

## Manu Smriti on Womanhood: What is Right and what is wrong?

International women day was celebrated in JNU University by burning copies of Manu Smriti. Students who participated in this event or organized this event proclaimed that the text of Manu Smriti described women in wrong manner. So, it's best day to burn Manu Smriti. I will like to give my opinion in this matter. First of all 99.9% better say 100% of students or JNU activists have never ever read Manu Smriti. They have habit of shouting to get cheap publicity, media attention and to prove them as activists. They don't even know that

When was Manu Smriti authored?

What was its sole purpose?

What is its relevance today?

What is the message given in it?

Is it being followed today?

Is Indian constitution based on teaching of Manu Smriti?

Nothing. No one knows anything but shouting. The main aim of shouting against Manu Smriti are the vested interests. Foremost being securing the Dalit Votes. Next is to prove oneself as secularist. The most interesting is to become a puppet in the hands of foreign forces through the strings of NGOs. All these attempts are sides of same coin. No doubt that by shouting every activist feels himself as a champion, as a hero. Many things that they are soldiers of Soviet Bolshevik revolution who got right platform for spreading Marxism and Leninism.

But Truth never becomes untruth even if shouted thousand times. In the Middle Ages Manu Smriti was adulterated by few ignorant persons. Denigrating women, denouncing the Varn Vyastha, propagating the birth based caste system were main interpolations done by these culprits. This fraud was exposed first by Swami Dayanand, the great Vedic scholar of the 19th Century. He writes: "I believe in that part of Manu Smriti which is not interpolated (appended later) and is in accord with the Vedas." He concludes that the Manu Smriti we read today is not as originally laid down by Swayambhu Manu, the first Chief of Humanity. As it now is, he found the text as self-contradictory and against the values espoused in Vedas, and hence injudicious. He therefore rejects those prejudicial texts which advocate discrimination against populations with alleged inferior status. This main idea led to editing of the adulterated text of Manu Smriti. This pure or Vishuddh part was published by many scholars. The most famous work is done by Dr. Surender Kumar (Presently Vice Chancellor of Gurukul Kangdi University, Haridwar). Every readers will accept the Manu Smriti after correction once he is aware what is mentioned in it.

Let us look up the text itself pertaining to women. We here give few examples.

3/56. Where women are honored, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not, no sacred rite yields the desired result.

9/26. Women who bear (our) children secure many blessings (for the family and the society at large); they are worthy of worship, who suffuse (their) dwellings with prosperity; there is no difference between them and goddesses of good fortune.

2/138. Way must be made for a man in a carriage, one who is above ninety years old, who is diseased, who carries a burden, and for a woman, the learned, the king and for a bridegroom.

3/114. A person may offer food without hesitation, even before serving the guests in one's house, to newly-married women, infants, the sick, and to pregnant women.

3/60. Where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband, happiness will assuredly be lasting in such families.

3/62. Where the wife is radiant and happy, the whole house is heaven-like; but if she is unhappy, all will appear as hell.

3/59. Hence, men who seek (their own) welfare, should always honor women on holidays and festivals with (gifts of) ornaments, clothes and food (as desired by them).

3/55. Women must be honoured and well – adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, who desire (their own) welfare.

9/13. These six causes spell ruin for women : drinking (spirituous liquor), associating with wicked people, separating from their husbands, rambling abroad, sleeping (at unseasonable hours), and dwelling with other men.

3/57. Where the female relatives live in grief, the family wholly perishes soon; where they are not unhappy, the family ever prospers.

3/58. Houses perish completely, as if destroyed by magic, on which female relatives pronounce a curse, upon not being duly honored.

9/28. Upon one's wife alone depends the welfare of the offspring's, due and fruitful performance of religious rites, faithful service of all in the family, superior conjugal happiness and the blissful existence of our ancestors in heaven and of our self.

4/180. Let no man quarrel with his parents, his female relatives, brothers, his son and his wife, and with his daughter and his servants.

8/389. Neither a mother nor a father, nor a wife nor a son shall be cast off; unless guilty of a crime causing loss of caste (or social status earned over one's lifetime), he who casts them off shall be fined six hundred (panas).

9/130. A daughter, who is even (as) oneself, (such a daughter) is equal to a son; how can another (heir) take the family estate, while such (an appointed daughter who is even as oneself) lives ?

9/131. The property of the mother is the share of the unmarried daughter alone and the son of an (appointed) daughter shall take the whole estate of (his maternal grandfather) who leaves no son of his own.

9/192. But when the mother has passed away, all uterine brothers and sisters shall have equal share of their mother's estate.

There are many similar examples from Manu Smriti which depicts women in respectable and honorable manner. The adulterated part of Manu Smriti must be rejected. But there is no harm in accepting the right portion.

The very idea of just burning the book is a cheap publicity stunt. I am not wrong in saying that the act of burning Manu Smriti is similar to what Islamic invaders did by burning the libraries of Nalanda considering everything as Shirk (wrong) and Kafir (infidel) without proper analysis and research.

Dr. Vivek Arya