one of the fundamental institutions of human society. The aims of Hindu marriage are said to be Dharma, Prajā (progeny) and Rati (pleasure). Hence, it is deemed important and not only from the social but also the religious point of view. Marriage was desired not so much for sex or for progeny as for obtaining a partner for the fulfilment of one's religious duties. It is, therefore, obvious that the Hindus regard Dharma as higher than Prajā and Rati.

The importance of marriage is evinced in the DP., when Brahmā ordered Viśvāvasu to provide the newly created Vaniks with the mind-born damsels for their marriage so that they can fulfil the aim of life as a householder (VII. 41, 44).

The DP. registers the public frown over the union between a man and a woman without legitimate marriage and reports the excommunication of the persons involved.

as the consequence of such union. The example of this union was the sexual relation behind a screen between the cowherd boys and the girls and the widows who brought them daily food (LX.4 ff.)<sup>1</sup>.

Forms of Marriage : According to the western sociologists, the basic forms of marriage are two, on the basis of a numeric variation of partners, viz., monogamy and polygamy<sup>2</sup> whereas according to ancient Hindu law - gives the forms of marriage are eight.

Monogamy : In the DP. Rāma and Sītā are the example of the ideal monogamous union. They never allowed themselves to be the victim of temptation of sexual enjoyment which, on some occasions, was exposed to them. They remained faithful to each other in spite of unfavourable and difficult situations they had to pass through.

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<sup>1</sup>•The story is narrated in Chapter II, under "Dhenuja Modha Brahmins."

<sup>2</sup>•Monogamy is the form in which an individual is institutionally permitted to have only one spouse at a time. Polygamy is a term covering both polygyny (the institution of marriage that permits a man to have two or more wives at the same time, and polyandry (the institution that permits a woman to have more than one husband at the same time). Vide Johnson Harry M., Sociology : A Systematic Introduction, (1966), pp.149-50.

From the stories, told in the DP. LXIII.35 ff and in LXVI.37 ff., it seems that Śivaśarma in the former story and Rajnīputra in the latter, each had only one wife.

The MKP favours monogamy and disapproves polygamy.<sup>3</sup>

Polygamy :

(1) Polyandry : "This form of union was once practised by the people of the cis-Himalayan tract in northern India and among some-tribes of the pre-Dravidian or Dravidian groups in south India."<sup>4</sup> "There is a difference of opinion among scholars about the prevalence of polyandry in the Vedic age. MM Dr. P.V. Kane and Dr. A.S. Altekar deny the existence of polyandry in the Vedic age, whereas Dr. R.C. Majumdar holds that 'polyandry, the counterpart of polygyny, probably also existed in the early Vedic society.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>.Vide Desai, N.Y., Ancient Indian Society, Religion and Mythology as depicted in the Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa, (1968), p.28. For the examples of ideal monogamous union vide Ibid, p.28; Kantawala S.G., CHMP. p.71.

<sup>4</sup>.Kapadia, K.M., Marriage and Family in India, (1966), p.52.

<sup>5</sup>.Desai, N.Y., Op. cit., p.27; Kane P.V., HDS. Vol.II., p.554; Altekar, A.S., The Position of Woman in Hindu Civilization, p. 132; Majumdar R.C., "Ideal and Position of Indian Woman in Domestic Life." Great Woman of India, p.7; Kantawala S.G., CHMP p.68.

The DP. contains only one instance of polyandry i.e. Draupadī becoming a common wife of the five Pāṇḍavas (I.39). It does not, however, elaborate, how the five Pāṇḍavas acquired her nor does it accounts for her becoming their common wife like the Mbh. and the MKP.<sup>6</sup>

(ii) Polygyny : "Though monogamy seems to have been the ideal and was probably the rule, the Vedīc literature is full of references to polygamy."<sup>7</sup>

There are some instances of polygynists as well as bigynists in the DP. Vicitravirya, Satyavatī's son, married two daughters of the king of Kāśī brought for him by Bhīṣma who won them in a svayamvara (I.19-20). This is a case of sororal polygyny which means marriage with two or more sisters. According to A.R. Radcliffe Brown the sororal polygyny can be attributed to the fact that co-wives who are sisters are less likely to quarrel than two who are not related and thus likely to maintain the peace and solidarity of the family.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>•Vide Desai N.Y., Op. cit. p.27.

<sup>7</sup>•Kane P.V., HDS. Vol. II., p.550 for evidence vide ibid, pp. 550 ff.

<sup>8</sup>•Radcliffe Brown A.R., Structure and Function in Primitive Society, p. 80; vide also Kantawala S.G., Op. cit. pp.71-72.

The following is the list of polygynists :

<u>Name of the polygynists:</u>	<u>Name/Number of the consorts:</u>
1. King Pāṇḍu	1. Kuntī, daughter of king Surasena and Māṇḍrī, daughter of the king of Madra. (I.26-27)
2. Bhīmasena	2. Draupadī and Demoness Hidimbā (I. 35,39)
3. Arjuna	3. Draupadī and Subhadra, Kṛṣṇa's sister (I. 39-40)
4. King Daśaratha	4. Kauśalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā (XXX.26)

Even in the historic times several kings were polygynists.<sup>9</sup> Even in modern times several persons are found to be bigamists and even polygynists.<sup>10</sup>

#### Eight Forms of Hindu Marriage :

Taking into consideration the mode of acquiring the bride and how the girl is given in marriage, the Hindus, ignoring the consideration of the numeric variation of partners, classify their forms of marriage into eight categories, which were recognized by the ancient Indian

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<sup>9</sup>•Vide Kane P.V., HDS. Vol.II. pp.553 ff.

<sup>10</sup>•Kantawala S.G., CHMP., p.71.

law from the times of the Gr̥hyasūtras, Dharmasūtras and Smṛtis. The eight forms of marriage are as follows :-

(1) BRAHMA form : It consists of the gift of a daughter by the father, after decking her with ornaments, to a man learned in the Vedas and of good conduct whom the bride's father himself invites.

(2) DAIVA form : It involves the gift of the daughter as above to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice, during the course of its performance.

(3) ĀRṢA form : Herein the father gives his daughter in marriage to the bridegroom after receiving a cow and a bull, or two pairs of these as a religious token as the price of selling the girl.

(4) PRĀJĀPATYA form : In this form the father makes a gift of the daughter, by addressing the couple with the mantra "sahôbhau caratām dharmam".

(5) ĀSURA form : In this form the bridegroom has to give money as much as he can to the father or kinsman of the bride.

(6) GĀNDHARVA form : In this form the union of the bride and the bridegroom is by mutual consent. It is a love marriage in the modern sense.

(7) RĀKSASA form : This involves the abduction of the bride from her home and the possible killing of her kinsmen who might intervene.

(8) PAISĀCA form : This involves the stealthy intercourse of the girl who is sleeping, intoxicated or deranged. This is the basest and most sinful type of marriage.<sup>11</sup>

Ludwik Sternbach, however, opines that there are eleven forms of marriage. In addition to the above mentioned forms of marriage there are two special forms named SVAM<sup>YA</sup>VARA (1) in which there was the absolute freedom of the bride to choose her husband (2) the bride is won by a feat of prowess. The GĀNDHARVA form is to be divided into two forms - the one being combined with the RĀKSASA ; the other free from it. From the legal point of view he categorises the first four as orthodox forms of marriage, while the other four as unorthodox one.<sup>12</sup>

The DP. does not furnish the clear instances of any form of the eight forms of marriage; yet the inference to Prājāpatya form of marriage may be drawn from the case of

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<sup>11</sup>•Vide Prabhu Pandharinath H., Hindu Social Organization, (1963), pp.151-52; Kane P.V., HDS. Vol. II, pp.516-17; Kantawala S.G., CHMP. pp. 71-72; Desai N.Y., Op.cit., pp.29-30.

<sup>12</sup>•Vide Sternbach Ludwik, "Forms of Marriage in Ancient India and their Development", Bharatiya Vidya, Vol.XII, 1951, pp. 62-138.

the gift of the mind-born damsels to the Gobhuja Vaniks by Viśvāvasu, the Prajāpati, the lord of the Gandharvas, for their fulfilment of the Gr̥hadharma (VII.41). It may be noted that the mantra "sabhôbhau caratām dharmam" is not mentioned in this connection; but it appears to be implied. The abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa represents indirectly the Rākṣasa form of marriage. In this case the real union did not take place after the successful abduction.

The DP. contains two instances of the Svayamvara form of marriage- the first being the acquisition of the daughters of the king of Kāśī by Bhīṣma (I.19-20); the second, the acquisition of Sītā by Rāma (XXXII.47). Both Bhīṣma and Rāma had to show their prowess before obtaining the hand of the brides. In the case of Bhīṣma the brides were obtained not for himself but for his half-brother Vicitravīrya.

The Modha Brahmins lay down the rule that the person who gives his daughter in marriage in exchange of some money fixed by him should be avoided (i.e. excommunicated) and he is termed the trader of girl (LXII.20). This means that the Modha Brahmins condemn the Āsura form of marriage.



Inter-caste Marriage :

The inter-caste marriage, now-a-days, is highly encouraged by the Government of India in its effort to remove the social evils resulting from the rigidity of the caste-system. Nevertheless, this effort does not receive full cooperation from public. We often find that many couples whose marriage was the inter-caste one, are persecuted in various ways. This indicates that the practice is frowned by the mass even to-day. It will be interesting to examine the attitude of the people towards the inter-caste marriage in India's past. The inter-caste marriage is traceable to the Vedic period. It is exemplified by the marriage of the sage Cyavana with Sukanyā.<sup>13</sup>

"That the law-giver like Āpastamba looked with disfavour the inter-caste marriage can be surmised from the right-royal condemnation of such marriages, while liberal law-givers like Manu and others permit the anuloma marriage; but the opinion about the approval of a marriage of twice-born with Śūdra woman was divided. The derogatory status assigned to the partners and pregeny of the PRATILOMA marriage suggests that it was looked down by the law-givers."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>•Vide Kane P.V., HDS. Vol. II., Part I, pp.44+7 ff.

<sup>14</sup>•Kantawala S.G., Op. cit., p.73.

The DP. furnishes only the instances of ANULOMA marriage. The marriage between the king Śantanu and Satyawatī, the daughter of a fisherman (I.15) and between the king Agni-ketu and a maid servant are the instances of this type of marriage (LXVI.43).

The Mōḍha Brahmins lay down the rule that the law promulgated by the traditional legislators like Manu etc., which provides for the taking to wife a girl belonging to one of the four VARNAS by a Brahmin, should not be followed in the Kali Yuga. (LXII.18). From this it is clear that the Mōḍha Brahmins do not look up with favour any form of marriage whether it is ANULOMA or PRATILOMA. They condemn the marriage outside their own caste (see below) i.e. they were endogamous. This indicates also the stage of high rigidity that was reached in the structure of the caste-system.

#### Limitations of Marriage :

The members of some group regard themselves as purer than or superior to the members of other groups. This leads to the development of the idea of inmarriage or endogamy among the members of their own group with a view to preserving the supposed purity and maintaining their prestige and dignity thereby. Caste system in India is

known to be a system of endogamous groups.<sup>15</sup> The Modha Brahmins can be regarded as the group of people belonging to the endogamous group, from the fact that they do not allow the members of their caste to marry the members of other castes. They lay down the rule that he (Brahmin) who out of lust takes to wife the girl belonging to a low varṇa shall not be punished but avoided like a Śūdra and that he who marries a girl belonging to Brahmin-caste other than Modha-Brahmin-caste shall not be admitted in the fold of Modha-Brahmin-castes. He shall be treated as excommunicated. They further lay down that he who takes to wife his own kin shall be treated as a Śūdra and as excommunicated (LXII. 26-28).

In the last case, the Sapinda-exogamy is probably referred to.<sup>16</sup> Now-a-days the Modha Brahmins belonging to different sub-caste do not intermarry, which is probably due to the enforcement of these rules.

### Marriage Rite

The marriage ceremony is performed by Indians with solemnity. It involves not only the social but also the religious life of the people.

<sup>15</sup> Vide Johnson Harry M., Op. cit., pp. 162-63.

<sup>16</sup> For the exogamy of the Hindus vide Kantawala S.G., Op. cit., pp. 74-76.

Marriage between Sūrya and Saṁjñā.

The DP. records the marriage ceremony between Sūrya and Saṁjñā which took place in Moheraka. It was attended by Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā. Other gods such as Indra led by Br̥haspati also came there with their consorts who sang the auspicious verses at the ceremony. Chrtācī, Menkā<sup>a</sup>, Rambhā, Urvaśī, Tilottamā and other Apsarasas performed the dance in the accompaniment of music played by the Gandharvas. It is also attended by wish-granting jewel, wish-granting cow, wish-granting tree and the god Kubera. They were the suppliers of all the materials. Mātrgaṇas (Mother-goddesses) like Gaurī etc. also came there. 18,000 Traividya Brahmins who attended the ceremony recited the auspicious sūktas. 36,000 servants of the Brahmins (Vaniks), with eagerness came to witness the ceremony and they lent a hand in various kinds of work in the ceremony. The marriage was duly performed; even the so-called Lājahoma was not missing (XVII.49-57).

This mythological setting provides us with the possible implications that the marriage in real life might have been attended by dignitaries comparable with the attendance of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā on the occasion of the marriage of Sūrya and Saṁjñā, that the people of

different communities might have been invited and that some programme of dance and music might have been organised. The fact that the wish-granting jewel etc. had attended the marriage of Sūrya and Samjñā might suggest that materials were affluently spent on the occasion of the marriage in real life.

#### Worship of Mātangi.

The DP. enjoins that five days after marriage the goddess Mātangi should be worshipped at the house of the bride or she could be worshipped after the bride has been brought to the house of the bridegroom's father. The worshipping-ceremony could be done under the shade of a banyan tree or in the house but in the latter case the twig consisting of seven leaves of a banyan tree should be brought for the ceremony to symbolise a banyan tree. The picture of the goddess possessing 18 hands is to be drawn on a golden or a brass plate. The following objects are to be depicted as resting on the 9 right hands : (1) a bow (2) an arrow (3) a sword (4) a club (khṛitaka) (5) a hatchet (6) a trident (7) a knife (8) a wine-pitcher (9) a rosary, and on the left hands (1) a pot of wine (of another kind) (2) a mace (3) an iron bar (4) a conch shell (5) a noose (6) a spear (7) a tomara (8) a serpent and <sup>following her</sup> (9) a dog. She is to be depicted as

riding on a lion. Then she should be consecrated with Vedic mantras. The goddess Mātāṅgī and the goddess Śrīmātā should be worshipped together. The Svastivācanaka<sup>17</sup> ceremony should be performed and the worship should be carried out according to the method enjoined in the Vedas. A lighted lamp fueled with ghee should be placed on one side. The bride and the bridegroom should sit facing the east. Brahmins should recite various songs of praise. Well-dressed ladies should sing the auspicious verses. The goddess Mātāṅgī should be devotedly worshipped. And for solemnity of the ceremony the mother of the bride should disguise as the goddess and pretend to be drunken. She should have a vessel filled with a drink prepared from molasses. She should display a healthy and pleasant disposition. Then the worship of the goddess should be made by various utterings. The third eye should be drawn between the eyebrows of the mother playing the role of Mātāṅgī with lamp-black. Then the goddess should be beautifully adorned. The naivedya of various kinds should be offered, e.g., cooked rice and bean, pāyasa, kulmāṣa, caṇaka, kṛsara, sūpa, vaṭaka, phenika, curd, etc. The Ārati ceremony should be performed by using eighteen lamps surrounding some in the middle and

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<sup>17</sup>•The Rgvedic verses that contain the word "svasti" are Rg.I.89.1, V.51.11, X.63.1. Vide Kane P.V., HDS. Vol.II. Part II, p.831 fn.1963.

in the meanwhile the bell should be rung. The mother of the bride, then, should offer each Brahmin and woman the drink left in the vessel. Then ~~the~~ offering of a cocoanut should be done. Then the bride and the bridegroom should look at their faces in the ghee. The ceremony to send off the goddess should be performed after the blessing ceremony (XXII. 54-74).

#### Worship of the Goddess Bharādī.

The wrath of <sup>the</sup> goddess named Bharādī was the cause of a strange occurrence in the marriage ceremony. The bride and the bridegroom were caused to swoon. It is, therefore, enjoined that the goddess should be propitiated before the actual marriage ceremony taking place. Again, at the end of the fourth day of the marriage ceremony, the following ceremony should be performed for the goddess. The bride and bridegroom should wear one piece of cloth together and in the middle of womenfolk they should give each other an auspicious bath. In the meantime, the husband of the bridegroom's sister (i.e. brother-in-law) well-dressed, with an eye closed and with the face made ugly should stand by their side. After the bath they should be brought to the ceremonial hall and they should be caused to play the game of gathering fruits. The ugly-faced

brother-in-law, also, should be by their side. Then the goddess should be worshipped by the relatives who were gathering there. At midnight at the house of the bridegroom, the wife of the maternal as well as that of the paternal uncle, sister of the father and mother of the bride should solemnly worship the goddess after an auspicious bath. The goddess should be made satisfied with various kinds of food and scent. This practice is peculiar only to Modha Brahmins. (XXIII. 22-33).

Now, this custom seems to have come into disuse as many Modha Brahmins, some of whom are priests know nothing about it.

#### Marriage Rite of the Vaniks :

Rāma is said to have sent Hanumat to bring back Vaniks to Moherakapura to serve Brahmins when he reinhabited the city. He gave them a sword and two white chowries, the former to be carried by the bridegroom and the latter to be used to fan him in the marriage-ceremony (XLV. 52-56). The marriage rite in which the bridegroom is required to carry a sword prevails even to-day amongst the Modha Banias belonging to certain divisions. Mr. Keshavalal Shankaralal Dave who is a priest attached to the temple of the goddess Modhesvari at Modhera told me



that the Modha Banias who migrated to Kathiawad and have Rajput-like surnames viz. Rathod, Solankī, Chavada and Dharaiya follow the custom. Rāma is said to have given a sword and two white chowries to the Maṇḍalika Vaniks for the same purpose too (XLVI. 52-53). I was told by a Maṇḍaliya Modha Bania that the practice is also followed in his caste. He claimed his origin from the Sūryavaṁśī Rajput. According to the census of India, "At the wedding of Modha Vanias, a sword and a fly-wisk are used which suggest a Rajput origin."<sup>18</sup> Some sections of Modha Banias, however, do not have this custom.

#### Sexual Relations :

Sexual pleasure (kāma) is regarded by the Hindu as one aim of life. Sexual pleasure which was enjoyed in conformity with dharma and which, when enjoyed, did not come in way of artha, was advocated by ancient writers. Sexual relations were considered as an art, and one of refinement. There were numerous works which contain instructions and wise advice regarding sex. The most famous of these works is Kāmasūtra, allegedly compiled by Vatsyāyana.<sup>19</sup> The immoral sexual behaviour, however, received unwholesome reaction from the society.

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<sup>18</sup>. Census of India, 1931, Vol. XIX, Part I, p.471.

<sup>19</sup>. Vide Edwardes Michael, *Everyday Life in Early India*; De Sushil Kumar, *Ancient Indian Erotics and erotic literature* (1959) pp. 92 ff.

In the Vedic period, as stated by Macdonell and Keith, "Adultery was generally regarded among Āryan people as a serious offence against the husband of the woman affected."<sup>20</sup> Manu also holds unfavourable views against adultery.<sup>21</sup> Adultery is condemned in the Rāmāyaṇa.<sup>22</sup> In the Mahābhārata adultery is explicitly condemned.<sup>23</sup> Adulterers are warned of dire punishment in several of the Purāṇas.<sup>24</sup>

The DP. contains following instances of sexual behaviour which is regarded as immoral.

(1) Indra committed adultery with Ahalyā, wife of the Sage Gautama. To punish Indra and his wife for the immoral act the sage cursed that Indra's scrotums would fall off and that Ahalyā would be turned into stone (XXV. 29-34). The severe punishment meted out by the sage, though mythical in nature, speaks of the public disapproval of the act. Gautama said to Ahalyā, "O wicked and foolish woman ! you have done the act censurable by public."

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<sup>20</sup> Macdonell A.A. and Keith A.B., Vedic Index of Names and Subjects. Vol. I., (1958), p.396.

<sup>21</sup> For details vide Pinkham M.W., Woman in the Sacred Scripture of Hinduism (1941), pp. 85-86.

<sup>22</sup> Pinkham M.W., Ibid. p.171.

<sup>23</sup> Pinkham M.W., Ibid. p.149.

<sup>24</sup> For details see Pinkham M.W., Ibid., pp. 102-103.

Therefore, (I curse you) to become stone remaining concealed from the sight of all people."(XXV.34)

(2) Śrīpati, a Brahmin was put to death for committing adultery with a Vanik widow (LXVIII. 14-16). This reflects how atrociously the public reacted against the sex criminal of this category, which indicates how serious the offence was to the mind of the people.

(3) The king Vindhyaśva is said to have assaulted Menakā for sexual intercourse, in spite of her dissuasion from doing it and her being Indra's wife. After having satisfied his lust, he felt guilty of his act and was afraid of Indra's wrath. (XXV. 4-13). Here one can see that sexual intercourse with somebody's wife is felt as a crime.

(4) The king Daṇḍaka raped Arajā, the daughter of the sage Bhṛgu and the consequent curse by the enraged sage led to his destruction (XLVII. 26-63). Sexual intercourse with the unwilling maid seems to be regarded as immoral too. Dhaumya said,

"Having heard that (i.e. his daughter's tale of woe), Bhṛgu, whose eyes became red with anger and whose lips trembling cursed the rascal king who was destitute of virtue and the lowest of man in the following terms - Because this demonical act was done by the king who had come to my hermitage, he and his kingdom be reduced to ashes instantly."(XLVII. 62-63)

The married man should not enjoy sexual pleasure with a woman other than his wife. This seems to be suggested when Rāma spurned the sexual offer by Śūrpaṇakhā, saying that he had a wife (XXXV.47). In the last instance it is the woman who makes advances, whereas in other cases it is the male.

It would be interesting to see what punishment is meted out to a person who commits adultery, according to Manu.

Manu lays down that the men who commit adultery with the wives of other should be awarded by the king<sup>a</sup>/punishment that causes terror then he shall be banished (M.S. VIII. 353); that a wife who violates the duty that she owes to her lord shall be devoured by dogs in a place frequented by many (M.S.VIII.371), and that the carnal intercourse with unmarried maidens is equal to the adultery with a guru's wife (M.S.:XI, 59). For the adultery with a guru's wife, a female part shall be impressed on the forehead with a hot iron. (M.S.IX.237).

"Sexual offenders, men or women, are to be severely punished, as instanced by the disfiguration of Śūrpaṇakhā and Ayomukhī, the cursing of Ahalyā, Indra and Daṇḍa, and the destruction of Vali and Rāvaṇa."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Vyas Shantikumar Nandooram, India in the Rāmāyaṇa Age, p.99.

## SECTION II

## FAMILY

Introduction : The family is the most elementary social unit and the prototype of all other human associations, for these evolve from family and kinship groups. It is here that the elementary egotistical propensities are curbed and harnessed to social purposes. It is one of the breeding grounds for the emergence of human co-operation and fellowship. It is the source from which the individual obtains his cultural development from the day he was born. "The child is surrounded by social definitions in the family. Moral attitudes abound for every situation. Ideas of right and wrong are repeatedly emphasized. The child finds ready-made ways of doing things presented to him almost before the occasion arises for their use --- Sentiments built up around certain objects and practices become cogent factors in the lives of individuals. Ritualistic performances on special occasions, family traditions that have become sacred are closely related to sentimental attitudes. There are

political, religious and social opinions that are potential forces in the family atmosphere. The pattern of behaviour and attitudes in the family reflect day after day the customs of the larger groups in which the family finds itself." <sup>26</sup>

Thus, the study of the inter-relationship among the members of the family is of vital importance from the socio-logical point of view. In the light of the information gleaned from the DP., the relation between father and son, the status and position of father, the relation between husband and wife, and brother-elder and younger, and brother's wife are discussed.

Father and Son. The father's word is to be always obeyed by the son.<sup>27</sup> The DP. furnishes the instance of a son carrying out the word of the father without even questioning its morality or propriety, as exemplified by Rāma who was ready to go into exile to save the honour of his father's word. (XXXIII.73 ff.) Obedience towards the father is declared to be the form of austerity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Brown, L. Guy., Social Psychology, 1934, p.63, quoted by Prabhu P.H., Op. cit. 1963, pp. 204-5.

<sup>27</sup> Rg.I. 38.1; V.43.7.

<sup>28</sup> Vide M.S.II.229.

The son is no less important to the father. On the birth of the first son, the father is freed from his debt to the manes.<sup>29</sup> Manu says that the eldest son on whom the father passes his debt and through whom he obtains immortality is alone begotten for the fulfilment of dharma; all the rest are considered as the off-spring of desire.<sup>30</sup> This speaks specially of the importance of the eldest son. "The yearning for the son is as old as the R̥g. Therein prayers for the birth of valiant sons are met with. With the passage of time the motive behind prayers changed, but the desire has persisted down to modern times."<sup>31</sup> The sentiment that the obtaining of a son is the earnest desire of the parents is met with in the DP. The religious acts performed at particular tīrthas promised them with the obtaining of a son or sons.(XV.38; XVII.40; XIX.40). The fact that he has no son made the king Daśaratha afflicted with painful feelings. He, therefore, had R̥ṣyasunga brought and performed the sacrifice to obtain a son. (XXX.12)

Status and Position of Father : The term "Pitr" in Sanskrit is equivalence of "father" in English. "The term 'पितृ'

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<sup>29</sup>•Vide M.S.IX.106.

<sup>30</sup>•M.S.IX.107.

<sup>31</sup>•Kantawala S.G. Op. cit. p.87.

is derived from 'Pā' to 'protect' or to 'preserve', and 'Pitr' therefore etymologically means 'protector'. The derivative meaning of the word thus emphasizes the most important obligation of the father with reference to the offspring, viz., to look after the helpless young one and give it care and protection.<sup>32</sup> The sentiment of love and affection towards a son and the desire to protect him seem to abide in the heart <sup>of</sup> a father in spite of the son being dangerous. This seems to be suggested from speech of Agnisarman to whom a snake was begotten. "This snake stays in my wife's womb without any difficulty and my wife does not die from its venom". "This egg-born creature, therefore, must have been born owing to certain causes. I will protect him as a son as long as he lives in my house". "The milk and love will be given to him always like an (ordinary) son. It may bite me any time on account of its insolence". "Is not there any wicked son who, involved in distress, harms his father ? This being the case, this snake was created for my death on account of the destiny". (XXIV. 59-62)

The responsibility of getting a proper match for his daughter rests on the shoulder of the father (cf. XVI.34; XXXII.9). Manu lays down that the father is reprehensible

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<sup>32</sup>•Prabhu P.H., Op. cit. p.250.



if he does not give his daughter at the proper time, that he should give her to the distinguished, handsome, of equal caste in accordance with the prescribed rule and that it is better for a girl to remain unmarried if the father cannot find a proper husband possessed of good qualities.<sup>33</sup>

When the members of the family quarrel, it is the duty of the father to make an inquiry into the matter and do justice to them. This is exemplified by Sūrya's intervention of the dispute between Chāya and Yama (XVI. 45 ff.). It is natural that discomfort resulting from the uncertainty of their son's safety will be felt by most fathers when their children have to go on a long journey or to perform some difficult task. This feeling was expressed by the king Daśaratha when Rāma was asked by the sage Viśvāmitra to kill the demons Mārīca and Subāhu (XXXI. 2 ff.).

#### Husband and Wife :

Manu says, "Let mutual fidelity continue until death. This may be considered as the summary of the highest law for husband and wife." "Let man and woman, united in marriage, constantly exert themselves that (they may not be) disunited (and) may not violate their mutual fidelity."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>•Vide M.S.IX.4; IX.88-89.

<sup>34</sup>•M.S.IX. 101-102.

This is the principle of an ideal couple. Rāma and Sītā are the well-known ideal couple of the epic. Rāma is described by the DP. as a faithful husband and Sītā as a self-supreme wife. Rāma was an expert in the science of love and Sītā was compatible with it (XXXIII.3). Śivaśarman and Susvarā both are referred to as expert in Kāma-sāstra (LXIII.36). Hence, a successful marriage consists in the agreeable dispositions and sex-knowledge of the couple. During my field study in Chanasma taluka, Mehsana district, I found that at a number of temples there are erotic figures. This probably suggests that there was an effort to popularize the knowledge of sex to the people who visited the temples.<sup>35</sup> The passionate love between Rāma and Sītā and devoted love shown by Susvarā at the dying bed of Śivaśarman<sup>m</sup> are delineated in the DP. XXXIII. 9 ff; XXXVII.44 ff and LXIII. 58 ff. Rāma is referred to in the DP. as the God-incarnate to protect dharma. That he waged a war with Rāvaṇa to rescue his wife, Sītā, is the example of his effort to protect dharma. Manu declares, "Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives." "He who carefully guards his wife, preserves (the purity of) his offspring, virtuous conduct, his family, himself and his (means of acquiring) merit."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup>. The erotic figures are also found at the Sun temple of Konark, Orissa and at the temples of Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

<sup>36</sup>. M.S. IX. 6-7.

Sītā showed her fidelity even during her captivity in Laṅkā. Being offered by Hanumat to carry her back to Rāma, she says, "I will not touch the hand of anybody except Rāma's. It is true that I was touched by Rāvaṇa but that was against my will."

The instance of broken home resulted from polygyny is also met with <sup>in</sup> the DP. It is seen in the episode of Kaikeyī <sup>ask</sup>ing the king Daśaratha for the throne in favour of her son, Bharata, and for sending Rāma into exile (XXXIII. 52 ff.). Johnson points out that "The possibility of rivalry and jealousy certainly exists in polygyny. These feelings might arise, for example, if the common husband neglected some of his wives sexually, or humiliated them by publicly treating one with special favour, or if the wives disagreed about household management."<sup>37</sup> In the DP. it is the son of one wife being treated with special favour that sparks off the trouble. This is illustrated in the case of Rāma.

Brothers - Elder and Younger, and Brother's Wife.

Manu enjoins that the eldest brother should support his younger brothers as if he were their father, and in return the latter should behave towards their eldest

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<sup>37</sup> Johnson Harry M., Op. cit. p.151.

brother as sons behave towards their father.<sup>38</sup> The eldest son is considered the most worthy of honour, therefore, he should not be treated with disrespect.<sup>39</sup>

It appears that Bharata behaved towards Rāma in the same manner as provided by Manu. He said (to Kaikeyī),

"Is it not strange that you tell me to rule while Rāma is still living ? (XXXIV.52)<sup>40</sup> According to Manu the preference is given to the eldest son in respect of inheritance.<sup>41</sup> Bharata must have said in this manner to his mother out of his respect for Rāma and in keeping with the laws of Manu. When asked again by Kausalyā, Rāma's mother to rule he said,

"O mother, you are so noble. You should stop such harsh words. O ! the knower of the law, it is improper for me to touch the kingdom which belongs rightfully to Rāma. My picture is tainted by me jealous and greedy mother. I take refuge in Rāma who gives protection." (XXXV. 14-15).<sup>42</sup> This also expresses the same feeling of Bharata towards Rāma.

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<sup>38</sup>•Vide M.S. IX. 108 (tr. by G. Bühler, p.346).

<sup>39</sup>•Vide Ibid. IX. 109.(tr. by G. Bühler, p.346).

<sup>40</sup>•Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 2. 76.11-12; 2.73. 7-8.

<sup>41</sup>•Vide MS. IX. 105; for the law of inheritance; Cf. Kane P.V., HDS. Vol. III, pp.42 ff.

<sup>42</sup>•Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 2.69, 73 ff.

The younger brother is also expected to execute the order of his elder brother. Bharata said (to Śatrughna) "Śatrughna, bring me the head of Mantharā quickly. All these censurable acts were due to the design of that sinful woman." Then Śatrughna carried out the order by dragging Mantharā along and pushed her to the ground. (XXXV.7-8)<sup>43</sup>

Vasiṣṭha said (to Bharata), "O high-minded one, now, your brother is carrying out the order of mother. You must carry out Rāma's order (i.e. rule Ayodhyā). This is an ancient tradition." (XXXV. 33). After that Bharata conceded to rule Ayodhyā in Rāma's name by putting his sandals on the throne, which again shows how much respect he had for his brother (XXXV. 37-39).<sup>44</sup>

The brotherly love is also expressed in the DP., when Bharata lamented in the presence of his mother, "O the most sinful and virtueless woman, the killer of my brother, by sending Rāma into exile you have killed me. What is the

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<sup>43</sup>. According to Ram. Śatrughna did this of his own accord. Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 2.72. 7 ff.

<sup>44</sup>. Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 2.103. 1 to 2.104.25.

use of the kingdom to me who has only a (soulless) body.  
 O Matangajā (Hastinī) woman,<sup>45</sup> without Rāma I will not  
 live for a moment. Rule the kingdom yourself. I do not want  
 to live."<sup>46</sup>(xxxv.3-4)

The constant following of Rāma by Lakṣmaṇa, wherever  
 he went, shows that they had strong attachment to each  
 other.

Brother's Wife and the Younger Brother :

The wife of the elder brother commanded respect from  
 her younger brother-in-law. This is suggested by the fact  
 that Lakṣmaṇa asked Sūrpanakhā to ask for permission from  
 Sītā if she wanted to enjoy with him because he held his  
 sister-in-law in high esteem (XXXV. 48).<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere  
 Lakṣmaṇa addressed Sītā with respectful term, i.e. "mother",  
 which shows that he placed her on par with the mother  
 (XXXVI.9).

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<sup>45</sup>. A Hastinī woman is defined thus :- She is short, fat and  
 ugly. Her lips are thick, neck short or bent if long  
 and mouth broad. Her eyes are red and small. If of light  
 complexion, Hastinī appears rather anaemic and lustreless.  
 She is slow of foot and walks ungainly on crooked feet  
 and toes. She is shameless and cruel and has an insati-  
 able capacity for love. See Thomas P., Kama Kalpa or  
 the Hindu Ritual of Love (1959), p.79.

<sup>46</sup>. Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 2.67.1 ff.

<sup>47</sup>. Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 3.17. 9ff. The accounts in the Ram.  
 differs from that in the DP. There Lakṣmaṇa ridiculed  
 Sūrpanakhā when she approached him.

The sexual relations between the elder brother's wife and his younger brother in ancient times were a peculiar phenomenon for the modern society. The sexual intimacy of a younger brother with his elder brother's wife, even when the elder brother is alive, is not repulsive. This is suggested by the episode of Mamatā and Brhaspati.<sup>48</sup>

The practice of taking over the elder brother's wife after his death by the younger brother was prevalent among the Hindus in the epic period,<sup>49</sup> and is probably traceable to the R̥gveda.<sup>50</sup> The existence of this practice is also suggested by the DP. Once when Rāma was in a hot pursuit of demon Mārīca by name who was in the form of a golden deer to kill it for Sītā. Being hit by the deadly arrow discharged by Rāma, the demon cried out in Rāma's voice for Lakṣmaṇa's help. When Lakṣmaṇa was reluctant to leave her to help Rāma, Sītā reproached him with these words,

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<sup>48</sup>. Vide Kantawala S.C., CHMP, p.69; Kapadia K.M., Hindu Kinship (1947), p.98.

<sup>49</sup>. Kapadia K.M., Ibid: p.99.

<sup>50</sup>. Vide Macdonell A.A., A History of Sanskrit Literature, (1962), p.106.

"O Lakṣmaṇa, today I know your real intention. You are lustful. I am certain that you have come here because you want me. O heroic one, I will not become an unchaste woman. Other than Rāma I will not enjoy any man. Knowing that Rāma is dead in fighting, I will give up my life."  
(XXXVI. 6-7)<sup>51</sup>

Another clear example was the taking over of Tārā, Vālī's<sup>n</sup> wife by Sugrīva, who thought that Vālī was slain in the fight with the demon Dundubhi (XXXVI. 54-59).

C. Rajagopalacari observes that "The Tamil poet Kamban describes Tārā as a chaste widow living a life of discipline and privations. It is different in Vālmīki, who includes Tārā and the other women as part of the inheritance Sugrīva won from Vālī - in fact, as an appurtenance of the throne. When Sugrīva lost himself in bodily pleasures and forgot his duty to Rāma, Tārā shared his revels and is described as being flushed and unsteady with wine when she went out at her lord's command to allay Lakṣmaṇa's resentment."

"In ancient times, when an elder brother died leaving a wife there was a custom in royal and other noble families

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<sup>51</sup>. Cf. Ram. cr. ed. 3.43. 5-8, 22-24; also cf. Kapadia K.M., Op. cit. p.98. For the practice of widows marrying their younger brothers-in-law vide Kapadia K.M., Op.cit. p.99 fn.



for the younger brother to take the widow as wife and protect her. It is difficult for people of one age to judge the customs of another age. Imagination and great flexibility of mind are needed to assess the merits and defects of usages with which <sup>we</sup> are not familiar."<sup>52</sup> This confirms that the practice was prevalent also at the time of Rāmāyana.

### SECTION III

#### Position of Women

Introduction : "It has rightly been said that the culture and civilization of a period can be gauged from the treatment accorded to women."<sup>53</sup> With the advancement of civilization the position of women has been increasingly raised nearly to the level of equality with men. In the Western countries the so-called 'Women's Lib' organizations which were unheard of in the past have been working actively to liberate women from male supremacy and demanding for women's equality with men in all respects.

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<sup>52</sup>.Rājagopalacari, Ramayana, p.198.

<sup>53</sup>.Pusalkar A.D., Bhāsa - A Study, (1940), p.380; see also Mehta Hansa, The Woman under the Hindu Law of Marriage and Succession (1943), p.3-4.

What is new about the status of women in Asia once a bastion of male supremacy, is that they now have the possibility of exercising power without subterfuge-and that many of them are doing it. In spite of their being termed underdeveloped or developing, many countries in Asia have propelled more women into position of prominence than any other countries in other continents. In some countries of Asia women have risen to the position of Prime Minister. Perhaps, better educational opportunities have armed Asia's new women with the skills that have enabled them to assert equality with males.

It would be interesting to know the position of their sisters in India's past.

#### Education and Yogic Practices.

As regards education Indian women, P.H.Prabhu concludes that "Though in the early Vedic period women were able to secure the same education as men equal terms, later on, it seems, that the content and also mode of the education for the two sexes came to be differentiated. Women's services to the society seem to have been conceived as concerned with, in and through the home and the family.

Due to this, it may be said that on the whole, in the later history of Hindu civilization, the Indian woman has had much less chances of education as compared with the chances man was accorded."<sup>54</sup> The education in ancient India for women had a tapering development towards later period. In the early ages, they were not barred from the Vedic studies but gradually education became less significant for them, especially when the practice of early marriage came into vogue. They were degraded to the status equal to Śūdras.<sup>55</sup>

The DP. has very scanty pieces of evidence of women's education. The scholarship of Mandodarī by which her earlier education may be inferred, appears in her argument launched against Rāvaṇa, while pleading with him for returning Sītā to Rāma. She said,

"The heroic traditions which you have spoken of are divided into many varieties. There are good as well as bad heroic traditions. They are classified by wise men under three categories, viz. highest, intermediate and lowest. The highest is the one by which one fights righteously to protect others and to protect cows and Brahmins.

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<sup>54</sup>. Prabhu P.H., Op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>55</sup>. Vide Kantawala, S.G., Op. cit., pp. 91-92; Altekar A.S., Op. cit., pp. 203-4.

The intermediate is the one by which one fights with violence or with delusion or with the motive of self-interest or with the sexual drive. O king, that you want to fight while holding somebody's righteous wife captive, however, is not an heroic tradition. As soon as you die you will go to hell." (XXXIX. 57-61). Elsewhere, she is referred to as the knower of moral philosophy (XXXIX. 23).

Though there was unwholesome feeling towards imparting secret knowledge to women, the women were not completely barred from the access to the knowledge. This is evinced in the DP. (XXVII. 23-24). At first Śiva, pre-occupied with the feeling that all women were rogue, was reluctant to impart the secret mantras to imploring Pārvatī; yet in the end he yielded to her insistent persuasion. All the secret mantras were imparted to her. Pārvatī's accomplishment of the mantras had later on almost caused disaster to Śiva.<sup>56</sup>

Some women in the DP. like the MP<sup>57</sup> and VP<sup>58</sup> are seen practicing penance to get relief from distress and

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<sup>56</sup>•See the chapter VI: mythology - under "Śiva and Pārvatī".

<sup>57</sup>•Kantawala S.G., Op. cit. p.92.

<sup>58</sup>•Vide Patil D.R., Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa, p.42.

obtain personal gain. Samjñā unable to bear the scorching effect of Sūrya's lustre, went to Dharmāranya to practice austerity in the hope that her husband's lustre might get reduced. (XVI. 36-40).

Woman as Wife and Mother :

It is laid down in many works that a woman should live up to the ideal of a pativrata. She should act, behave and carry out the affair under her responsibility as a chaste wife in the interest of her husband's happiness. The husband should be regarded by her as an adorable object, separation from whom is undesirable for her.<sup>59</sup>

The DP. also gives us some glimpses of an ideal woman. Brahmā order Viśvāvasu to purvey women to give to Vaniks in marriage so that they can pursue the Grhasthāśrama. He was asked to produce from his mind damsels who are pure, ever-smiling, disposed to righteousness, possessed of good conduct and devoted to the ideal of a pativrata (VII.42). The wives of Brahmins, on their part, are beautiful, youthful, firm in the ideal of pātivratya; they never utter harsh words, are not possessed of bad conduct, not unhappy, not ugly, not disposed to injury of others, not greedy, and not unchaste; they speak refined language

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<sup>59</sup>. For details vide Alterkar A.S., Op. cit. <sup>P.P 97-99</sup>, P.H. Prabhu, <sup>P.H.</sup> Op. cit. pp. 231 ff.

(Sanskrit); bad words never came out from their lips; they are busy with their domestic work (VIII.22-24). The foregoing description shows that the wives possessed of the aforesaid virtues were the desideratum of the society. These virtues of women however seem to be universally desirable.

It is an ignoble act for a married woman to stay away from her husband's home and to remain for many days at her father's place. It is the expectation of all the kinsmen that a married woman should remain always at her husband's house. This is evinced in the episode of Samjñā who secretly retired to her father, Viśvakarman without Sūrya's knowledge (XVI.28-29). The DP. also hints from the same episode that it is the duty of a father to find a suitable husband for his daughter and the daughter, on her part, after marriage should, under either happy or unhappy condition, remain always at her husband's place, because this is the characteristic of a good and chaste woman (XVI. 34-35). The married woman, according to the custom, will go to her father's place for delivery (LXVIII.14). This practice also prevailed in Buddha's times. Queen Māyā is said to have gone to her father's place for the purpose of delivery but unfortunately she gave birth to Siddhārtha, the future Buddha,

on the way, at Lumbini park. Even in modern times the married woman goes to her father's place for her first delivery.

The wife should also follow her husband to serve him, wherever he goes, or in whatever condition he lives. This example is set by Sītā. She said to Rāvaṇa who inquired about her "My father is Janaka who is resourceful as well as righteous. I came here (in the forest) to serve my husband." (XXXVI.20)

Now, the woman as mother will be considered.

A mother is ideally expected not to become unrighteous even to her children no matter how bad they are.<sup>60</sup> She should, at any rate, remain affectionate to their children (XVI. 50-51). Nevertheless, this noble teaching does not seem to appeal to step-mothers. They normally show partiality in favour of their own children. They do not do justice to their step-children. Ill-treatment of Yama by Chāyā had led to a quarrel between them, in which angry Yama raised his foot to kick her and in response to this ignoble act she cursed him (XVI. 45-47).

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<sup>60</sup>. Cf. kuputro jāyeta kvacid api kumātā na bhavati :  
Sāṅkarācārya's Devyapārādhakṣmāpanastotra. 2d.

On account of her partiality towards her son, Bharata, Kaikeyī resented the abdication of the throne in favour of Rāma by Daśaratha; and afterwards she managed to force the king to unwillingly abrogate his previous decision and give the throne to Bharata (XXXIII. 45 ff.).

#### Women and Religion :

In the Vedic age women enjoyed all religious rights and privileges which men possessed. Normally, religious prayers and sacrifices were offered jointly by the husband and the wife. Women's participation in Vedic sacrifices was thus a real and not a formal one. In their husband's absence women could also perform the sacrifice alone; but this practice died down by the beginning of the Christian era.

During the age of the Brāhmaṇas (C. 1500-1000 B.C.) Vedic sacrifices became very complicated; they could be properly performed only by those who had studied their minute intricacies very carefully. Consequently, the participation of women in sacrifices gradually became a mere matter of formality. Gradually the sacrificial work was allotted to males entirely.

When the Vedic Karmamārga had lost its importance Bhakti and Purāṇic schools rose into prominence by about



500 A.D. The Purāṇic religion made ample provisions for the religious requirement of women. As early as the 3rd century B.C. women were already accustomed to perform a number of vows and fasts (vratas). As the women of the later period were uneducated and thus incapable of understanding the profound philosophical discussion, the Purāṇic religion, which relied mostly on faith and devotion, therefore, appealed to them immensely.<sup>61</sup>

The DP. contains instances of women participating in the religious matter in various ways. Sītā played an important role in selecting Brahmins for performing the sacrifice proposed by Rāma at Moherakapura when he visited the place on his pilgrimage. He, however, at a loss as to which Brahmins he should select for the purpose. Sītā solved this problem for him (LI. 5-7). It is, however, difficult to say whether Sītā's participation in the sacrifice was real or more formal as the DP. does not state clearly on the point. The DP. XIX.40 claims that if a woman who is barren or who bears only one child or whose child is dead, worships the goddess Ānandā she will obtain happiness on account of issues being acquired. The purpose of this is to call on women to play their parts in worshipping the goddess.

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<sup>61</sup>•For details see Altekar A.S. Op. cit. pp.231 ff.

The DP. XIX. 16-17 recommends that for religious merits well-dressed women, keeping on their heads beautifully painted and perforated pots in which lamps are lighted, should play the festivity by dancing and singing in front of Śrīmātā. This shows that women played their active parts in performing the religious act in this Bhakti religion.

Young girls and Brahmins are to be fed in order to please <sup>the</sup> goddess Kṣemalābhā. This is shown in the DP. XXVIII. 42 and XXIX.8. It is here that the young girls act as the agents between man and the goddess. For the beneficial result to their marriage, husband and wife are jointly recommended to perform the ceremonies to propitiate the goddesses Śrīmātā and Bharādī (XXII.63-64; XXIII.23-34). This is an instance of women being indispensable in the ceremonies. Among the Jains women are deemed as occupying lower position than men as the Digambara Jains hold that they can never get salvation unless they be born again as men. Mahāvīra, however, is not known to have raised any objection in admitting nuns to his church.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>. Altekar A.S., Op. cit. p.246.

The DP. fabricates a legend<sup>63</sup> of how Jainism began to spread. It says that Gaṇeśa, disguised as a Jain monk spread Jainism among the women-folk first and then they induced their husbands to follow the creed. With the result of that the Jain community became larger and larger. Even women became Āryas. (LXVI. 20-23).

Satī : Satī or Sutte is a custom in which a widow immolates herself at the funeral of her husband. It was widely prevailing in ancient times. It existed among the Aryans in the Indo-European period, but by the time they entered India it has gone out of vogue as there was no mention of it in the Avesta nor in the R̥gveda. The custom was gradually struggling into existence once again in the early centuries of the Christian era. Originally, this custom was confined to only the fighting class (Kṣatriya); later on it had penetrated into the Brahmin community as well.<sup>64</sup>

The DP. records two cases of Satī, one of a kṣatriya woman and another of a Brahmin one, viz., (1) the mother of Vanarāja, the founder of Patan, who is said to have

<sup>63</sup> See also under "The Spread of Jainism to Gurjaradeśa" Ch.V.

<sup>64</sup> For details see Altekar A.S., Op. cit. pp.135 ff.

let the fire consume her at the funeral of her husband who died in battle with the thieves to prevent Brahmins' cattle from being taken away,<sup>65</sup>(LXVI.61)<sup>pp.</sup>; (2) Susvarā a Brahmin lady, wife of Śivaśarman, who entered the fire at her husband's funeral, leaving alone her baby who was destined to be the first ancestor of the Modhas. She attained heaven with her husband from this act of devotion (IXIII. 75-76).

These two ladies, Vanarāja's mother and Susvarā, were persuaded to give up their self-immolation by Brahmins and by husband respectively, as both of them had new-born babies to take care of. But they did not comply with the persuasion. This indicates that a woman with a young baby was not recommended to become a sātī and that force was not exercised in the operation of the custom.

As against the above-mentioned two cases, the Purāṇa also contains an instance of three widow-queens surviving their husbands, viz., :

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<sup>65</sup>. See Altekar A.S., Op. cit. pp. 140 ff.

This is not recorded in other sources.

(See Forbes A.K., Rās Mālā, pp. 27-29; Bailey Edward Clive, History of Gujarat, pp 24-25)

(1) Queen Matsyagandhā of the king Śantanu who afterwards through union with Parāśara gave birth to Vyāsa (I. 15 ff.).

(2) Two widow-queens of Vicitravīrya who afterwards each gave birth to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu through union with Vyāsa according to Niyoga or levirate system. (I. 21 ff.). This proves that at the time of <sup>the</sup> Mahābhārata the custom was not in vogue.<sup>66</sup> The prevalence of the custom of satī in the so-called Dharmāranya region is born out by satī-stones found profusely therein. (See photograph No. 7 )

Power of a Pativrata :

In the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas hyperbolical descriptions of the power of the pativrata occur frequently.<sup>67</sup> In the DP. the story of Śāṇḍilī illustrates the power of a pativrata. The account of her story in chapter XLIII. of the DP. is given below.

Śāṇḍilī was a great woman who was well-accomplished in the practice of penance. Once she heard about the duties of a pativrata which are described in the Dharmaśāstra. This created in her a strong desire to marry a man

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<sup>66</sup>. See Altekar A.S., Op. cit. pp. 140 ff.

<sup>67</sup>. Vide Kane P.V., HDS. Vol. II. pp. 567 ff.

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whosoever he may be - a muni or a t̄apaṣa. Once she came across a leper Brahmin. She asked him to become her husband. He agreed on condition that she would have to serve him faithfully and without disputing with him when he would give orders. She conceded to all the demands and they became husband and wife. One night in the month of Śrāvaṇa the husband became afflicted with the desire of having a union with the prostitute whom he happened to sight in daytime; so he ordered his wife to search for her and bring her to him. In the course of the search, Śāṇḍilī got lost in the rainy night and passed casually by the pond where the sage Māṇḍavya was impaled on a stake. There she heard the curse by the angry sage by the effect of which her husband would die at sunrise. She was horrified and with the sole idea of saving her husband's life she scooped up <sup>Some</sup> water of <sup>the</sup> Sarasvatī from the pond and took a resolution that she would let herself be reduced to ashes if the sun rose. The sun did not rise and the gods were put into trouble. They, consequently, requested her to give up the resolution, which she conceded to. As soon as the sun rose, her husband died. He was afterwards brought back to life by the gods who sprinkled nectar on him and then he became rejuvenated and was cured of leprosy.

From the story the attitude of the people towards women is reflected. Here the absolute subservience to one's husband was the most essential quality to put one on the throne of an ideal woman. Chastity of a wife is the quality called for by the society (VII.42). It is said in one place that a chaste wife joins her husband after death<sup>68</sup> (LXIII.76).

General Attitude and Feeling Towards Women :

"In early Indian literature, both sacred and secular, there is often a dual attitude towards woman. There are many praises for the loving wife, abundant and faithful who is not just a chattel but 'half the man'. She was to be treated with love and certainly never beaten. On the other hand, women were said to be naturally lustful and unless constantly watched, would be promiscuous or, failing the opportunity, lesbian".<sup>69</sup>

In many places the DP. shows negative attitude towards women. They were regarded as inconstant and thereby they may cause damage to valuable things. It is, therefore, advised that mantras are not<sup>to</sup> be revealed to

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<sup>68</sup>. For parallels vide Kane P.V., HDS. Vol.II, Part I, pp. 567 ff.

<sup>69</sup>. Edwardes Michael, Op. cit., p.40.

women (XXVII. 24). They were regarded as brainless, unsteady, greedy and weak; they don't know what should be done and what should not (XXVII. 25). Secret should not be revealed to any woman; <sup>70</sup>whosoever has confidence in a woman will meet with constant misery (XXVII. 27).

Regarding the wickedness of women the M.S. holds that it is their nature to seduce man in this world. In the company of females even the wise may lose his guard. The woman can lead astray not only a fool but even a learned man and make him the slave of desire and anger. It is also advised that one should not sit in a lonely place with his own mother, sister or daughter because it may happen that the senses may overcome him. The women were allotted by Manu, the creator, the love of bed, of their seat, of ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct. They were destitute of strength and of knowledge of Vedic text.<sup>70</sup>

Since the Vedic times, it is enjoined that a woman ought not to be killed.<sup>71</sup> The feeling that a woman ought not to be killed, in spite of the fact that she was a demoness, is expressed by Rāma when he was to kill Tāṭikā.

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<sup>70</sup>•Vide M.S. II. 213-215; IX. 17-18; see also Bühler G. (tr.) the Laws of Manu, p.69 and p. 330.

<sup>71</sup>•Altekar A.S., Op. cit. p. 380; Kane P.V., HDS Vol.II, pp. 593 ff.



(XXXI.35). The M.S. (IX.232) says that a person killing a woman or a Brahmin or an infant is to be meted out a capital punishment. For all that, the DP. states that killing a demoness who is the evildoer, the source of suffering and injury to others does not amount to committing a Nārīhatyā (killing a woman). (XXXI. 36-37). That Śūrpaṇakhā was not killed by Lakṣmaṇa for her misbehaviour with Rāma was probably due to Avadhyatā of a woman being observed. (XXXV. 44 ff.). That her ears and nose were cut was probably the customary punishment of a woman with such misconduct. (XXXV. 49)<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>•Cf. MP. 227.200.