

OPPOSITION TO MANU

WHY ?



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OPPOSITION TO MANU: WHY ?

(English Translation of 'Manu Ka Virodh Kyon ?')

by

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Consequent upon the unwarranted opposition to Manu a unanimous resolution was passed on 28th July 1989 by the full administrative bench of the Rajasthan High Court to the effect that the statue of Maharshi Manu installed on the Jaipur premises of that Court be removed. While discussing this resolution with Dr. Surendra Kumar I was first inspired and later helped by him to file a writ petition in the Jaipur Bench of Rajasthan High Court seeking the annulment of the impugned order. Fifteen points forming our argument were put before the court for consideration. In other words the writ petition was based on these points on the strength of which it was prayed that Maharshi Manu's statue should not be moved to any other place from the one where it stood installed at that time.

The fifteen fundamental points were:-

- i. Maharshi Manu -- the first and the foremost writer of a Code of **Dharma**.
- ii. Manu -- A religious teacher and a preceptor.
- iii. The **Manusmriti** -- a major scripture of the Arya Samaj.
- iv. Manu -- the first law-giver.
- v. Manu and the **Manusmriti** -- most authentic as evidences in the view of modern scholars.
- vi. Manu's statue installed in the Supreme Court also.
- vii. Manu's wide recognition overseas.
- viii. Manu, the foremost father of mankind.
- ix. The real nature of Manu's Varna system-- a rational system.
- x. Shudras -- not untouchable in the opinion of Manu.
- xi. Manu's Penal Code -- not anti-Shudra.
- xii. Many examples and evidences in history to prove that change of Varna is possible.
- xiii. Change of Varna as per Manu's system -- a common occurrence in modern times.
- xiv. The oft-cited objectionable verses -- spurious interpolations in the **Manusmriti**.
- xv. Research on the presence of interpolations in the **Manusmriti** conclusive.

The Court summoned me also in my capacity as the petitioner to put across my point of view. I was given only limited time. So I straightway told the senior advocate pleading against Manu's statue:-

"I have based my petition on fifteen points. You may identify any

three of these which you regard as the weakest. I will confine my arguments only to the three points for the time being, leaving other points out for want of time."

It sounded amazing that someone should ask the lawyer of the rival side to take up only the three weakest points out of a total of fifteen and to confine only to them while pleading. But this senior advocate of the defendants could hardly say anything in response to this offer. Seeing no reply forthcoming the full bench ruled that I should put before the court in gist all that I had to say on the fifteen basic points. I did exactly as I was told. It took me about three full days. The Court heard me with rapt attention. When it came to the defence lawyer to put up his side of things he started looking sideways. The court record has this to say: "The advocates disparaging Manu could not dare say anything in reply even though the Court waited for twenty long minutes for securing a reply."

At long last the court passed an interim judicial order staying its own administrative resolution dated 28-7-89 to the effect that Manu's statue should be removed to some other place from the premises of the court. With the result the statue continues to stay installed just where it was.

As a matter of fact it is highly disgusting to note that a thoughtless attempt was made to have Manu's statue removed on the basis of various kinds of baseless allegations or with some ulterior motives. The aim of this tract is to caution the discerning readers against the politically motivated attacks being made on great men of India. I am, of course, grateful to Dr. Surendra Kumar who has shown extreme sense of duty, care and caution in the whole episode.

August 10, 1995

Dharampal Arya,
Secretary,
Manu Pratishthan Sangharsha Samiti
and
Secretary, Arsh Sahitya
Prachar Trust, Delhi.

FOREWORD

One of the most frequently used words these days is **Manuvad** without its meaning and import being made clear. The use of this word is being made vaguely, ambiguously and loosely only in tune with the phraseology used by crafty politicians. A correct and impartial assessment of the **Manusmriti** leads us to conclude that **Manuvad** means a philosophy which is based on finer values of life, viz., merit-action-capability trio determining a person's status in the society rather than his birth and parentage. Naturally then a philosophy having no reference to an individual's merits, performance and capabilities, and upgrading or degrading him only because of his birth and parentage will be called anti-**Manuvad** or non-**Manuvad**.

The contents and the interpretation of the **Manusmriti** presented (or misrepresented) by anti-Manu writers right from the British critics down to some Indian writers are prejudiced and one-sided. Completely ignoring the brighter side they have highlighted the interpolated verses which were added spuriously to the original **Manusmriti** by self-seeking writers with ulterior motives. This approach not only damages the image of Manu but also presents in bad light the Indian religion, civilization, culture, history and particularly the religious scriptures. Besides, it helps create misgivings about them in and out of the country. This, in turn, leads to sacrilegious treatment of our scriptures without any justification wounding our racial and national pride grievously.

This write-up aims at giving correct information on **Manu** and the **Manusmriti**, at carrying out a correct appraisal of the book by removing misgivings about it, and thus at creating a correct opinion about it. It cannot be denied that the birth-based caste system has brought about the downfall of our society, race and country. This system continues to be a potent danger with adverse ramifications for future. But at the same time it is also a fact that some Indians are extremely short-sighted in as much as they are trying to tarnish our magnificent past and talk of demolishing our rich heritage only on account of an evil system (caste-system) which was introduced not by **Manu** but by someone subsequently. This is like cutting at the very roots of Aryan or Hindu religion, civilization and culture; nay, of the very existence of

Hinduism.

No system in the world is completely foolproof or wholly acceptable. Even the present social and political system is not perfect. If some flaw creeps into a system it can be remedied. Our ancient saints and sages have suggested to us a panacea for tackling such unwarranted situations:-

यानि अस्माकं सुचरितानि, तानि त्वया उपास्यानि, नो इतराणि ।

(Taittiriya Upanishad, I-II-2)

This means that good actions of others should be embraced and imitated and not the rest.

Acting upon this precept we can keep up the good and give up the bad. Our welfare lies in carrying on our good conduct, actions and intentions. It is foolish to give them up. In any case it is now hoped that the readers will shed their misgivings after having read this treatise. They will also get acquainted with the principles and precepts carried in the **Manusmriti** and will come round to accepting them.

--Dr. Surendra Kumar

OPPOSITION TO MANU : WHY ?

During the British period in India some western writers indoctrinated in Christianity, and having vested interests in the continuance of the British Empire hatched a foolproof conspiracy. They planned to inculcate antipathy in and demolish faith from the minds of Indians towards every that thing and person who traditionally were closely associated with the majesty, magnanimity and magnificence of India. These western writers succeeded in converting to their views some of the Indians with the help of the imperial influence of the Britishers and their divide-and-rule policy. Macaulay's educational policy also lent them a helping hand. Such Indians then carried on and furthered this anti-Indianism. Thus came up on the scene a group of people who made Maharshi Manu-- the first law-giver, and his **Manusmriti**-- the foremost law-book, a target of their slanderous criticism. Things have come to such a pass that whereas disparaging Manu and decrying his **Manusmriti** on mere hearsay and unsubstantiated criticism has become a mission for some sections of the society, it has become a fashion with the English-knowing people in India, and an issue for winning elections for some political parties. Very queer is the conduct of our politicians in this regard. A few years ago, soon on the split of a particular political party the erstwhile progeny of Manu disowned him as their foremost father and started cursing and contemning him, his **Manusmriti** and his progeny from public fora. One of the political parties structured a point and programme, **viz., Manuvad** for grabbing political power. Some years ago when a statue of Manu was installed on the Jaipur premises of the Rajasthan High Court in recognition of his having been the first law-giver, some people saw the statue as a potent danger and began subjecting the lifeless statue to a controversy. The dispute thus created is under the consideration of that very Hon'ble Court to decide. The fact of the matter is that some people, regarding the opposition to the statue as a very good posture for making the best political capital out of, are trying to acquire a political identity.

One is amazed to see such people disregarding the **Manusmriti** as, let alone having read it, have not even as much as seen the shape and size of the book, One day I confronted a person who started slighting the **Manusmriti** by quoting a quadruplet from Tulsidas, **viz., 'Dhol, pashu,**

shudra, aur nari....' attributing it in ignorance to Manu as one of the **shlokas** authored by him. It can easily be guessed from this illustration how little the slanderers of Manu know about him and his **Manusmriti**.

Laymen apart, even as widely read a man as Dr. Ambedkar is swept away in opposition to Manu to such an extent that he sees in every anti-**Shudra** act a doing of Manu. He has attributed to Manu the anti-**Shudra** sayings of even Shankaracharya. And the chaos and confusion created by ordinary writers in respect of Manu has a very long account. All this points to the fact that a careful and serious study of the **Manusmriti** has not been carried out.

It has been observed that there are three types of people who indulge in deprecating Manu. One are those who have read Manu through prejudiced commentaries written in English, and have been brought up in a tradition thus developed. Such people are not acquainted with the alterations and interpolations carried out in the ancient Indian literature through the ages. The second are those who have not read side by side the original and the interpolated versions thoughtfully and critically. The third are those who have made it a point to disparage Manu on account of some misgivings, prejudices and worst of all, even vested interests. But the fact remains that Maharshi Manu neither as a man nor as a writer deserves to be condemned. India and Indianism can take pride in him and look big and dignified.

A. MANU'S PLACE AND POSITION

1. Manu's Position in India

Maharshi Manu is the first to have given the world a well-regulated, systematised, ethical and ideal pattern of living for human beings. He is the first among **manavas** (one of the human races), the first among scripture-writers, the first among law-makers, law-givers and social philosophers, the pioneer statesman and above all the first sage-ruler. Manu is the religious teacher who introduced the **yajna**-rituals. The religious scripture composed by him which today is known as the **Manusmriti** is the oldest of **Smritis**. We see in our ancient history and literature right from **Vedic** ages down to modern times, a long tradition of those scripture- writers, litterateurs, authors, poets and rulers who have spoken of Manu eulogistically. **Vedic Samhitas** and **Brahmanical** scriptures describe Manu's words as efficacious and beneficent like medicine. Maharshi Valmiki in his **Ramayana**

alludes to Manu as an authority in the field of religious scriptures. Ram, who is worshipped as God by the Hindus, quotes Manu's verses to prove that his conduct has been in consonance with the directions given in the religious scriptures. The **Mahabharata** proclaims at several places that the **Manusmriti** is a tried and tested constitution of life, and alludes to its writer as the greatest preceptor and jurist. In several of the **Puranas** Manu has been embellished with epithets such as the foremost sage-ruler, scripture-writer, etc. and thus has been painted as a person devoted to human welfare. Acharya Yaska quotes Manu's dictum in his **Nirukta** in the discussion on equal rights for sons and daughters and thus regards him as authentic. In the **Arthashastra** Chanakya has quoted Manu as an authority. Brihaspati, a writer of one of the **Smritis** regards the **Manusmriti** as the most authentic document and proclaims other **Smritis** controverting Manu's as unacceptable. Ashwaghosh, the Buddhist poet, quotes Manu's dicta in his work **Vajrakopaniṣad** as an evidence. Yajñavalkya's **Smriti** is based on the **Manusmriti** itself. All religious books and **Smritis** quote Manu's words in support of the contentions contained in them. Dharsen, the king of Valabhi has declared Manuism as an authentic creed as per a petrograph of 571 A.D. Dara Shikoh, the writer-son of Emperor Shah Jehan describes Manu as the first and original human whom Jews, Christians and Mohammedans call Adam. Guru Govind Singh has showered liberal eulogies on Manu in his book entitled 'Dasham Grantha'.

Maharshi Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj accepts **Manusmriti** as an authority second only to the Vedas. Shri Aurobindo regards Manu as a semi-god. Shri Rabinder Nath Tagore, Dr. Radha Krishnan, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and many other national leaders have made a mention of Manu in their writings as the first law-giver. A number of jurists such as Justice A.N. Mullah, N.Raghavacharya and others have acknowledged Manu's set of laws as an authority. Keeping only this widely acknowledged recognition of Manu in mind Pt. Nehru and people at large embellished Dr. Ambedkar with the epithet 'Modern Manu' while presenting the Constitution of India to the Lok Sabha. Also, while unveiling the statue of Dr. Ambedkar, Shri R. Venkataraman, the then President of India added to the grandeur of the former's personality by calling him "Modern Manu."

2. **Manu's Recognition Overseas**

Manu's position and prestige, his magnanimity and magnificence

and the extent of his influence overseas have not been any the less than these have been in India. The encyclopaedias brought out by the Britishers, Americans and Germans describe Manu as the foremost among humans, as the first law-giver, as the pioneer jurist and social philosopher. Upholding Manu's beliefs Maxmueller, A.A. Macdonnel, A.B. Keith, P.Thomas, Louis Renov and other western writers regard the **Manusmriti** not only as a religious book but also a law book and describe the laws given therein as universal in application and beneficial to all mankind. Sir William Jones, a judge in the Indian Supreme Court at one time learnt Sanskrit to have a first hand study of the **Manusmriti** on having realized the scripture's indispensability in arriving at judgements in respect of some disputes of Indians. He even edited the **Manusmriti**. The famous German Philosopher, Frederich Neitsche has gone to the extent of saying that 'the **Manusmriti** is superior to the Bible as a scripture;. In fact, according to him 'It is a sin to compare the **Manusmriti** with the **Bible**'. Books like 'The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences' brought out in the USA, 'The Cambridge History of India', Keith's 'History of Sanskrit Literature', A History of Dharma Shastra' by Bharat Ratna P.V. Kane, Dr. Satyaketu's 'Dakshin Purvi Aur Dakshin Asia Mein Bhartiya Sanskriti' (India Culture in South East and South Asia) and other similar books contain a vivid and detailed description of the extent of the influence of the **Manusmriti**. These readings can make every Indian feel puffed with pride at the country's ancient heritage.

We come to learn from the history of, and the petrographs found in Bali island, Burma, Philippines, Thailand, Champa (Vietnam), Cambodia (Kampuchea), Indonesia, Malaysia, Ceylon, Nepal etc. that varna system based on people's profession as propounded in Manu's scripture has been practised in these countries. Paramount importance was given to the laws enunciated by Manu, and judgements were doled out accordingly. A number of verses of the **Manusmriti** have been found inscribed in the form of petrographs. Kings and emperors used to take pride in calling themselves the disciples or followers of Manu, and would feel elevated by adding one or the other label of Manuism to their name. According to an inscription found in Champa (Vietnam) Raja Jai Inder Varmadeva was a follower of Manuism. According to another inscription found in Udayan Varma's 'Sadok Kakthom' there is a mention of a book entitled 'Manav Neetisar' which is based on the **Manusmriti**. In one of Yashovarman's inscriptions found in

Prasat Kompan we find quoted a verse. i.e., 2.1.36 from the **Manusmriti**. In one of the inscriptions of Raja Jayavarma there is a mention of a minister who was well-versed in the **Manusmriti**. In Bali island Manu's social system is still being practised. The code of conduct and the constitutions of the aforementioned countries were and still are largely based on the **Manusmriti**. The Philippines believe that Manu's Smriti and another Smriti authored by Laotse have contributed a lot to the making of their country's code of conduct. It is in recognition of their contribution that the statues of the two have been installed at the gate of the legislature of that country.

Howsoever much Manu may be disparaged and deprecated the relationship that has been built between us and Manu can never be undone. We can never break off with Manu, can never put him in abeyance so long as this human society and its history are intact.

Indian society regards Manu as their original ancestor as is testified in the country's ancient literature. All humans are the progeny of Manu. It is for this reason that all words meaning 'man', such as **manushya**, **manuj**, **manav**, **manush**, have originated from the word **Manu**. So the writer of the Nirukta says while giving an etymology of these words 'मनोः अपत्यम्, मनुष्यः' (3-4). This means that we are called **Manushya** for we are the progeny of Manu. The statement 'मानव्यः प्रजाः' in the Brahmanical scriptures also testifies the same fact. The European scholars have philologically proved that there was a time when Europe, Iran and Indian sub-continent were the members of one ethnic group. The words connoting man in the languages of these regions are all derivatives of words originated from **Manu**, e.g., **minos** in Greek and Latin, **mann** in German, **manna** in Spanish, **man**, **manis**, **manus**, **manes**, etc., in English and its dialects, **nuh** {with स् (s) of मनुस् (manus) changed into ह (h) and म (m) getting dropped} in Iranian Persian. This fact is testified in the historical writings and inscriptions of these countries. Iranians regard themselves as Aryans even today and believe Saptasindhu country to be the place of their origin. Cambodians (Kampuchians) regard themselves as the progeny of Manu. The inhabitants of Thailand consider themselves to be the descendants of Ram who belonged to the Suryavanshi clan. Both Ram and Krishan belong to Manu's lineage. On having read this account we can say that no other scripture-writer or law-giver has been accorded as high a place of pride and prestige as Manu.

3. Accusations Hurlled at Manu and the Manusmriti

Now let us consider the charges levelled against Manu and the **Manusmriti** which can broadly be classified into three categories:-

- i. Manu built up a caste system based on birth.
- ii. In his social system whereas he made partisan and even inhuman laws for the Shudras, he gave privileges to Savarnas (the high-borns), particularly the Brahmanas. Thus Manu was anti-Shudra.
- iii. Manu was anti-woman. He did not allow women equal rights with men. Also Manu has spoken rather disparagingly of women.

To answer these charges it will be in the fitness of things to cite evidences and examples from the **Manusmriti** itself rather than quote instances and adduce proofs from outside. So a few observations are being made below on the basis of some conclusions drawn from the **Manusmriti**.

B₁ THE REAL NATURE OF MANU'S VARNA SYSTEM

1. Based on Merit, Profession and Potentiality Manu's System has Vedic Origin:-

The varna system propounded in the **Manusmriti** is based on an individual's profession, his merits and capabilities, and has Vedic origin. This system finds its mention originally in three of the **Vedas**, viz., **Rigveda** (10.90.11-12), **Yajurveda** (31.10-11) and **Atharvaveda** (19.6., 506), Manu considers the Vedas to be of axiomatic status in religious matters. So, regarding the Varna system as a system propounded and sanctioned by the **Vedas** and considering it to be the basis of righteousness, Manu includes it in his system of administration, and disseminates his plan through his scripture.

2. Varna System and Caste System as Contrasting Systems:-

The determining factors in Manu's Vedic Varna system are merits, vocation and capabilities rather than the birth of a human. Here it is essential to understand that Varna system and caste system are contradictory propositions. Neither of these systems can sustain itself where the other is being practised and thus the presence of one rules out the other. The basic difference between the two can easily be understood if we appreciate the etymological difference of the two words. In the varna system it is the Varna (an individual's vocation) which is the deciding factor whereas in the caste system it is the parentage which is of crucial importance. Interchangeable use of the two words is highly misleading.

The word **Varna** is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root 'वृत्र वरणे' which means the vocation which is chosen. Acharya Yaska clarifies the connotation of this word in his **Nirukta** as follows:

वर्णः वृणोते (2-14) meaning thereby the word 'Varna' has something to do with the choice/the selection (of vocation/profession here), whereas the word 'Jati' has something to do with **Janma** (birth). The word **jati** has been used as a synonym for janma (birth) and not caste as is illustrated below:

जाति-अन्धबधिरौ (1-201)	:blind and deaf by birth
जातिं स्मरति पौर्विकीम्(4-148)	:remembers his previous birth.
द्विजातिः (10-4)	:because he is believed to be born twice.
एकजातिः (10-4)	:Shudra, because he has only one birth and does not have the second, which is believed to take place on being initiated into the study-period.

As per Vedic varna system the society is to be divided into four classes, viz., of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. As long as people kept on choosing one of these vocational groups on the basis of merit-cum-profession-cum-ability the system kept on being called **Varna Vyavastha** (class system). However, when birth or parentage began to determine if one was a Brahmana or a Shudra, etc., it came to be called **Jati Vyavastha** (caste system). An etymological study of the word **Varna**, which is formed from a Sanskrit verbal root and a suffix added to it, only indicates that when the system (i.e. Varna Vyavastha) came into being the Varna (vocation) was selected on the basis of the concerned individual's merit-cum-profession-cum-ability and not acquired on account of his parentage.

3. No Mention of Present-day Castes and Sub Castes in Manu's Varna System:

That Manu has made a mention of only four varnas and of no castes or sub-castes is a conclusive proof in support of the fact that Manu's varna vyavastha was based on vocation and performance and not on birth. Two facts are evident from it. One, there were no castes based on parentage during Manu's times. Two, parentage or **gotra** (sub-caste) was of no consequence in varna-vyavastha and one would not acquire a **varna** (vocation) on this basis. If during Manu's times birth had been the basis for

determining varna or if there had been castes or sub-castes Manu would certainly have enumerated them and also pointed out which of them belonged to Brahmana community and which to Shudra community and so on and so forth. How much disregard Manu had for birth-based aggrandisement is known from that verse in the Manusmriti in which a mention has been made with derogatory epithets like '**Vantashi**' (one who eats his vomit) for those who eulogised someone for his lineage or parentage (3-109). Besides, in Manu mention had been made of an individual's virtues and good deeds only and not of his clan, caste or kinship while showing respectfulness and reverence to him.

4. **Purpose of Manusmriti Defeated if Birth-based Castes Accepted:**

The very purpose of the composition of the **Manusmriti** would be defeated if we accepted Manu to be a believer in castes on the basis of birth because the scripture has assigned different tasks to different varnas (classes). If a person were to be a Brahmana, kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra by birth he would remain in the same varna whether or not he performed the tasks allocated to that varna. The very fact that Manu has assigned different roles to different varnas only proves that he approves of vocation and not of birth as the basis of varna vyavastha.

5. **Provision for Change of Varna in Varna Vyavastha.**

There is a very basic difference between the varna vyavastha and the caste system. It is that there is a provision for change of varna in varna vyavastha. An important verse from the Manusmriti dispelling all doubts in this respect is being quoted as an evidence:-

शूद्रो ब्राह्मणतामेति, ब्राह्मणश्चेति शूद्रताम्।

क्षत्रियात् जातमेवं तु विद्याद् वैश्यात्तथैव च ॥ (10-65)

Manu says in this verse that a Brahmana becomes a Shudra and vice versa on the basis of one's merits, actions and abilities. Similarly such an interchange also takes place between Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

6. **Change of Varna on Neglecting Prescribed Duties:**

There are dozens of verses in the Manusmriti which speak of provisions for downgrading Brahmanas to the class of Shudras on account of the former neglecting their prescribed duties and indulging in deeds of debased nature (See 2/37, 40, 103, 168; 4/245 etc.) and for upgrading Shudras to higher varnas consequent upon their undertaking tasks of nobler nature (See 9/335).

7. Varna Vyavastha Practised upto the Mahabharata Period:

The aforementioned proofs and arguments make it abundantly clear that in Manu's social system all people had equal rights to join any of the varnas according to their merits and vocations, irrespective of their parents' profession. This system continued from Rigvedic period until Mahabharata (Geeta) period. The Geeta clearly says:

'चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः (4-13)

The chaturvaranya (the four-class system) has been created on the basis of people's vocations and merits and not on their birth and parentage.

8. Change of Varna: Examples in History:

Hundreds of examples from Indian history can be cited in support of the fact that Varna Vyavastha is based on an individual's vocation and action, and has nothing to do with his birth.

i. Kavash Ailush, a son of a slave-woman, and Vatsa, a son of a Shudra-woman became Rigvedic Rishis for their having become seers of **Mantras** (exponents of vedic hymns).

ii. Raja Vishvamitra who was born of Kshatriya parents became a Brahmarshi.

iii. Satyakam Jabal whose birth and lineage are unknown became a **Brahmavadi** Rishi (an exponent of the highest reality, Brahma)

iv. Matanga who was born in a Chandal family came to be called a Rishi...

v. Valmiki who (according to some legends) was lowly-born acquired the fame which goes with the name of Maharshi Valmiki.

vi. Slave woman's son, Vidur, became the prime minister of Raja Dhritarashtra and came to be known as a **Mahatma**.

vii. Shri Ram, a son of king Dashratha, and Shri Krishna, born in a Yadav family, came to be regarded as God. They became venerable even for the **Brahmanas**, their birth in a Kshatriya family notwithstanding.

viii. On the other hand, Ravana who was born in the clan of Pulastya Rishi came to be called a 'demon' for indulging in evil deeds.

ix. Raghu, the ancestor of Rama, had a son named Pravridha. He was outcast from the Kshatriya clan due to his misdeeds and misdemeanour and became a demon.

x. Trishanku, originally a king became a Chandal.

xi. Many of Vishwamitra's sons came to be called Shudras.

9. The Whole Community Acquiring a New Varna.

Besides individuals, we also come across examples of a whole community or a large part of it leaving its earlier varna and acquiring a new one. Some verses in the **Mahabharata** and the **Manusmriti**, with, of course, some variations in the text, reveal that some of the communities were Kshatriyas earlier but with the negligence of their duties, and for their not having undertaken penance to atone for their omissions and commissions even when so required by the Brahmanas, degenerated into being enlisted among the Shudras.

शनकैस्तु क्रियालोपादिमा क्षत्रियजातयः ।

वृषलत्वं गता लोके ब्राह्मणादर्शनेन च ॥

पौण्ड्रकाश्चौड्रविडाः काम्बोजाः यवनाः शकाः ।

पारदाः पहलवाश्चीनाः किराताः दरदाः खशाः ॥ (10-43,44)

Meaning: Owing to their having neglected their prescribed duties and not having undertaken penance even on being advised to do so by the Brahmanas some of the Kshatriya communities which came to be called Shudras were: Paundraka, Audra, Dravida, Kamboja, Yavana, Shaka, Parada, Pahalva, Cheena, Kirata, Darada, and Khasha. In addition to these some other communities that find a mention in the same context in the **Mahabharata** (Ch. 35.17-18) are: Mekala, Lata, Kanvashira, Shaundika, Darva, Chaura, Shabara and Barbar.

Examples of change of varna are found until much later in the history. According to J. Wilson and H.L. Rose the Pakharana or Pushkarna Brahmanas of Rajputana, Sindh and Gujarat, and Pathak and Mahavar Rajputas of Aamtara in the Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh were upgraded to higher classes consequent upon change of vana (see Hindi Encyclopaedia Part 4.).

10. The Secret of Identical Sub-castes in all the Four Varnas:

The Identical surnames found among Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Dalitas are a firm proof not only indicating the existence of long family traditions but also showing that the members of all communities are descendants of the same one original family. People in the beginning chose a particular varna on the basis of their merits, performance and potentialities and later on came to be regarded as the members of the same varna. In the times that were to come their varna in case of some, was upgraded, and in case of others downgraded for

various reasons. For example, in some areas the people of Brahmana community continued to remain Brahmanas whereas in others they became Kshatriyas and in yet others, Shudras. During the course of time a rigid social system developed and parentage and birth became the bases of a person's categorisation which came to be called caste.

11. The Basic Elements in Varna Vyavastha:

The basic elements of **varna vyavastha** as propounded in the **Manusmriti** are merits, vocation and capabilities, Manu does not attach any importance to an individual as such or to the varna to which he belongs, but to the aforesaid attributes. Where these attributes abound on the positive side the individual and his varna are accorded greater respect and reverence. Where they are in a low measure or are on the negative side the individual and his varna are given a lower recognition. Even till today no civilized system has been able to negate the elements constituting Manu's **varna vyavastha** nor is any likely to do so in future. Negating these is sure to lead to injustice and consequent discontent, protests, mismanagement and ultimately to anarchy. Such a situation is described idiomatically in Hindi as: 'Treating the donkey at par with the horse', and 'driving all with the same stick'.

As a result of such a situation no country or society can progress and prosper, be happy, contented or peaceful, remain disciplined, systematised or even unified. In fact such an arrangement cannot sustain for too long. Even the communistic pattern of society or government, which swears by the principle of equality for all has not been able to ignore the elements so basic to Manu's system. Even in that system we have public posts and social positions being given to individuals after taking into consideration their merits, duties and capabilities which further determine their perks, status and salary structure.

If we carry out a comparative analysis of the present day administrative and business set-up vis-a-vis the one conceived by Manu we shall be able to see clearly the essential similarities between the two. There are four classes in the administrative hierarchy of the government, viz. i. Class I Gazetted officers ii. Class II Gazetted officers iii. Class III and Class IV employees. Among them the first two man the officer-cadre and the rest are **karamcharis** (workers). The basis of this classification is an individual's potentialities and capabilities, and the duty assigned to him.

And these very things determine the privileges, status and importance given to him. In the earlier times too, the possession of particular type of potentialities and capabilities by an individual was certified by the academic institutions (The **Gurukulas**, the **Ashramas** and the **Acharyas** of the institutions) much on the same lines as is being done today (by schools, colleges, universities, etc.). In the absence of any such certification a semi-educated or an uneducated person has to undertake a menial job or physical labour and such a person is put in the last category of service. In earlier times also a person who would not go to a teacher for acquiring knowledge or a particular skill used to undertake a job of a similar nature and was categorised as a Shudra which means a man of a low position, a message-bearer, etc. One can easily see how similar to the word 'Shudra' are the connotations of words like 'Naukar', 'Chakar', 'Sevak', 'Preshya' (a message bearer), 'servant', 'orderly', 'a low class employee' etc.

There is not much difference between the systems of allotment of vocation as it exists today and as it was practised earlier. In both the cases one is permitted to practise a profession such as medicine, law or teaching only on the acquisition of a relevant degree or diploma or certification, and not without it. Rules and duties for all jobs are prescribed which if violated will entail removal from the position held by a person.

12. Practical Opportunities for Shudras to Change their Varna

There are some people who have considered themselves Shudras and for some reasons are still labouring under this erroneous impression, and thus keeping themselves deprived of human rights. The Arya Samaj which regards Manu as a religious preceptor and is an ardent follower of the principles and systems enunciated by Manu openly invites them to get initiated into any of the varnas they qualify for, and thus offers them concrete opportunities to change their varna. Long before the present-day constitution of India came into force Maharshi Dayanand declared in the light of the dicta of **Manusmriti** that untouchability, notions of inequality among humans, casteism, denial of education to women and to those born of Shudra parents, child marriage, unmatched marriage, polygamy, practice of **sati** system and social and economic exploitation were great social evils. He also carried on a crusade against these evils. The Arya Samaj has set up **gurukulas** and schools some of which are exclusively