



RĀJDHARMA AND RĀṢṬRANĪTĪ IN MANUSMṚITĪ: ITS RELEVANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT DAY

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Manusmṛiti is the oldest scripture that has had the greatest influence of Indian religion and Society. No other book can compare to the influence of Manusmṛiti in the history of Indian society religion and literature. For hundreds of years Manu teaching has explained Indian religion and control the social system. During Manu's time there was no religion called Hinduism. But the Hinduism of the later period which embodies The Legacy of Manu and the tradition of Manusmṛiti. Manusmṛiti is a collection of 12 Prakaraṇa's or chapters and 2686 verses. This book is highly controversial. Because according to the early text, Manu is the first man the ancestor of mankind. In Sanskrit the word 'Manav' means Manu or son of Manu. The first Manu refers to the spiritual son of Brahma swayambhu. According to later text Manu is the title or name of the 14 kshatriyarulers of the world or alternatively the head of the dynasty, which begins with each cyclical kalpa at the time of the new birth of the universe. That is each kalpa speaks of 14 manvantaras. Each manvantara was headed by the different Manu. The present universe is claimed to be ruled by the 7th Manu whose name is Vaivasvata Manu. In order to clarify the concept of the actual authorship of Manusmṛiti quoting from the Samhita, where it is said according to the Manusmṛiti the great man created Manu after a long period of pre-nance. Manu is called the second creator of the entire universe^{1/33}. It is said that Manusmṛiti was written 300 years after the Vedas, not only that it is mentioned in Manusmṛiti 'The religion taught by the Vedas is the religion by the Manusmṛiti. Regarding the context Manusmṛiti has influenced the culture Civilization literature, history, etc. of many countries. for example: [Manusmṛiti, The Oxford International Encyclopaedia of legal history 2009, Oxford University Press, and Patrick Olivella 2005, Manu's code of law, Oxford University Press] mentioned: The Manusmṛiti, Also known as the Mānava- Dharmaśāstra or law of Manu, is one of the many legal text and constitution among the many Dharmaśāstra or Hinduism. In ancient India the sages often wrote their ideas on how society should run in the manuscripts. It is believed that the original form of Manusmṛiti was changed as many things written in the manuscript contradict each other.

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Introduction

Dr. Motwani, a renowned Sri Lankan sociologist with PhD in 1958, from California University USA rights on Manusmṛiti as follows: 'Manusmṛiti or dharmaśāstra is a treatise that deals with the social life of man, fundamentally the Dharmaśāstra contains a statement of principles of social life of man applicable of all time'. In general it can be said that all the literature that has developed around the Vedas is called Vedic literature. Vedic literature consists of samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishad etc. Sage Manu said, Veda is the root of all religions. That is, the Vedas are the root of all religions. By regarding the Vedas one can gain knowledge about religion and Brahman. Dr Surendra Kumar a prominent Sanskrit scholar has cited many events in the original book of Manusmṛiti and has identified and separated all the irrelevant projected verses, Immoral projected verses and projected verses written for group interest. Scholar almost agree that an ancient religions scripture, which is now completely extinct, once regulated the spiritual and socioeconomic life of the entire human race. Later, at various times, many foreign enemies, attracted by the wealth and prosperity of India, attacked this country and tried to establish their dominance. For example, all the pillars of Vedic Civilization were destroyed due to the continuous operations of Alexander Arabs, Turks, Shakas, Huns etc. The Gurukul, the world of education was separated from the main infrastructure. Some opportunistic self-proclaimed Brahmin peoples of that time, started destroying various scripture as they wished due to their own interest and to expand their dominance.

Similarly, in the Manusmṛiti the carrier of Vedic civilization, preached by the said Bhrigu Muni many different sources are used to maintain dominance. It is important to remember that the ancient religions scriptures Manusmṛiti were originally written based on the Vedas and that author was ‘Sayambhuva Manu’ The Sage Bhrigu compiled it in a concise form and disseminated it through ten Sages (whose names are mentioned in the Samhita). Therefore, Manusmṛiti is a book based on the Vedas. In that sense, if any verses are found in Manusmṛiti that are in conflict with the ideology of the Vedas, then it must be understood that the social part is definitely a projection, that is, it has been added later with which the original Book has no connection.

In the 7th verse of the second chapter of Manusmṛiti, it is said whatever religion Manu has declared for any person it is exactly as it is stated in the Vedas since Manu is fully aware of all the Vedas. In the 8th verses of the second chapter of Manusmṛiti, it is said: by careful examination all the scriptures with the eyes of knowledge, Scholars will become aware of the Vedic duties and dharma and perform them. It is said in the Manusmṛiti that those who are able to acquire proper knowledge by reading the scriptures belong to the Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya classes. And those who do not have such educational qualifications belong to the Shudra class (it should be remembered that there is no birth factor related to this) Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya are called Dvija. The reason why these three castes are called Dvija is that they are born twice, once in the womb of their mother and then once in Brahmanjana, that is they are initiated into the Upanayana Sanskar and acquire the knowledge of the Vedas. That is why Shudras do not get a second bath by acquiring knowledge. (Manusmṛiti 2/146, 1014).

This is how caste has been divided according to qualities and actions there is no room for error in this. If we leave aside the errors and omissions of the latter parts of the monochy it is easy to understand how important and indispensable it is for a social system besides, it contains all our Shraddha system, Caste system, Ashram system necessary laws for distribution of wealth etc. From one point of view, it was a complete system of life of the society of that time. This Manusmṛiti is like a fragment of the Vedic society. The relevance of the Manusmṛiti in the present day is a subject of scholarly social and political debate. It has both enduring philosophical value and significant limitations when viewed from the perspective of modern constitutional democracy. From the perspective of Rajdharma and Rastraniti, The Manusmṛiti retains partial relevance. Many of its principles of governance remain useful while others are not compatible with modern democratic and constitutional systems. But Manusmṛiti is most relevant today as the source of ethical and administrative principles, not as a legal or constitutional authority. Its teachings on Rajdharma, justice, integrity, public welfare, and responsible leadership and Rastraniti efficient administration, national security and fiscal responsibility can still inform discussion on governance.

However these principles must be interpreted in harmony with the constitution of India who guarantees equality, Liberty justice and fundamental rights to all citizens. Thus, the enduring value of the Manusmṛiti lies in its ethical vision of governance rather than in the direct application of all its social prescriptions. The explanation and instruction of Rajdharma in Manusmṛiti Manu while describing the duties of a king, says in the seven chapter in his book that he should serve the people of the Vedas by sleeping in bed every day during the prescribed time. This will increase the king's honour considerably. The king is told to be modest according to him; the king should learn vinaya or modesty from the brahmins every day. Because restraint mind cannot be destroyed in any way. No matter how many hardships he faces, he can overcome all difficulties with confidence but an unruly king, despite being wealthy, will be on the verge of destruction due to his intemperance. On the other hand, if a king having no support due to the bad time lives in the forest, and if he is restrained or disciplined, he can regain his Kingdom.

The king said in the context of punishment due to the fear of punishment, all the creatures in the world are able to enjoy, no one deviates from their religion, punishment alone protects the law. If the subjects deny the authority of the king and do not respect the king, then the Social Status is destroyed and anger arises among the subjects. If punishment is applied correctly all the subjects strive, and the permanent peace of the king is established. It is due to the fear of punishment that all the creatures in the animal world are able to enjoy their own pleasures. Under the influence of punishment, the achievement of equal pleasures is possible, because thieves cannot steal the wealth and useful goods of the householder. Because there is punishment no movable or immovable creature divides from their religion. If the king is indifferent and does not properly punish the criminal, then there will be an outbreak of civil justice in the kingdom. The strong people would try to gain more power by oppressing the weak people. Regarding these 6 qualities of a king Manu says:

Joins, Deities, Vehicles, Asana, Duality and restraint are called the six qualities. Joins: - A treaty is an agreement with an enemy King to benefit each other. Deities:- The vigraha yatra is a pilgrimage to the enemy king to show respect for the enemy for the sake of war. Vehicles: means a collection of all the animals, horses and elephants for war. Vehicle is also divided into two categories. In case of sudden need, it can be used alone or with an allied king. Asana: - Staying at home, ignoring the enemy, is called Asana. Ambivalence: - hesitating over one's own strength is called ambivalence. Sanshraya: taking refuge in another powerful king when oppressed by enemies is called samshraya. Manu has further divided each quality into two parts. There are two types of Sandhi, namely equal value and unequal value karma. There are two types of idols: - idol made by oneself to accomplish task of an untimely time or idols made to ward off harm from a friend. Sanshraya is also divided into two types. one type is when someone takes refuge in another King to prevent an attack by an enemy and the other type is when someone takes refuge in a king to prevent an attack by an enemy and to prevent such an attack another king is taken refuge in the second type. It may be mentioned that there is a special chapter called ‘Rajdharma Parva’ in the Mahabharata and under the shantiparva written by Maharshi Vyasadeva. Moreover this subject is also been reviewed in Kautilya's Arthashastra and in the later works “Kamandakniti” and “Shukraniti” based on Arthashastra.

In the first verse of the 7th chapter of Manusmṛiti, the author proposed to review the royal religion saying that the way in which a king is created, the way in which a king behaves and the way in which he attains perfection are the subject of discussion

in this chapter. Here it is seen that the author has also included the origin of a king in the royal religion. In the context of the explanation of this Royal religion the commentator Kullukabhatta says the word Dharma refers to both visible and invisible ceremonies, visible ceremonies are those which, when performed results in seen, and invisible ceremonies never results. The first type of ceremony refers to the joints, deities etc. The commentator of Manusmṛiti Medhatithi has adopted the word Dharma as duty speech here both types of ceremonies should be considered as included in the duties of the King. However, emphasizes has been placed on the ceremony of visible. In the 56 chapter of the Rajdharmanushasana in the Mahabharata Maharaja Yudhishtira says that all living beings are under the protection of the Rajdharma. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha these four elements are included in the Raj dharma. Just as the rays guide the Horses, and the hooks guide the hands, so the Raj dharma guides all people on the right path. If this Rajdharma is neglected, no human origination can exist. Just as the sun rises and dispels the evil darkness so Rajdharma prevents the evil actions of all living beings.

In the 63rd chapter of the Rajdharmanushasana in the Mahabharat, Bhishma says that just as the footprints of all living beings are covered by the footprint of an elephant, so all religions and sub religions are covered by the Rājdharmā. The Rājdharmā of Manusmṛiti is based on the fundamental principles of the observance of religion by the four castes such as Brahmins and the four ashrams, such as Brahmacharya. Ancient political Scholars never forgot the faults of human nature. They believed that there was never as shortage, of dishonest people in society who deviated from virtue and morality and encroached on the freedom and rights of others. Therefore, the need for a system of governance was always failed to prevent the dynamic and sinful behaviour of the wicked. Otherwise, the protection of the lives and property of the people, and their observance of the varna ashrama religion prescribed by the scriptures may become untenable. The two main issues of people lives and property and the protection of religion depend on the king and the king's use of his power of punishment that is, the punishment of criminals.

The seventh chapter of Manusmṛiti further states that the ideal king will be a pure character aware of the character of the people, possessing the power of the senses, knowledgeable in many scriptures and having practical experience. He will be free from both lust and anger will daily pay homage to the wise men, who are versed in the Vedas and ethics and will follow their rules naturally a humble king will also immunity from the Brahmins who are versed in the Vedas. It is the duty of the king to establish his subjects in their religion through the discipline of duty to teach them humility through knowledge and advise and to gain the favour of the people by allocating funds to worthy causes.

Similarly in the seven chapter of Manusmṛiti, it is said that the king needs an assistant for the administration of the state because it is difficult to perform simple tasks alone, so it is very difficult to rule our prosperous state alone. So, the appointment of secretary is absolutely essential to assist the king in the work of Administration. The Manusmṛiti mentions that the king should have 7 or 8 ministers in the seven chapter of Manusmṛiti, it is also said that the relationship between the kingdom and the foreign Kingdom is mainly dependent on the work of the Messenger (Dūta). That is why it is said that before the place of the Messenger was also very necessary in the system of governance. Regarding the appointment of messengers, it is said in Manusmṛiti, that only a person who is knowledgeable in all scriptures, experienced in gestures, figures and behaviours of good character, clever, and born in the good family should be appointed as a king messenger.

The great poet Kalidas says in his Epic poem 'Raghuvansham' just as the sun collects nectar from earth during the day and during the rainy season, it brings and less blessings to the earth by boring down a thousand fold rain, similarly, King Raghu also collected taxes from his proja and with the help of the collected taxes, he was careful to provide all round welfare to his proja, so there is a special need to accumulate wealth in the royal treasury for the happiness prosperity and maximum security of the proja. 'Sukraniti' also says that although the king is the lord in form in practice is the servant of the proja, just as it is the duty of the king to protect the proja, it is also the moral duty of the proja to protect the king however it is also mentioned that in special cases tax collection should be refrained from. For example, even if the king is extremely poor, he should not collect any taxes from the Shrotriya, rather the king knowing the knowledge and work of the Shrotriya should provide them with a suitable livelihood and just as a father protects his own son, the king protect them from all kinds of fear.

Relevance in the present day context: Manusmṛiti cannot be treated as a modern constitution or a complete model of governance. Modern domestic equality fundamental rights popular sovereignty, and Human Rights several social provisions of Manusmṛiti are incompatible with this principles. Nevertheless, some of its political and ethical ideas can be studied in a contemporary context.

1. Welfare and protection of citizens: The emphasis on protecting subjects has relevance to the modern concept of the Welfare and security-oriented state. A contemporary government is expected to protect citizens from violence, crime, external threats, and economic insecurity.

2. Ethical leadership: Manusmṛiti emphasizes the conduct and discipline of the ruler. This remains relevant because modern democratic governance also requires: integrity, accountability, self-restraint, responsibility, public minded leadership. Political authority without ethical responsibility can lead to corruption and abuse of power.

3. Rule of law: The idea that the ruler should govern according to rather than purely personal will can be compared with the modern principle of constitutional Government and rule of law. In a modern democracy, however, the constitution and law not religious authority is the ultimate Framework for government.

4. Responsible use of punishment the importance given to Danda Niti highlights the necessity of effective law enforcement. In the modern context this translates into the need for fair criminal justice, due process, proportionate punishment, independent courts, protection of individual rights.

5. Good administration: the importance of competent ministers and officials has direct contemporary relevance modern States required a professional efficient and accountable civil service.

6. National security and foreign policy: Manusmṛiti concern with alliances, enemies, war, and political strategy can be studied in relation to modern questions of: National security, Defence policy, Diplomacy, International relations, Strategic alliances. Limitations of Manusmṛiti in the modern age: A balanced study must also recognise that many aspects of Manusmṛiti cannot be directly applied to contemporary democratic society.

1. Social inequality: It's social classification and certain caste-based prescriptions conflict with the modern principles of equality, dignity and Social Justice.

2. Gender inequality: Some provisions concerning women do not correspond to contemporary principals of gender equality and individual autonomy.

3. Monarchical political structure: Manusmṛiti primarily discusses the duties of a king whereas modern India is a constitutional democracy based on popular sovereignty.

4. Fundamental rights: Modern political systems recognize Universal constitutional and Human Rights. These cannot simply be derived from or subordinated to the social framework of Manusmṛiti. Therefore, it's political ideas need to be historically understood and critically interpreted, rather than mechanically implemented.

5. Critical evaluation the political philosophy of Manusmṛiti can be understood of two levels. Historically, it is significant because it represents an important strand of ancient India thinking about kingship, political authority, justice, administration, punishment and state security. From a contemporary perspective its greatest relevance lies in certain protection of citizen's justice, administrative competence, ethical conduct, maintenance of order and responsible exercise of political power. At the same time principles in consistence with modern constitutional democracy particular by those involving social hierarchy and inequality must be critically rejected rather than treated as contemporary political ideas.

Conclusion

Rajdharma and Rashtraniti in Manusmṛiti represent an important chapter in the history of Indian political thought. Their central message is that the rural authority carries corresponding duties: protecting the people, administrative justice, maintaining ordering security and governing responsibility. In the present day Manusmṛiti should not be regarded as a substitute for the constitution or modern democratic institutions. Its value lies primarily in its history and philosophical contribution and in the opportunity, it provides to reflect upon ethical governance and the responsibilities of political power. Thus, the most appropriate modern approach is critical engagement rather than literal application, preserving ideas that promote justice, responsibility, public welfare, and good governance while rejecting provisions that conflict with equality, human dignity, fundamental rights and constitutional democracy.

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