

unmarried girls, ailing, expectant and old women should be provided food first and then alone should husband and wife in the family take meals together. (ii.138; iii.114, 116) All these provisions in Manu indicate the high degree of sense of respect and affection he had for womenfolk.

9. Manu not in Favour of Unrestrained Freedom to Women

It will be only pertinent to clarify in this context that Manu is an admirer of virtues and a great detractor of vices. So he accords all respect to the virtuous ladies and provides for all punishment to the vicious women. One of the characteristics of these provisions of Manu is that he is not in favour of unlimited liberty for woman which may make her unsafe and consequentially be extremely harmful to her. So he has warned women against jumping the security cover provided to her either by the father or by the husband or by the son because such a misadventure on her part can bring a bad name to two families— one her parents' and the other her in-laws' (v-149; ix-56) However, by no means does it mean that Manu is anti-women's lib. This only implies that the first social requirement of women is security which may be provided to her by the State's law and order machinery or some man or by her own valour. Her own valour, more often than not, fails to protect her in a world dominated by sensual tendencies. There are instances to show that even the well-armed woman-dacoits have required male protection and patronage. However, it will not be proper to assess Manu's contentions in the present day political perspective. Today there is a law-enforcing government and yet thousands of women have been criminally assaulted and thus compelled to go to dogs. Rape and subsequent killing of women is the order of the day and the rule of law is rendered ineffectual. The real import of Manu's words can be realized *vis-a-vis* a situation when there is looseness in administration consequent upon a change in the system of government following violent incidents. It is in such a situation that Manu's words prove to be perfectly true.

This analysis makes it clear that the provisions made by Manu are neither anti-shudra nor anti-woman. They are in fact, extremely fair, just, impartial and even-handed. Manu has said nothing objectionable, nothing exceptionable.

E- SPURIOUS INTERPOLATIONS IN THE MANUSMRITI

The aforementioned discussion leads us to the inevitable conclusion

that the **Manusmriti** does have in it a large number of verses carrying noble canons and commandments. However, it is also a fact that the extremely objectionable verses which anti-Manu writers have been quoting and underscoring are imputed to Manu and his **Manusmriti**. This makes the scripture a carrier of paradoxes. If the latter type of verses were also accepted as really from the original **Manusmriti** it would mean that the book has in it on the one side just and fair rules and regulations and unfair and unreasonable and hence despicable proposals and postulates on the other. The crucial question is: Is it an acceptable position that a book should originally carry in it such paradoxes and self contradictory statements and commandments? When there are no apparently self contradictory statements in the compositions of even ordinary writers of average intelligence how can there be such paradoxical statements in the write-up of such a legal luminary and religiously righteous sage. A plain, simple and incontrovertible explanation to this is one and only one: The just and noble laws and those giving due consideration to a man's potentialities, actions and abilities are originally written by Manu and those against these principles, and putting a premium on partial, unreasonable and unjust approach are interpolations added to the **Manusmriti** from time to time, designed to suit the vested interests of interpolators. This explanation gets upheld as correct and just if we make a reference to the **Manusmriti** itself. The original verses are contextually relevant and written in a sober style which matches with the principle of due consideration for an individual's merits, actions and potentialities so dearly upheld by Manu. The interpolated verses are written in a different style and are not only irrelevant and out of context but also thematically discordant. Thus we can determine which verses are original and which ones are interpolated. In brief can be stated the following as guiding principles for telling the original from the interpolated:-

1. The system upheld by Manu is the Vedic Varna system (Even Dr. Ambedkar has accepted this fact). So the verses upholding the principle of merit-profession-potentiality are the original ones, and those against it and pleading for parentage and birth as determining factors are the motivated insertions made subsequently.

There were no castes during Manu's times. That is why Manu does not name any caste as belonging to one or the other varna. Keeping this in

view the logical conclusion is that the verses upholding the inheritance of varnas are the interpolated ones.

2. The verses relating to the system of due and equitable punishment quoted in the present write-up, which constitute the general law, are original. And the verses which talk of discriminatory rigorous punishment only to some sections are interpolated ones.

3. Similarly the verses quoted here relating to the definition of Shudras, talking of charitable attitude towards them, of performance of religious rites by them, of possible change from one varna to the other are from the original text. On the other hand those which talk of a person being a Shudra if born of Shudra parents, which talk of untouchability, of discrimination between the high and the low, and those which support exploitation of weaker sections are interpolated ones.

4. Again the verses quoted in this article suggesting that women should be given due regard, should enjoy social freedom, have equality with men and have the right to education including the right to study the Vedas, are original and those negating these postulates are interpolations.

Some readers may be interested in going deep into the question of which verses are original and why, which verses are subsequent motivated additions and why. They are urged to refer to the **Manusmriti (Complete)** in Hindi published by the **Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, 455-Khari Baoli, Delhi**. This book carries an appraisal of the book on the strength of arguments based on internal evidence and tells the original verses from the interpolated ones on the basis of universally acceptable yardsticks. This edition of the **Manusmriti** will prove very useful in securing information regarding the original subjects taken up in the scripture for discussion, regarding the interpolated verses clearly stating why they are decisively and conclusively interpolated and not original, regarding some of the popular misgivings about the **Manusmriti** and their resolution in a convincing manner. This is the latest research on interpolations in the **Manusmriti**. It is essential to make it clear here that the interpolated verses are no longer a subject of controversy. Instead, they have been accepted as such decisively, conclusively and finally. It is a fact of history supported by written evidences that there have been made motivated additions to the ancient Sanskrit literature from time to time. The **Mahabharata** which originally carried only 10,000 verses has gradually

become a stupendous volume of about one lakh verses. Today's **Ramayana** carries hundreds of more shlokas than those in a hand-written version which is about one thousand years old and which is still lying preserved in the Nepalese archives. The **Manusmriti** is also sailing in the same boat. As a matter of fact a larger number of additions, alterations and interpolations have been carried out in it. The reason obviously is that it is more related and relevant to the day-to-day conduct and concerns of human beings. So it was subjected to manipulations by vested interests. The scholars of all shades and hues are unanimous on the issue of interpolations in the **Manusmriti**. The commentaries available on it bear a direct testimony to this fact. The later-day commentaries carry a larger number of verses. There are 170 more verses in Kullukabhattacha's commentary (12th century) than those found in that of Meghatithi (9th century). Till then the extra verses in the former had not been assimilated in the main body of the commentary and so had to be given in large brackets. There is a variation in the number of verses found in other commentaries.

*British researchers like Wooler, J. Jolly, Keith and MacDonell and the Encyclopaedia Americana also accept that the **Manusmriti** carries a large number of interpolations.

*Maharshi Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj regards only the original and interpolation-free **Manusmriti** as authentic. He has pointed out some interpolated verses and has urged scholars to identify other such verses for expurgating this great work.

*Mahatma Gandhi in his book entitled 'Varna Vyavastha' accepts that the objectionable verses found in the **Manusmriti** are subsequent motivated insertions. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Rabindernath Tagore and other national leaders and scholars too are of the same opinion.

Hence the need of the hour is that the original **Manusmriti** should be reckoned as authentic, and the opposition to Manu on the basis of interpolated **Shlokas** should be rebutted because Manu and **Manusmriti** are worth taking pride in and not something condemnable. We should not drag such invaluable and important heritage of our country in the dirty politics of vested interests, and thus should not desecrate it by subjecting it to indignities and insults.

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