

# **Social Construction of Women in Anamdas Ka Potha : A Sociological Study**

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation entitled SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN IN ANAMDAS KA POTHAN : a sociological study submitted by Amit Kumar Sharma has not been submitted for award of any degree to this or any other university. I recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for consideration of award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in sociology of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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## PREFACE

This study is a part of my larger programme for the cause of Indian Sociology or the Sociology of India. The basic frame of the project came into being during 1984-86 when I was evolving my own view of Indian society under the guidance of my guru Prof. J.P.S. Uberoi. So far as dissatisfaction with the western sociology is concerned it began under the influence of Uberoi himself. And his own works *Science and Culture* (1978) and *The other mind of Europe* (1984) were instrumental in making me search for an alternative method or at least broadening the basis of Western Sociology. Thus, I dedicate this study to J.P.S. Uberoi.

My concept of Indian tradition, especially Hinduism has evolved over a period of time and those who have influenced me in this process are the following :

My father, Pandit Nawal Kishore Sharma has been the guide and friend from the very childhood and he has influenced the core of my thinking. I have used his unpublished papers and thesis in the second chapter of this dissertation. I do not have words to express gratitude.

Professor Yogendra Singh helped me to clarify some of my concepts about the process of Hinduism in making of Indian culture when I was doing a course work on Theoretical

orientation with him. In this course I wrote my term paper on *The Sacred and Profane in Hinduism* and by approving my paper he made me confident enough to take such a vast topic as rereading<sup>the</sup> Indian Tradition.

Prof. Andre Beteille was my tutor during the M.A. course and he was the first to draw my attention towards the inconsistency in religious ideologies which can be only explained by secular facts of economy and society. Beteille taught me to see worldly aspects of the other-worldly religions as tutor as well as the teacher of a course on *Religion and Society*.

Prof. Veena Das taught me Kinship theory of Levi - Strauss and Dr. Amitav Ghosh guided me on the Indian kinship. Thomas Trautmann was very helpful in clarifying my concept of Hinduism in a strange way- because in the discussion I opposed his views and in the process of my criticism to his *Dravidian Kinship* I learned alot. By agreeing to my views, Trautmann boosted confidence in me.

Although I did not meet them in person I feel my debt to T.N. Madan and Agehananda Bharati because their books *Non-Renunciation (1987)* and *Hindu-views and ways and The Hindu-Muslim Interface (1981)* respectively influenced my view like personal guides. In the same way, I pay my homage to Dr.S. Radhakrisnan and Prof. N.K. Bose.

for my concept of Hinduism as a process was considerably influenced by their works on Hinduism.

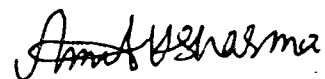
However, there are many others whose name does not figure in the text or bibliography but who were the guides in my conceptualization of women in different traditions. They are my mother Mrs. Kamaladevi Sharma, my wife Bandana and friends-Rakesh, Aditi, Ananta, Sushma, Sharada Ashok, Prabhanjan, Ashutosh, Dependra, Siyaram Sharma and Kameshwar Choudhary. I thank them all.

For the understanding of Hazari Prasad Duivedi and his novels, I met three Professors of Hindi Department J.N.U. They are Professors Namvar Singh, Kedar Nath Singh and Manager-Pandey. I had many sessions with Prof. Namvar Singh and one session each with Professors. K.N. Singh and Manager Pandey. Their help was vital in the interpretation of the novel.

I am grateful to all the above people. However, I cannot forget the motherly love of my supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) Patricia Uberoi who was affectionate and sympathetic to all my personal and intellectual problems. She gave me a free hand to write as I liked and never tried to impose her views on my own. I think I cannot repay her.

Our Chairman Prof. R.K. Jain has been cooperative to me. He helped me once by lending his personal materials when I need them badly. I thank him for his help.

July 20, 1988.



(AMIT KUMAR SHARMA)

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

I.

This study is a part of my larger interest in the '*Sociology of India*' debate which began with the pioneers of Indian sociology (particularly Radhakamal Mukerjee (1930, 1960, 1964 b, c and d). D.P. Mukherjee (1948, 1958) and Anand Coomarswamy through his own works (1909, 1936, 1936, 1942, 1946, 1948 a) as well as through his influence on A.K. Saran (1958, 1962 a, 1977).

But due to many socio-historical reasons it was forgotten for time-being only to be reinforced by Louis Dumont through his editorship and contribution to *Contribution to Indian Sociology (1957-1966) series* as well as by his *Homo Hierarchicus (1970)*. This debate is continuing even today in the *contributions to Indian Sociology (New Series)* in particular and in the discussion on the nature of Indian cultural tradition in general (e.g. Unnithan et al 1965; Saksena 1961; Y.Singh, 1986; R.K.Jain, 1985 etc.)

Thus, it is primarily neither a contribution in the growing field of '*Sociology of women*' nor a study in the '*Sociology of Literature*' per se. Rather it is a contribution to the



debate or possibility of debate on the nature of Indian cultural tradition and its appropriate Sociology from comparatively a new angle.

I agree with Veena Das (1977) that "whether one agrees with the substantive parts of Dumont's argument or not, the altered conception of the nature of anthropological explanation itself constitutes a landmark in Indian Sociology". R.K. Jain (1985) rightly feels that a particular combination of structural (following Dumont) and cultural (following American Cultural anthropology, Chiefly Schneider, 1968) has become the dominant mode of explanation in the field of Indian cultural tradition although Jain thinks that it is 'an explosive mixture (page 18). Thus, there is a need to make a dialogue with Dumontian conception of 'person' in Indian cultural tradition - which in one sense is the basis of his whole comparative anthropology. Jain (ibid) supports my view when he asserts that it is the conception of 'person' which separates Dumont's methodology from ethnosociology or cultural analysis.

However, I feel that even today, conception of 'person' has not received its due recognition. Still it is not capable of being the central concept in dealing with the sensitive issues of culture and tradition.

Still the concept of person is man centred and it excludes the other half of humanity. It is an epistemological lacuna. The history of humanity is the witness that man and woman were not conceptualized in the same way in all places in all times. And I have a feeling that if a tradition is to be conceptualized properly we have to begin with the underlying assumptions of 'man' and 'woman' as social person in that particular cultural tradition - because in the ultimate sense a tradition is nothing but the institutionalized process of living of persons in a particular way. Thus, how men and women are conceptualized and their interrelationship is constructed is central to any proper and systematic study of a particular tradition in space and time.

We have to accept the fact that men have been the designer of most cultures, atleast all known cultures after christ and naturally they have superior position in every culture (Evans-Pritchard 1965; Ursula King, 1980) However, women's 'otherness' (Simone de Bouvoir, 1972) is not seen in the same way by every cultural tradition. Again, there may be paradoxical situation that on the ideal or philosophical level women are treated in one way but in practice they are treated in contradictory or atleast contrary way (Ursula King, 80). But as

Dumont (1970), Veena Das (1977) and T.N. Madam (1981) emphasize, philosophical presuppositions are necessary for the proper comprehension of observed reality. Moreover, I think that out of many differences, it is the difference in the conceptualization of women which differentiates one cultural tradition from the other in a fundamental way. I do not see that it is essentially a feminist argument or even a marxist one. Rather, I feel that it is a heuristic argument necessitated by the unresolved puzzles of social genesis or emergence of culture in the way it is today i.e. the puzzle of so called 'historical defeat of women' in the process of social evolution. In other words, my study is less concerned with what 'ought to be' as in the case of feminist writings or marxism and more with the explanation of the 'what has been ? or 'what is?'

has

This study has been influenced by Semiological Explanation as propounded by J.P.S. Uberoi in his *Science and Culture* (1977) and in some sense it goes for *structural model - building* as fashined by Claude-Levi-Strauss (1963) and Edmund Leach (1961). However, I take only insight and broad-guide-line from Levi-Strauss, Leach or Uberoi because my starting point or central argument is either absent in them or muted (in the sense of Ardener, 1975).

Thus, it can be said that although I broadly share the epistemology of Uberoi (1977) and others in the application of this epistemology I have tried to synthesize semiology Marxism and feminism with Hindu world - view (which itself appears in a new synthesis). As is évident it is a highly ambitious project and no project of this genre can be ever perfect. Moreover, given our time and space it is bound to be sketchy and general. It is however, an argument which has not received its due in Indian Sociology and I must press atleast for a debate.

## II. PROGRAMME OF THIS STUDY

My specific programme in this study is to emphasize the need to reconstruct sociological concepts of to include women as the equal partner/men in the making of human culture on the one hand, on the other it aims to reassert the argument that a sociology of or for India is not possible unless we have a proper ethnography of Indian tradition through ages. As I underlined earlier, there is a need to make a dialogue with Dumont and his conception of person in India (1965). Dumont writes that Indian society does not have individual

persons rather, 'it is replaced by the holistic idea of order or dharma ----- while the particular human being is here as elsewhere the empirical elementary agent of institutions, the individual (person) is absent from all social institutions---- (page 86). Thus, there is a need to study 'the holistic idea of order or dharma' in other words, the Hindu tradition and the concept of social person - individual or collective, in it.

Thus, in the second chapter I have tried to prove the gender bias in western sociology which in my view is rooted in the Biblical tradition of the west. My aim in this chapter is to show that woman as a person is missing in the main-stream sociology and there is a need to broaden its concept of culture. Thus, I try to get an evidence in this chapter that existing apparatus of main-stream sociology is not very useful in the study of western society itself and in any cast its application on Indian reality will be more a burden than aid for sociologist of India.

In the third and fourth chapters I hope to reconstruct Indian tradition . . . . the third Chapter aims to reconstruct Indian tradition on the

basis of materials generally used in sociological literature and the fourth chapter, *Social construction of woman in Anamdes Ka Potha : a sociological study* is an attempt to attest the third chapter by studying a novel of a great hindi novelist Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. Application of novel in the study of cultural meaning is not absolutely new attempt today. Burns and Burns (1973) accepts novels as a valid data. M.Berger (1978) goes to the extent of saying that in dealing with human actions and their underlying notions at the most general level, the social scientist has not yet succeeded in going beyond the truly great novelist. And T.N. Madan (1987) used literature freely in the composition of his new thesis on Hinduism. Thus my attempt is not a novel one.

This study tries to interpret given facts in a way which may not be very familiar but facts are generally reliable and from authentic and authoritative sources. Only interpretation or synthesis is mine. Thus, I have used other's words freely.

In the last chapter I have included a brief summary of the arguments of each chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

SOCIOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN  
AS A PERSON

1.

To understand the sociological construction of women as a person (SOCIAL), we must understand the concept of social person first and then the emergence of sociological construction (conception) of woman as a person.

Charles Taylor (1983) in his article "The concept of a Person" has marvellously summarized two views of what it is to be a person and more or less my views reflect his arguments with minor alternation of language:

"Person figures primarily in moral and legal discourse. A person is a being with a certain moral status, or a bearer of rights. But underlying the moral status, as its condition are certain capacities. A person is a being who has a sense of self, has a notion of the future and the past, can hold values, make choices, in short, can adopt life-plans. At least, a person must be the kind of being who is in principle capable of all this, however damaged these capacities may be in practice."

(Page 48 ).

The above lines from Taylor defines a person as a being with his/her own point of view on things. The

life-plan, the choices, the sense of self must be attributable to him/her as in some sense their point of origin. After defining the person, Taylor goes on to present 'partly in summary, partly in reconstruction, two views of what it is to be a person, which.....underpin a host of different position and attitudes evident in modern culture'. Taylor feels that the first notion of person is rooted in the seventeenth century, epistemologically-grounded notion of the subject. A person is being with consciousness, where consciousness is seen as a power to frame representations of things. Persons have consciousness, and alone possess it, or at least they have it in a manner and to a degree that animals do not. In other words, persons have 'a representation of things' (P 49).

The important boundary is that between persons and other agents, the one marked by consciousness. The boundary between agents and mere things is not recognised as important at all, and is not seen as reflecting a qualitative distinction. What makes out agents from other things tends to be identified by a performance criterion: animals somehow maintain and reproduce themselves through a wide variety of circumstances. They show highly complex adaptive behaviour. But understanding them in terms of performance allows for no



distinction of nature between animals and machines which (as in computers) similarly exhibit complex adaptive behaviour. Thus, in the first view, we differentiate person by consciousness quality from animals and machines but club together both animals and machines - it is a limitation of this view.

Now, Taylor presents the second view about person which he himself accepts as more comprehensive one. In the second view, the focus is on the nature of agency. What is crucial about agents is that things matter to them, i.e., they can attribute purposes, desires, aversions to them in a strong, original sense. Agents who have nothing like consciousness in the human sense have original purposes. Consciousness in the characteristically human form can be seen as what we attain when we come to formulate the significance of things for us. We, then, have an articulate view of our self and world. But things matter to us prior to this formulation. So original purpose can not be confused with consciousness. These are matters of significance for human beings which are peculiarly human and have no analogue with animals. These are matters of pride, shame, moral goodness, evil, dignity, the sense of worth, the various human forms of love and so on. If we look at goals like survival and reproduction, we can perhaps convince ourselves that the difference between men and animals lies in a strategic superiority of the former: we can pursue the same ends much more

effectively than our dumb cousins. But when we consider these human emotions, we can see that the ends which make up a human life are *Sui-generis*. And then even the ends of survival and reproduction will appear in a new light. What it is to maintain and hand on a human form of life, i.e., a given culture, is also a peculiar by human affair.

We see that the two conceptions square off against each other. They both start off with our ordinary notion of a person, defined by certain capacities: a person, is an agent who has a sense of self, of his/her own life, who can evaluate it, and make choices about it. This is the basis of the respect we owe persons. Even those who through some accident or misfortune are deprived of the ability to exercise these capacities are still understood as belonging to the species defined by this potentiality. The central importance of all this for our moral thinking is reflected in the fact that these capacities form an important part of what we should respect and nourish in human beings. To make someone less capable of understanding himself, evaluating and choosing is to deny totally the injunction that we should respect him as a person.

However, the difference between the two approaches are obvious. Whatever the motive, the first conception

of the person grounds a certain view about moral deliberations, our ends are seen as set by nature, and thus discoverable by objective scrutiny, or else as autonomously chosen; but in either case, as beyond the ambiguous field of interpretation of the peculiarly human significances. In the light of these ends, reason is and ought to be instrumental. Utilitarianism is a product of this modern conception with its stress on instrumental reasoning, on calculation, and on a naturalistically identified end, happiness.

On the other hand, the alternative perspective, which Taylor calls the significance view, objects to the first view as a flight from the human and sets up a completely different model of practical deliberation. Rather than side stepping the peculiarly human emotions, and turning to instrumental reason, the main form this deliberation takes is a search for the true form of these emotions.

Although both these models are current in modern western culture, I prefer with Taylor the second view. It is more consistent with the mainstream sociology also. The significance view can be reconciled with Durkheimian concept of *Society as a Sui-generis* as well

as *Society as a moral community*. And it is also consistent with weberian notion of *subjective meaning of human action*.

## II.

As we have seen in the earlier section, a person is a being who has a sense of self, has a notion of the future and the past, can hold values, make choices, in short, can adopt Life-plans. Now, our aim is to see how woman is conceptualized in sociological literature? Whether she has been recognized as a person or not and, if, yes then how this concept of woman as a social person emerged in sociology? To do all this, we have to look at the sociological tradition.

Sociology emerged in the west in the nineteenth century and it has been so far, western cultural construction in more than one way. Thus sociological literature conceptualized woman in the way woman was seen in the Biblical west. The concept of woman in the west has been reconstructed out of the Biblical construction of (Adam and) Eve as in the story of genesis and the subsequent generalization of Eve as nature and Adam as culture. How it happened is a different story but I am primarily interested here in the relationship this myth of Adam and Eve had on the famous dichotomy of Nature and

Culture in sociology which try to place woman in the category of Nature and man with culture as in claude Levi-Stranss (1969).

*The Hidden Face of the Eve* - In the west as well as in the Arab World, most people from the ancient times have thought that Eve was the first woman to appear on the face of the Earth. They also believed that she was born of Adam and grew out of one of his ribs, as the story goes in the sacred books: first of Judaism, then christianity, and finally Islam. If we return to ancient history, many important facts related to woman at home and in society are revealed, we also discover that the changes affecting her status and role were intimately related to the way in which the social and economic structure of society evolved. The unveiling of this relationship between the economic and social infrastructure of society and the position occupied by woman constitutes the key to understanding the reasons for the downward path that finally led her at the time of christianity to a situation where she became a mere rib in the body of man.

The ancient Egyptian civilization is more than 5,000 years old and historically precedes the advent of Judaism, the first of the three monotheistic religions.

The ancient Egyptians had their own religion, and their own religious practices and rituals, before Judaism made its entry on the scene. Judaism was influenced in many ways by the religion of the Pharaohs and in particular the monotheistic leaning of Akhnatoun's sun worship. In the successive dynasties, women of Egypt occupied a high place both in the affairs of their country and in the realm of religion. Female gods reigned side by side with male gods over the destinities of human beings. Historical studies indicate that the most ancient of all gods were female. In Egypt goddesses ruled over many areas and participated with male gods in deciding human destinities, we may cite as examples: Maait, the Goddess of Truth; and Naizet, the goddess of war and Floods, Isis, Sikhmet, Hathour and many others.

The elevation of women to the heights occupied by goddesses was a reflection of their status within society before the systems characterized by the patriarchal family, land ownership and division into social classes came into being, with the advent of these systems the status of woman gradually dropped over a period of time, but vestiges of the matriarchal system, more or

less important, continued to survive in feudal or slave societies such as that of the Pharaohs (Nawal EL Saadawi, 1980,P.92).

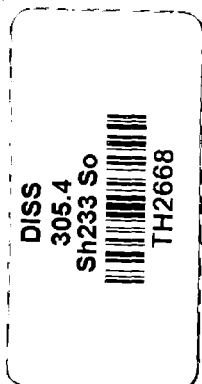
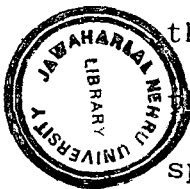
In this context, it is interesting to recall that some people have tried to prove that the cause of superior position of female goddesses and female themselves in the early history is the fact that discovery of agriculture has been the job of women and it remained their exclusive preoccupation in its early stages. It created conditions for the economic and, therefore, also of social supremacy of the female. (D.P. Chattopadhyaya, 1959). Chattopadhyaya further writes that the original pre-hunting stage was characterized by mother-right, with the development of hunting, however, the social supremacy was shifted to male. In the post-hunting stage, among those people that developed the pastoral economy this male supremacy came to exercise even greater hold, among those, however, that discovered agriculture, the situation was reversed. There was a revival of mother-right among them with the further development of agriculture, i.e., with the introduction of the cattle drawn plough to the field, the agricultural mother-right was, finally, overthrown (ibid).

It is a fact that gods and goddesses are created in human image and it is also a fact that in those societies,

or sections or periods of society, in which mother or other female goddesses have dominated we get a superior position of female in comparison to female in male-god dominated society and sometimes to males also. Thus, it is certain that there is intimate relationship between socio-economic structure and the image of gods/goddesses, however, the one to one relationship between the two, as we find in Chatopadhyaya and others may not be acceptable to all, we cannot relate exactly as to how Judaism emerged and how it gave birth to christianity and in this shift from Judaism to christianity how the conceptualization of women changed substantially. Thus, it is better if we concentrate, now, on the myth of Adam and Eve and its subsequent interpretation which gained currency in one form or the other in the western intellectual milieu:-

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The story of Adam and Eve was born in Judaism, and through Judaism arose the idea that woman was sinful and that sin was sex. With this idea, the separation between spirit (or soul) and body was consecrated and canonized for all time. Christianity followed in the wake of Judaism, and went even further in smelting and moulding the iron fetters of prejudice and rigidity in the attitudes and values related to women and sex. To reinforce these fetters and ensure their eternity Jesus Christ, the Messiah,

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was made to be born a sacred male, a lord so chaste that women were forbidden to him and sexual relations with them were an experience that he was never to know, or even to seek. Furthermore, he was made to be born asexually from the womb of the virgin Mary who had never known the embrace of a man, god filled her with the breath of his spirit and the embryo of the Messiah developed quietly in the silence of her womb.

Thus the change from Old Testament (Eve) to New Testament (Mary) is interesting in the sense that both mythical stories can be interpreted together in the way Levi-Stranass (1963), and others (e.g. Veena Das, 1985) have done in sociology.

#### THE FIRST MYTH: ADAM AND EVE

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE KORAN:

The first man on Earth, Adam, went as far as denying Eve her ability to bear children and bestowed this power on himself since, as the story goes, 'Eve was born of Adam's rib'. In the beginning Adam was alone in the heaven and he desired a company. Thus he created Eve out of his rib.(Some people say, God created Eve out of Adam's rib). Both were living happily. But one day Eve ate the forbidden fruit and persuaded Adam

to do so. It was considered a sin-because they ate the forbidden fruit and, therefore, they had been cursed to leave the heaven and go on earth. Thus, Adam was the first man on Earth and Eve,

, the first woman. Out of them humanity came into existence. Since Eve ate the forbidden fruit herself and persuaded Adam to do also like her, she is regarded as sinful and Adam is deemed innocent who just followed Eve. It is the most popular story of genesis, rather, the part of the story of genesis shared by all the three religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (Chiefly Nawal EL Saadawi, 1980).

#### THE SECOND MYTH; CHRIST AND MARY

##### THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was made to be born a sacred male, a lord so chaste that women were forbidden to him and sexual relations with them were an experience that he was never to know, or even to seek. He was made to be born asexually from the womb of virgin Mary who had never known embrace of a man. God filled her with the breath of his spirit and the embryo of the Messiah developed quietly in the silence of her womb.

God had created man in his own image, and god was spirit, woman on the other hand was the body, and the body was sex. Man alone was a complete portrayal of the God of the Heavens on earth, but woman could never become complete until espoused to a man, for through marriage woman's body was at least endowed with a head. This head was her husband. In the Old Testament, Man was allowed to pray before God without covering his head since he resembled the creator and was akin to him. A woman, however, was enjoined to cover her head when praying because according to a common religious interpretation She -unlike man - was found lacking in something essential. She was a body without a head. Since the main difference between a human being and an animal lies in the head, or in other words the brain, only man could be considered a complete human being. Woman was only an animal body dominated by passion, sensuality and an insatiable lust, carrying within herself evil as an integral part of her nature, a consecration of God's will and an embodiment of Satan in the human being. All the prophets known in history, all the high priests, and monks and friars and frocked servitors of religion were men, dedicated to serving God and required to shun woman for all life since women were descended from Satan. In the thirteenth century Saint Thomas Aquinas and Alberto

Magnus, who were considered the most prominent theologians of the time, propounded the idea that women were capable of having sexual relations with Satan (Nawal EL Saadawi, 1980)- thus woman was sinner again but not man.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE MYTHS;

In all the three religions, God is assumed to be just and justice requires that there should be no discrimination between Adam and Eve. God is also endowed with an infallible logic, so how can we explain the glaring contradictions that run through the texture of this religious canvas? God glorifies the mind of man in his sacred books and makes of him the symbol of thought and intelligence, whereas woman personifies the body, a body without a head, a body whose head is the man. Yet in the first story, Eve is more intelligent than Adam, she is able to understand what Adam fails to grasp and to realize that the forbidden tree bears the most delicious and exhilarating of all fruits - knowledge, and with knowledge the capacity to differentiate between good and evil. She was quick and sensitive enough to perceive that god's warnings not to approach the forbidden fruit carried a hidden purpose behind them, an attempt to conceal some truth and the fear that if once their hands had stretched out to the

branches, and once their teeth had bitten into the juicy fragrant flesh, their minds would be able to discern between good and evil. From that moment they would rise to the level of their creator. Man who was created in the image of the God would himself become God. (Nawal EL Saadawi, 1980 Page 103.). However, Adam is regarded as superior because (a) he was at the origin of the human race (b) in one version, he made Eve out of his rib and gave life to her, in the other version, God made Eve out of Adam's rib. (c) Besides , Eve was a sinner because she did the evil work of eating the forbidden fruit and (after taking the pleasure) persuaded the innocent Adam to eat the fruit. Thus, Eve is the original sinner, and Adam the original innocent.

Now, if we interpret the above facts into sociological language, we get the following results:-

(a) Adam was at the origin of the human race and Eve came after him - this is not sufficient for the superiority of Adam over Eve because in the theory of evolution later species are considered more developed than the earlier ones. And we have no reason to deny the validity of biological evolutionary theory, if a question arises as to who is superior: a prior human ancestor or a later evolve.

(b) If we accept the first version that Adam made Eve out of his own rib and hence Adam is superior to Eve. The question arises how was he himself made? Had he made himself and then made Eve out of his rib, then he becomes superior to Eve by this logic, but then, how come he was persuaded by Eve to eat the forbidden food - how can a superior being be persuaded to commit a sin by an inferior being? Again, Adam did the mothering like most women do in all societies, in all the times, but women are not regarded as superior to the men they give birth to (here we are talking of superiority in the sense of power and not respect. And we are talking of Patrilineal Societies only).

But in case, we accept the second version of the story that God made Eve out of Adam's rib - then we have no ground to accept that Adam is superior to Eve - because it is more probable that God has created Adam also. And in that case both are equal in relation to God. And if God has created Eve out of Adam's rib then from what stuff was Adam himself created?

Since Adam is not a God but just a creature, thus, it is difficult to accept the view that if he is wholly a male being, out of him was created a wholly female being.

Again, if he is a wholly male stuff how can the God create a female stuff out of a male one? If they both are created under a design by God to create a human civilization on earth then they are mere agents created by God according to his plans - thus, no one is superior to the other.

(c) If God created Adam and Eve with certain purposes, then, the forbidden fruit must also have a hidden purpose - otherwise what was the need for the creation of a fruit which cannot be eaten properly and if ever tasted it will be deemed a sin? Thus, we have to accept that the fruit had the hidden purpose of differentiating between good and evil, an attempt to conceal truth and Eve unveiled it. In her attempt she was innovative and bold. She had a choice either to be content with the things given or to do something adventurous. And she selected adventure instead of being content with things given. She created something different than what was existing. She made a way to enter a different world. She is said to be ashamed after eating the fruit but perhaps she was first to feel shame. Perhaps it was she who first covered her nakedness after she ate the fruit and felt the shame. The above facts present her as the creator of human culture, as the symbol of human culture. She transformed nature, socialized Adam into that culture by persuading

him to do like her. She, thus, becomes the first human person - in both the views Taylor mentions. And Adam represents nature of which culture emerged and persuaded "nature" (given, Adam) to change with culture and virtually he is swept away by Her. In this sense she is either superior or more intelligent equal. But in no way the inferior or subordinate. However, she is regarded as inferior in the further interpretations. Logically, existing facts are unable to account for this reverse in the meaning. It is true that she committed a crime of making a human culture but should we take the literal meaning of crime here? I think that this sin or the crime of the heaven should not be taken in a negative sense. Atleast, from the human point of view, Eve was inventor of human culture and superior to Adam who followed her on Earth. Thus, it is unfair to equate Eve with Nature and Adam is in no way equal to culture. Either Adam should be equated with nature or he is a junior partner of Eve in the making at culture.

However, if we employ trichotomy of Nature, culture and spiritual instead of dichotomy of Nature and culture the conceptualization of Adam and Eve in the first myth can be as follows :-

Adam is more geared towards spirit but then why he desired the other fellow? And further, why he was



fallible enough to be tempted to taste the forbidden fruit on Eve's suggestion? Even in this schema Eve is equal to culture. There is no one, then, left as equal to nature. Thus trichotomy is not applicable and Adam is less an spiritual agent and more a passive being or equal to nature.

In this myth Eve cannot be equated with body and sex also as woman are generally conceived. There is reference of humanity coming into existence out of Adam and Eve in that sense both participated as body in the sexual act. Here we find no resolution of incest taboo and there is no mention of sex or incest, perhaps, due to this very limitation of not resolving incestuous relationship between the children of Adam and Eve (as well as Adam and Eve themselves - if Adam made Eve out of his rib then Eve may be considered his daughter) the myth of Christ and Mary as son and mother was constructed.

In one more cultural sense Eve may be considered as superior to Adam. In the context of incest taboo and prohibitory marital practices; Anthropologists have opened that breaking of incest (or any prohibition) is an example of strength and superiority. For example -the Egyptian Pharoah often married their own sisters to keep the throne intact in the family. In the same way the chiefs of Highland Burma often married their one sister. In the same way Eve broken the rule of not eating the forbidden fruit and thus he was superior to Adam who was just the meak follower

of the rule.

Thus, we see that whatever the later interpretation or misinterpretation of the story of genesis atleast in the original story Eve as a person is stronger than Adam and her position is also superior than Adam from human cultural standards. She represents culture, innovation intelligence and leadership, whereas, Adam represents nature, contentment with the given and a follower's attitude.

#### THE SECOND MYTH

However, in the second myth the Eve is found already existing in the form of Mary out of which Jesus Christ was created by God in his own image. Jesus Christ was made to be born asexually from the womb of the virgin Mary who had never known the embrace of a man. God filled her with the breath of his spirit and the embryo of the Messiah developed quietly in the silence of her womb. Christ came from her womb through her vagina and was made a sacred male, a lord so chaste that woman were forbidden to him and sexual relations with them were an experience that he was never to know, or even to seek . Here the inconsistency of the popular interpretation of the story of genesis and the story itself is removed and finally, the woman was sacrificed at the altar. The woman now fell a victim to the cult of the virgin Mary and the chastity of a christ raised above the human level of desires and the physical

needs. God had created man in his own image, and God was spirit. Woman on the other hand was the body, and the body was sex. Man alone was a complete portrayal of the God of the Heavens on earth, but woman could never become complete until espoused to a man, for through marriage women's body was at least endowed with a head. This head was her husband. She was a body without a head. Her body was dominated by passion; sensuality and an insatiable lust carrying within herself evil as an integral part of her nature. She was embodiment of Satan in the human being. Aquinas and Magnus propounded the idea that women were capable of having sexual relations with Satan. Thus the story of the first myth was completed. In the first myth the story begins with the sentence 'Adam made Eve out of his rib' and the second myth ends with making woman as the mere rib in the body of man.

Here, woman or Mary was made nature out of which man or Christ emerged and the mother - son relationship solved the problem of incest taboo and the sexuality of Adam was removed by making Christ a sacred bachelor. The same womb and vagina from which Christ emerged was considered impure and evil. The question remained, however, that if God created Christ asexually then why a female body was needed? He could have created Christ out of a male body (by breathing into a man) or from anything else. But he did not do so. The

reason is that god needed a female body and he (God) became a male ! It is interesting that God made Eve out of Adam in the first myth and God needed Mary to make Christ ! I think in the first myth God is a female and in the second myth God becomes the male. And the change from the female God of first myth to the male god of the second (myth) is related with the position of woman from Eve to Mary or from a position of superiority of woman to the superiority of man. How this happened may be interesting to investigate. But this much is clear from the above facts that in the second myth the position of women is muted (Ardner, 1975). She ceases to be a person as well as self. She has no control either on herself or on the situation. She does not act on her own. She is made a mere rib a mere body, a mere sexual object always inferior to men. She is insulted to the extent of being called the embodiment of satan capable of having sexual relations with Satan. However, the history of human civilization does not match with this notion of womanhood and femininity. Generally speaking, in the christian world women have been comparatively more virtuous and morally bound than men and if women are embodiments of Satan then Mary was also a woman. If women were capable of having sexual relations then what were men? Were they Satans? Russell (1929, 1976) and many others have documented history as an uncompromising witness to the fact that the 'holy men of God' had recourse to diverse

and varied ways of expressing and satisfying their sexual needs and that prostitution flared up as never before in the periods known for the predominance of puritanical attitudes and values. Luther's reformation was partly an attempt to correct the abuses that had become rampant within the church. One of his observations was that a large part of the revenue of the catholic church was drawn from the dues paid by brothels. To him it appeared that church was working hand in hand with Satan since its very sustenance seemed to come from one of its favourite occupations. T.E. James writes in his book *Prostitution and the Law* (undated) that Prostitution was unknown until the patriarchal family established itself in society. It was the only possible solution to a situation in which a single husband was imposed on every married woman whereas the man was free to have sexual relations with women other than his wife. The need arose for a category of women with whom the men could practise extra - marital intercourse whenever they felt the desire. Thus, it is not correct to say that women should be equated with body and bodily pleasure (sex) and men with head and spirit. In reality both men and women have body and head and both like the pleasure of body in the same way. In both category of being immorality can be found. However, it is a fact that the sacred and spiritual values "were applied in real life

and practice not to the ruling classes but only to the ruled, not to men but to women, and not to the rich but only to the poor. They acted as shackles upon the mind and fetters around the body, making it all the more easy for the forces of reaction, oppression, and dictatorship to dominate and domesticate the vast masses of men and women living under their yoke..... As an ineluctable corollary to a life of toil, life's pleasures and sex had to be sacrificed, and the only way was to depict them as unworthy, degrading, lower forms human activity which were more suited to the world of animals than to that of men and women..... At a later stage, however, when industrial societies witnessed a rapid advance in technology and machinery, when physical effort was no longer so much in demand when standards of living had risen and hours of work had dropped, when production had been multiplied a hundred fold and consumption had made rapid strides, the puritanical values and moral codes which taught renunciation and abstention to the working man and woman lost their significance and their function (Nawal EL Saadawi, 1980 pp 98-99). I have quoted extensively from Saadawi just to give force to the above interpretation of mine that both myths reflect the changing relationship of man and women as well as their relationship to the forces and means of production and consumption and without

taking political - economy into account it is very difficult to explain the emergence of Judaism from Egyptian religion and again emergence of christianity from Judaism. Again the emergence of Protestantism of Luther out of Catholicism and modern protest from calvinism in their essential moral outlook conceptualizing man and woman can be explained only through a proper study of texts in relation to the preceding texts as well as preceding and succeeding contexts within which a particular religion grows, outgrows or perishes. However, my main aim in this section was to analyse the basis of Nature-culture dichotomy in western sociology and the conceptualization of woman under it. And I have tried to establish that Nature-culture dichotomy (as we find in modern sociology) is not rooted in the first myth of Bible's story of genesis, however, the seeds of this dichotomy is certainly found in the popular or christian interpretation of the myth of Adam and Eve. On the contrary, the conceptualization of woman as Nature, body or sex without a personality of her own is rooted in the myth of Jesus and Mary which I have called the second Myth (of Adam and Eve).

### III.

#### THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE IN THE WESTERN SOCIETY

It is in the viana of the turn of the century that we first find a direct attempt to illuminate scientifically the whole complex of unspoken concepts which make up the

so called 'feminine principle'. The hypothesis of human bisexuality, a theory essential to the clarification of the feminine principle was first posited here by Otto Weininger in 1904. However, the nineteenth century Swiss classical scholar and thinker J.J. Bachofen broadly anticipates Weininger's postulates. Thus it is better to see the view of Bachofen first.

A) *Bachofen (1961, 1926)* states that in the dawn of mankind, human beings lived in a state of unlimited hetaerism where procreation was rampant and knew no law beyond the raw forces of nature. This first phase of human existence Bachofen places under the divinity of the goddess Aphrodite. Following upon this first phase is the matriarchal state; ruled by Demeter and characterized by matrimony and agriculture. Here Bachofen finds the bare rudiments of jurisprudence.

These two initial stages of human development are essentially feminine. They are followed by what Bachofen understands to be the greatest revolutionary triumph of mankind : the change which gave birth to western civilization. The matriarchal tie between mother and child, that is, the visible material tie, gave way to the invisible, apparantly non-material and hence spiritual link of paternalism. In this overcoming of maternality and the natural world by forces



of the spirit. Bachofen sees the birth of all philosophical and intellectual possibility.

We can easily discern the influence of the second myth of Jesus and Mary in the formulation of Bachofen where the relationship of Jesus with God (spiritual) was recognised after concealing the importance of Mary. Actually, conceptualization of Mary as the virgin mother was the greatest revolutionary triumph of men in the intellectual history of mankind.

B) *Otto Weininger* - Opined in 1904 that 'Man and Woman are like two substances which are distributed among living individuals in varying mixed proportions, without the coefficient of one substance ever vanishing. In experience one might say, there is neither man nor woman, only masculine and feminine' (*Otto Weininger, 1904*). In other words, every human being, regardless of sexual differentiation is composed of masculine and feminine characteristics. This sort of reasoning has been put forward by literary figures in East (e.g. Tagore) and West (George Sand, George Eliot, James Joyce etc.) but what is actually meant by these terms is rarely defined. Weininger, however, attempted a description of the masculine and feminine principles.

For Weininger, the feminine side of personality is completely subsumed by sexuality. The 'feminine' woman

lives in a constant devotion to sexual matters, intrinsically linked to her reproductive function. Unlike the male, who is something more than sexual, the female has no consciousness and hence no control over her sexual side. For her thinking and feeling are identical; for the male they are in constant opposition. Unconsciousness is feminine and for Weininger, it is linked with the condition of fusion, of unity between subject and object. Thus, the masculine being will be conscious of the tension between private and public values, solitude and community. The feminine being, because of her undivided nature will experience no conflict of this kind. Furthermore, because of her basic unconsciousness, the feminine being does not recognize the importance of the laws of morality and is incapable of true ethical action. Weininger favours the masculine side of the human duality. It is in the masculine consciousness and intellect that he sees the individual's ultimate liberation. Masculinity is the seat of all higher human endeavour, of all philosophical and artistic achievement.

Weininger's view is the further refinement of the christian argument we find in the myth of Christ and Mary with the recognition of the masculine and feminine substances distributed in the mixed (varying) proportions between

human beings, Weininger has been able to save the Christian argument in a more sophisticated way than Christian theologians have been in the earlier days. Now, Mary, Eve and other exceptional woman who do not fit exactly in the christian schema of woman as sexuality, unconsciousness etc. can be easily said to be dominated by the masculine substances. in the same way, those men (of course, they are majority) who does not fit in the christian schema of spirituality, intellect, consciousness and a tendency to separateness can be said to be dominated by feminine substances. But *masculinity pure and simple is found among men*, is the obvious conclusion of Weininger. However, it must be said that if used without a gender bias the analytical advance of Weininger was really a revolutionary step towards conceptualization of man and women in any society at any period of time. It had enough scope for empirical research to study woman as a person in a particular space at a particular time. But Weininger could not grow out of his age and society in the application of his revolutionary conceptualization. Masculinity, for Weininger and Bachofen acts as a force which liberates humanity from mere materialism. It effects a positive change which enables man to live by cultural and spiritual values. Whereas, for both the thinkers feminity is directly related to sexuality: the chaotic state of hetaerism taken to the individual level,

becomes an image for Weininger's feminine unconsciousness with its lack of moral responsibility.

Thus, in the dichotomy of Nature and culture, a new equation of Private and Public was added with the recognition of separateness of subject (Private) from object (Public). In the earlier section when we were dealing with spiritual norms, I had referred prostitutes or public women as the essential section of orthodox christian society where men separated their private (wife) life and enjoyed public (prostitutes). I strongly feel that if, at all, woman combines (unites) private and public and men separates the two (in the essentially religious milieu like the christian west), it must be in the domain of sex - where man had an access of both private and public and he differentiated between the two but women had only one domain either public or private and in both the cases she had unity of morality as well as consistency of thought and action or feeling, whereas man had tension (contradiction) between the morality of private and public as well as between thought and action or feeling. However, the interesting thing is that man was considered superior for his separateness and women was deemed inferior for her unity! This inconsistency can be solved if we apply the political economy approach and bring the power component in society as the 'deep structure' of the above equation.

However, it is possible that people will bring socio-economic situation themselves in the essentially religious analysis that the private - public dichotomy is not rooted in the classification of wives/prostitutes, dichotomy rather it is based on the sphere of work, nature of engagement or the notion of home and outside or the personal home and impersonal social activities. But it is begging the question, because how it happened that woman who were equal or superior partner of men in social activities, i.e. construction of culture and its maintenance in the Egyptian civilization and its contemporary civilizations as well as in the Myth of Adam and Eve suddenly were made fit only for the home, for the non-productive (in economic sense) work of house - maintenance and their reproduction power of working hands was not recognized in preference to the paternal authority of men ? The answer to this question cannot be found in religious dogmas or christian ideology of paternalism. It can be answered only through the analysis of sudden ascendance of men over women in power equation and the notion of ruling and ruled classes. Either we take the dichotomy of wife and prostitute or home and outside - the dichotomy of private and public or unity and separation with the assumed superiority of Public and separation over Private and unity is a testimony of gender bias in christianity. This bias is so obvious that it is very difficult to accept the view that christianity is a just religion and it has been more humane than its ancestors at least for the half of members.

## IV

Now, we have got all the important elements needed for the sociological conceptualization of women from the western tradition. Thus, we are in a better position to read the sociological literature and its gender bias in the construction of women as a person in more authentic way :

By general reckoning Marx, Weber and Durkheim are regarded as the pionners of classical sociology in the modern sense. Out of the three, Weber's sociology does not recognise importance of women per se and his sociology begins with the general notion of human action. Thus, weber is not relevant from our research point of view.

Marx himself has not written much about women but his friend Engels published an important work (*Origin of Family, Private Property and State*, 1884) on the history of man - woman relationship and Engels claimed that he has fulfilled the desire of Marx by writing this book. Thus, Marxist sociology of Marx and Engels was the first analytical attempt to recognise the importance of man - woman relationship especially the overthrow of motherhood by invisible fatherhood. in the development of cultures. However, this angel of thought did not

influence the mainstream sociology for a long time and it is only recently that sociologists have begun to make a dialogue with Engels.

Thus, it is Durkheim where we can find the root of sociological concept of women as a person, if any, because it is Durkheim who has been reigning mainstream sociology from one angel or the other. Moreover, the person who made famous the Nature-Culture dichotomy in sociology, Levi - Strauss, is directly related with Anne' - Sociologique of Durkheim and his nephew, Marcel Mauss.

#### DURKHEIM

In his first book *The Division of Labour in Society* (1933) Durkheim claimed that human society has passed from two stages mechanical solidarity (without division of labour) and organic solidarity (with division of labour) and he proves that in mechanical solidarity there is no concept of individual self and the whole society (i.e. clan) functions like one self. And it is only with organic solidarity that individual self emerges and every individual looks like society (sacred) because in mechanical solidarity there is contrast between sacred (social) and profane (individual) and since there is nonindividual self, therefore, self and society are one and the same. Now, in

organic solidarity the individual emerges and every individual has his/her own self, therefore, to maintain order in organic solidarity, it is necessary that every individual self is the embodiment of the same sacred which is the grammar of organic culture. Therefore, the contrast of sacred (social) and Profane (individual) breaks in the organic solidarity. Here, every individual internalizes the same sacred and, sacred and profane becomes one and the same - either it is sacralization of profane or profanization of sacred. It can be called secular also. Durkheim calls it science in contrast to religion of the mechanical solidarity. In other words, social order in mechanical solidarity is based on religion, whereas in organic solidarity it is based on science.

In his later work however, Durkheim seems to argue that human society is based on the following contrasts:-

Sacred	:	Profane
:: God	:	Man
:: Society	:	individual
:: Culture	:	nature
:: Soul	:	Body
:: Right	:	Left
:: Man	:	Woman
:: mysterious	:	intelligible
:: Irrational	:	rational
:: Spiritual	:	Temporal

(J.P.S. Uberoi, 'on exchange')



Uberoi thinks that the above contrasts are fundamental to the understanding of Durkheimians and Durkheimian Sociology (oral exchange). However, it is a fact that Durkheim did not defined all the equations and at best we find the definition of sacred, society, God, soul and culture as analogous - things which are set - apart from individual and temporal phenomena. The opposite concepts of Profane, individual etc. are only negatively defined and understood. However, from our point of view, the above facts about Durkheim are sufficient to explain the position of women in Durkheimian sociology :

In the mechanical solidarity, there was no individual self and no division of labour of any kind. The clan or descent group functioned as one self - therefore, woman as a category was not evident and no one- women or man had an individual self. In other words, woman as a person was not found in the mechanical solidarity.

However, in organic solidarity individual self or social person in the sense of Charles Taylor emerged. But in the *Division of Labour* we do not find woman as a distinct category from men. We have only individual who can be either man or woman. But in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915) for example, we get the concept of culture and nature, sacred and profane, society and individual, soul and body and right and left etc. In the

above table of Uberoio, there is another contrast of man and woman. If we accept all the above analogy as the creation of Durkheim, then, barring mysterious and intelligible as well as irrational and rational - all the other analogy can be said as the christian borrowing of Durkheim in the tradition of Bachofen or Weininger - where man is sacred, culture, social, soul, right, spiritual and God; and Woman is profane, nature, individual (or private), body, left, temporal and devotee. However, Durkheim calls sacred as mysterious and irrational and profane as intelligible and rational - and if we apply these analogy on man and woman then we have to say that man is mysterious and irrational and woman intelligible and rational. Besides , Durkheim was perhaps the first who denied God the heavenly existence and supernatural quality in the christian sense and made him equivalent to society and a human creation. Thus, it is very difficult to say that Durkheim was applying christian concept in his sociology. At best we can say that he accepted the popular notions of the western civilization and integrated them in his sociology and after him, atleast, these notions became secular, popular or analytical instead of religious. However, these equations about women are not focal to Durkheimian Sociology and their importance lies only in their influence on Levi - Strauss who was the first sociologist to categorize woman as nature or natural objects under the control of man.

## LEVI-STRAUSS

Claude Levi-Strauss, in his famous book *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969) put forward the view that sexuality is an element of nature which, by means of the imposition of the incest taboo and exogamy is transformed into culture. Thus, according to Levi-Strauss, the beginning of human culture is linked with the classification of wives and sisters or the imposition of incest taboo. Now, Levi-Strauss assumes that invention of incest taboo was a job of men and it were men who were the architects of culture. Men are superior in the sense that they had renounced their sisters for other man. This renunciation or sacrifice of the natural right over the sexuality of sisters and other near women kin by men makes them cultural or cultured and if we take the analogy from Durkheim and the earlier western intellectuals, then, men became spiritual and moral by the renunciation of this sexual privilege and women became the sexual objects, things to be gained and given in exchange by men. They (Woman) had no choice over the Gods (husbands) they were to receive and no control in determining their value in the process of their exchange for another women through the medium of goods. They were the possession of men who used them as they liked.

## AN ANALYSIS OF LEVI-STRAUSS

It is a fact that after the imposition of paternity over motherhood women were sub-ordinated by men and in marriage or gift to Gods (e.g. Devadasis in India) they had no choice in most of the cases. However, it is wrong to say that culture began with the ascendancy of men over women. By any account the people of Egypt and Indus valley were cultured, although women had comparatively high position than men in these cultures. Thus Levi-Strauss is biased in identifying male control over the exchange of women with culture per se and making culture dependent on the subjugation of women. Actually, however, it may be possible to see the subordination of women as a product of the relationship by which sex and gender are organized and produced in kinship rather than as the origin of those relationships.

Secondly, it is not correct to say that men renounced their sisters and, therefore, they are cultured, spiritual or moral (as Christ became by renouncing women and sex). Because, as we know from the Egypt women were superior in society and inherited the throne - thus we can equally argue that it were women who renounced their brothers and sons. Moreover, it were women who renounced the authority over sons in favour of paternity or (in terms of western bias) in favour of culture and civilization. Thus, either

we have to accept the spiritual superiority of women or we have to accept men as the exploiter of women in the process of culture making or atleast, we have to argue that there are many ways of making culture and the one Levi - Strauss describes is one of them. Therefore, we see that it is not proper to equate women with nature or natural objects to be transformed as culture by men (who are the symbol and maker of culture).

SHERRY B. ORTNER

The other sociologist who has tried to analyse the nature - culture = women - man equation is Ortner (1974). She collects the assumptions about women prevalent in intellectual circles and presents her own analysis in the following heads :

- (a) The secondary status of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact.
- (b) Culture is equated relatively unambiguously with men, while women are seen as being closer to nature than men for three reasons :-
  - i. Women's body space and life cycle are more taken up with the natural processes of reproduction than is man's body, which leaves him freer to use tools and symbols to hunt and make war.

- ii. Her social role as the bearer but especially the nurturer of infants who are barely human and utterly unsocialized and her close association with the domestic unit as opposed to the public domain place her closer to nature.

Nonetheless, Ortner stresses that woman in her mothering, home-making role might also be associated with culture for the same reason - as the one who performs the basic, quintessential tasks of culture : changing babies into socially acceptable people and turning the 'raw' into the 'cooked!.

- iii. Finally, drawing on Chodorow's theory (1978) that a distinctly female personality is created by the structure of the family, Ortner holds that women tend to experience things, feelings and people as concrete rather than abstract, subjectively and interpersonally rather than objectively.

Ortner concludes that, although woman's body and mothering role align her closely with nature her obvious participation in culture places her in an intermediate position, performing some sort of synthesizing or converting

function between nature and culture. Because she mediates between the two realms somewhat ambiguously she is liable to more stringent restrictions and circumscription than men are.

#### ANALYSIS OF ORTNER'S VIEW

Although organizing dichotomies such as nature and culture, female and male may be vital in certain cultural contexts, their meaning is not universal and certainly not value - free. Mac Cormack (1980) writes that "the myth of nature is a system of arbitrary signs which relies on a social consensus for meaning. Neither the concept of nature nor that of culture is 'given' and they cannot be free from the biases of the culture in which the concepts were constructed". Thus, we see that Ortner has tried to improve on the same assumptions of western culture on which Levi-Strauss and his predecessors based their theses, however, no body questioned the very assumptions of western culture.

#### CONCLUDING REMARK

It is evident that the nature - culture opposition exists in a matrix common to other value - laden oppositions including those of gender ideology by which western culture organizes itself. And if we want to understand it, it must be understood in relation to them.

If it seems 'natural' for us to align female and male with nature and culture, perhaps, that is, because we still participate unconsciously in that very ideology, thus, we must seek to avoid making oppositions out of what might be, more elusively, differences.

Neither Levi-Strauss, nor Ortner recognizes the possibility or presence of a female point of view. Levi-Strauss considers women to be the passive objects of male activity in the material exchange, and disregards their frequent involvement as match-makers and sharers in wealth or higher status. In the same way, Ortner assumes that, if women are kept from the public realm in which men prevail, they are, therefore, necessarily inferior to men and thus fails to question the priority assigned to public life or to recognise women's importance in less formal private roles.

Ardener (1975) suggests that women and men may, in some cultures, at least, hold two distinct models of the universe. Men articulate the dominant structure in terms of their position in the world. While women are rendered inarticulate within this structure, form a 'muted group' whose model of the universe exists at 'deeper levels'. It is this which accounts for men's association of women with the non-social realm, the nature or wilderness.



As long as the transmission and experience of power are its primary focus, as long as war and politics (public) are seen as more significant to the history of human kind than child rearing (private), women remain marginalized or invisible (Learner, 1979). Its androcentric framework - the criteria of significance and selection which have determined the questions it asks as well as its methodology and notion of evidence - has excluded from its consideration not only women but the poor, the anonymous and the illiterate.

We question the traditional separation of society into the 'private' and 'public' spheres with the relegation of woman to the family, to a domestic realm which is conceived of as a refuge from the world of work and the competition of men in the market - place and empire. This division perpetuates the belief that women's child-bearing 'naturally' placed her in the home and leads to an understanding of 'women' not in terms of relationship - with other women and with men - but of difference and apartness as beings who presently are and have at all times been not actors but mere subjects of male action and female biology (Chiefly, Rosaldo, 1980).

The division of public from private has obscured an understanding of the family in terms both of women's position in the family and the family's position within

society. In reality the private and public are interdependent i.e. the personal is political and the experience in one realm affects the other. The separation of spheres has also distorted our understanding of women's work, rendering much of it invisible by relegating it to the personal. Definition of work as something performed for wages discounts some traditional aspects of women's work as a part of production whereas actually it has been women's unpaid labour in the home that has enabled men to work outside it.

Ascertaining the criteria for measuring women's status is itself a difficult problem for a sociologist of civilizations. No single criteria can be singled out: a woman may have high status in the family, for example, and low status economically. Losses in one area may entail gains in another; or what appears to be disadvantage may entail hidden advantages as is suggested by the reassessment of victorian sexuality, conversely, apparent advantages may conceal disadvantages as in the case of Renaissance English wives (Chiefly Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, 1985).

Women have been an out group, the other, the second sex, however, it has never been possible to exclude women in the same way as it has been to exclude other out groups.

Therefore, it has been necessary to bombard them with a massive literature of religious, social and biological content explaining why they should remain in a role secondary to men.

Actual behaviour is likely to be more varied than is suggested by social myths or stereotypes, and the relation of the ideology of woman to social reality remains difficult to measure. The periods of progress for men may not be the same for women. Kelley (1976) goes to the extent that it often involved losses for women - the same factors that liberated man from the social and ideological constraints of the past, for example, the new capitalist economy and humanist learning, impinged on the lives of women, moulding noble woman especially into an aesthetic object: decorous, chaste, dependent (Kelley, 1976).

Thus, a sociologist of different cultures has to be very careful in applying his/her general concepts to all cultures in the same way. More often than not every culture has its own 'language' (subjective meaning and world view) and a sociologist has to analyse that 'language' within the context of that culture i.e. within the political economy of that culture, its preceding culture and the language it employed to define its various elements. In case, we can get the future succeeding culture of it also, it is much better. But in any case it is not possible

to grasp why people live as they do in different countries, if we do not go back in the history of that region as well as the ideology it employed. In the same way, it is not possible to know why women were relegated to an inferior position in a particular religion, if we know nothing about their status and situation in the societies and civilizations that preceded that religion. However, in recent times we find a tendency to study women alone as object of study and such studies go comparing women of one culture from the other. Most of the feminist studies come in this category. I strongly feel that such studies are not going to make a better studies than we have today. The only difference will be that instead of male bias and prejudice we will have female bias and prejudice. If we want to conceptualize man and woman and their relationship in a particular culture. We have to avoid both male and female point of view as our starting point and choose the role of an objective analyst. The need is to make sociology itself a comprehensive study of cultures. As Evans - Pritchard wrote " much of what can be said of the lives of primitive women is due to their being members of societies with a simple technology and economy rather than to their being women, so that it is difficult to make a comparison between the position of women in our culture and society and their position in primitive cultures and societies without comparing

the culture and societies in many other respects. Naturally, the Australian Aboriginal woman has a harder time and a more restricted social life than our sisters and daughters but so also does the Aboriginal man than our brothers and sons" (Evans - Bitchard, 1965, pages 44-45).

But what has been done so far? without interpreting a particular culture properly we have assumed the man's version of culture as the true culture and thus landed up with the partial picture of that culture and we compared one partial or distorted picture with similar other picture from another culture. Thus, we conclude, that there is a need to combine woman's point of view with the existing man's point of view as data and we have to interpret a particular culture with its material basis within the historical context into our own neutral sociological language. For this job sociological concepts may need reinterpretation and reconstruction. Any culture is made of men, women and their relationship and that culture can be properly understood only after we comprehend the construction of man and woman as social persons by that culture itself. Woman as social person is missing from sociology in the proper sense of the term or at least it has not become the popular operational concept. It is one of the reason that women are a 'muted' group in sociology.

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## CHAPTER 3

WOMAN AND WOMAN-HOOD IN INDIA FROM  
THE DAYS OF MOTHER-GODDESS TO SHANKARCHARYA (FIRST)

## I

In the analysis of Indian woman we generally encounter arguments like this :

- (i) the ideal of Hinduism does not match with the practice of Hindus (e.g. Ursula King, 1980)
- (ii) the position of Indian woman was glorious during the vedic period and deteriorated gradually (e.g. Altekar 1963 and many others)
- (iii) Before the British period the Indian woman, generally, faced an age of subjection and emancipation started generally with the British (e.g. P. Thomas, 1964).

As is evident with the title of the chapter our analysis is limited to the ancient India, hence, we are unable to deal with the third sort of argument, i.e. before the British came Indian woman were not emancipated and emancipation began only after the British came in India. We are not interested in comparison here. Although following the anthropological tradition, we

could have easily contrasted the one with the other. The reason behind our concentration on ancient India is guided by the fact that Hinduism has not been properly understood in <sup>sociology.</sup> Hinduism has been evolving from the days Aryans came in India (around 2000 B.C to 1750 B.C.) to the establishment of four maths by the Shankaracharya. (788A.D- 820 A.D.). Before Shankaracharya Hinduism by any name was not a religion but a way of life based on certain moralistic principles and cosmological laws which again was based on six schools of Indian philosophy and the science of Astrology. In between Buddhism and Jainism came into being and a conflict between the three gave rise to the need of synthesis. And the attempt of Shankaracharya was aimed at this very synthesis. It was Shankar, who codified Hinduism and made it a religion of contemporary India. From then onwards, we have the classical religion of Hinduism on the one hand and the folk hindu may of like on the other. The folk calls it *Sanatana dharma*. It is however, not in conflict with the Sanskritic Hinduism. Shankritic Hinduism encompasses the folk Hinduism and it would not be wrong to say that Shankritic Hinduism is the boundary within which the folk ways of life have been functioning (Chiefly Pandit Nawal Kishore Sharma unpublished thesis-

oral exchange). If we follow the above argument, the puzzling debate about the nature of Hinduism - whether it is a religion (Veena Das, 1977 etc.) or a way of life (Radhakrishnan, 1949 etc) - can be easily solved. Again the Advaita vedanta of Shankar is claimed to be inconsistent in theory and practice as is evident by the popular claim that Shankar was an opponent of MOORTI PUJA as well as the popular (academic) belief that Shankar propagated an abstract other-worldly philosophical world view which claimed the living world as MAYA (illusion) and hence ignored the worldly matters including devotion or BHAKTI to a personal god. This notion of Shankar is so common that it is hardly doubted. However, in recent years even this myth is deconstructed. The chief among those<sup>whose</sup> writings help demystify this myth are chiefly Anthropologist Agehananda Bharati (1981) and Pandit Nawal Kishore Sharma (ibid). They claim that Shankar was himself a devotee of DEVI or SHIVA - SAKTI and had installed the SRIYANTRA not only in the maths he founded but also in several temples of rather all - India importance. This argument has been somehow attested by a noted Hindi critic DASHARATH OJHA also in a recent article in AAJ-KAL (June, 1988).



Thus, it is clear that there is a need to study Hinduism and Hindu ideal in a systematic way chiefly because it has been either grossly misinterpreted or only partially understood and in most of the cases only trivial generalisations are made in its favour or dis-favour. Even obvious historical facts have not been taken into account when people made sociological arguments either about Hinduism or Hindu women and more often than not people assumed a particular idea about Hinduism or Indian woman and hardly an attempt is made to demonstrate the fact or explain the 'why'? and 'how'? questions which are the singular demand of a science.

But our emphasis was caused also because the author of our novel Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi is a noted historian of Hindu tradition and his *Anamadas ka Potha* the novel under study, is well regarded as a historical novel. And Acharya Dwivedi has written explicitly in his *Hindi Sahitya Ki Bhumika* (1979) that the unity of JIVA and BRAHMA or ATMA and PARMATMA was not suitable for BHAKTI or <sup>for which</sup> /atleast two things are needed; the devotee (JIVA) and god (BRAHMA).  
 ----- In the twelfth century four powerful sects emerged in opposition to Advaita which became able in the course of time to change the ethos of Indian medita-

tion ( PP 51-52). As is well known, twelfth century India witnessed the glorification of BHAKTI and the BHAKTI-MOVEMENT and in the above paragraph Dwivediji was explaining this very movement by saying that the BHAGWAT DHARMA which was common to these all four sects came in opposition to Shankar's 'ADVAITA and BHAKTI AND BHAKTI MOVEMENT was not possible within Shankar 's schema. Since BHAKTI is the central Theme of the novel under study and since both the novel (1976) and the literary history (1979) have been written within three years by the same author, it is hoped that the same idea were the guiding force. Our study of Shankar gains importance in the situation because if shankar was himself a devotee then Dwivediji has not done justice in his literary history and if we correct his mistake in the analysis of BHAKTI which gave way to love of RADHA-KRISHNA and SHIVA PARVATI legends. then our analysis of the novel will differ widely from the one which is presented by Hindi critics. Noted hindi critic Dr. Namvar Singh has opined (in his various articles as well as in oral exchange to me) that "Dwivediji has tried to establish the superiority of Bhagawat Dharma in his all four novels ----- we find a journey from Tantra to the Bhagawat dharma. " If we follow the argument of Dr. Singh and Acharya Dwivedi

himself then Shankar, becomes insignificant in the analysis of *Anamadas Ka Potha* but I ;am surprized after reading Agehananda Bharati (1981) that the encounter of Shankar with Bharati (the wife of Mandan Mishra ) was of the same type in incident and after-effect which we find in *Anamadas ka Potha*. And as is well known about Acharya Dwivedi he takes all important incident in his novels from Indian myths, stories and classical literature. Thus there is all probability that the first encounter of RAIKVA with JABALA with all its dramatic significance may have been taken from certain myths, stories or classical literature. And I am almost sure that such encounter is rare and: the Shankar.. 's one may have been the inspiration. If we give accent to this probabability then Shankar becomes significant.

So far we have introduced the need of re-reading the vedic Hinduism, but what about the relationship of vedic culture to the Indus valley people or the Dravidian culture? And the answer to this question solves many of the puzzling aspect of Shakti Kali or Mahadevi as the powerful goddess of Hindus from the male-dominant Rig Vedic gods, and the acceptance of ARDHANARISHWAR BRAHMA AND YUGAL UPASANA from the male Brahma (Purusa) D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Hazari Prasad

Dwivedi and many others including L.E. Gotwood etc. have argued that these new features were concessions to the Dravidian culture in the process of reconciliation or synthesis on the basis of these studies we present the concept of woman and woman-hood in Dravidian and vedic cultures and the gradual synthesis which was somehow worked out for a composite culture.

After dealing with the composite vedic culture we turn to Buddhism and Jainism in brief and then we take the making of Hinduism during and after Shankara.

II. THE PRE-BUDDHIST HINDUISM

There <sup>be</sup> can/may many ways to study womanhood and woman in the pre-Buddhist Hinduism. The first may be chronological but the the problem of this approach lies in the fact that Later - Rige-vedic world-view was influenced by Dravidian culture and Dravidian cultures was chronologically prior to the vedic one. Hence one has to begin with Dravidian religion and Dravidian religion was not a Hindu religion.

Secondly, we can begin with the philosophical presuppositions but in the case of Indus-people we do not have readable text to decipher philosophy. Here we have only archeological evidences only which shed light on practices and figures etc.

Thus we follow a mixed approach with the prime motive of comprehension. We begin with the vedic and post vedic Hinduism and then to explain the difference and shifting of gods we deal with the mother - goddess and the female principle of the Indus people. After that comes the turn of upanisdic philosophy and then a brief summary is given.

(i) THE VEDIC HINDUISM - Before dealing with the position of women in vedic society let us have a look at the concept of creation in the vedas.

In other religious source books for example the old Testament, and the Koran, the story of Genesis begins in the heaven - where there is a male (Adam) and either he creates a woman (Eve) or god creates her out of him - thus the difference of gender is central to

the original text of the religions. However in the case of India, gender does not play such a decisive role in the story of creation. The vedas are the recognised earliest authoritative texts of the Hindus, and the PURUSH SUKTA of the RIG VEDA presents a story of creation but this creation does not deal with the genesis of humanity in the same sense in which christianity and Islam, for example. present in their Bible and Koran. Here, we find the creation of varna, which literally means colour but in actual practice which means the division of society into four categories - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras. It is said in the PURUSHA SUKTA that the Brahma (creator) created Brahmins out of his head, Kshatriyas out of his arms, Vaishyas out of his thighs and Shudras from his legs. But many intellectuals have opined that it does not deal with the creation of four classes of people rather it symbolically speaks of the four attributes of intellect symbolising head, strength symbolising arms support symbolising thighs, and service symbolising legs. Mahatma Gandhi shared a similar view, and he accepted only three main attributes SATO GUNA , RAJO GUNA and

TAMOGUNA as the basis of varna. Again there is no consensus among the interpreters and commentators of vedas from the ancient times that the Brahma should be accepted as male or common gender symbolising ARDHANARISHWAR. The term PURUSHA of the PURUSHA SUKTA means male in the Sanskrit.

However, the Purusha or the creator in the vedas can be easily accepted as male only because the vedic pantheon is pre-dominantly male. Thus our analysis of woman-hood and woman in vedic religion has to be concentrated on its god - goddesses rather than on the story of creation as is the case with other religions.

From the history text books, we get the information that in the post-vedic Hinduism, with all its formal allegiance to the vedas, there survived one of the major Gods - Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Prajapati- Pusan, Matarisvan etc. D.P Chattopadhyaya (1959) feels that -----"this exit of the vedic Gods from the post vedic pantheon was only logical, the pastoral economy which generated the vedic pantheon was no longer there in the post - vedic period to nourish it. The vedic gods had to wither away. <sup>Father</sup> Further-

right elements might have been aggressively imposed on the lives of the people, yet the remnants of mother - right could not be completely stamped out. The Indian masses, remaining as they did the tillers of the soil, were sticking to their old mother - goddess, or Sakti. Not that there is no male god in the later Indian Pantheon. But they are ----- generally pushed to the background or somehow or other fused with the female. The siva-lingam is probably the commonest example of the latter".

Even if we do not accept the cause of the change of male gods by the YUGAL UPASANA etc. the fact remains that Rig-vedic gods were dominantly male and the tri-deva of post-vedic period-Brahma Vishnu, Mahesh are new gods so is Kali or shakti. Vishnu is generally not worshipped alone and he and his avatars are always worshipped with their spouses - vishnu with Lakshmi, Krishna with Ram with sita. Radha, /Again out of the three forms, the latter two avatars are more popular gods than Vishnu himself and both avatars are significant in the sense that their spouse's name precedes their own - RADHA - KRISHAN AND SITA - RAMA.



Mahesh is regarded as Ardhanarishwar and in case he is accepted as male god he is worshipped with his spouse Parvati . Moreover, his symbol is linga - the male and female reproductive organs.

Brahma is not so popular as Vishnu or Mahesh but he is regarded as important god. Sometimes he is more important than the other two. However, it is not clear whether Brahma as a person god of Trideva is equal to the Brahma of Advaita which accepts god as the cosmos or the creator of universe. In case he is equal in both cases, the question of his sex becomes important. But generally trideva concept accepts all three gods as equals and Brahma is conceptualized as a single god without spouse, but sometimes SARASWATI is accepted as his spouse. Although in popular legends and worship Saraswati is said the second wife of Vishnu. W.J. Wilkins. (1882) differentiates between the two Brahmas. He says that one Brahma is the supreme the god of being gods; of whom Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are manifestations (P. 93) and he calls 'Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and the mother of the vedas and the inventor of the Devanagari letters' as the wife of Brahma (P. 107). If this is true, then, by all reckoning Saraswati has been a more popular and more important deity than her spouse Brahma in later hinduism - at least in daily worship and popular conception.

Another, important deity in post - vedic Hinduism has been Shakti a new comer<sup>to</sup> the vedic religion. She is worshipped in many forms the most important being the abstract female principle of the the universe, almost equivalent to Brahma, the supreme god of gods or as Kali, Durga, Uma, Parvati and many others. Wilkins (ibid) describes at least seventeen forms of Shakti however, Pandit Bhudeb Vajpayee Shastri (oral exchange) mentions it twenty one. It is again important that both Shankaracharya and Ramkrishna Paramhansa - the two most important figures of historical hinduism have been a devotee of Shakti or Kali.

The later-day Hinduism recognises either a couple (Sita-Ram, Radha Krishna), or a union of male and female (Ardhanarishwar Shiva or the Linga which represents according wilkins male and female Reproductive organs and which is obvious in the shrines of shiva-temples all over India) on the one hand and a female principle in the form of Mahadevi or Shakti on the other. Lynn E. Gatwood (1985) opines that "there are two distinct versions of the female principle in India, one of which is free from divine male control and the other necessarily defined by such control. I call the control - free, non sanskritic version Devi, and the control-defined, Sanskritic one the spouse goddess..

A quasi - orthodox, control - free form of Devi as Kali, Durga, or Shakti is formed Mahadevi" (P. 1) I agree with Gatwood that there are two versions of female principle in India and I also accept that ' there is a conflict between the nature of the non- Sanskritic goddess (Mahadevi) and the Sanskritic goddess (spouse-)' (P.182). However, Gatwood does not give much importance to the change of deity and their nature from Rig-veda to the post-vedic period and thus the real nature of post-vedic Sanskritic Hinduism remains concealed. If we recognise this change then we have to accept that Hindu society under-went a sea change in synthesising the Drawidian element into the Arayan religion. In this connection more important than the difference between Mahadevi and spouse goddess is the nature of post vedic male God himself. In the Rig-veda's PURUSA SUKTA the Brahma is called the Purusa which literally means male. However, it is possible that he is just the abstract principle of cosmos as was the Mother goddess of Indus-valley (Dravidian) people. But as we know, the mother- goddess definitely signified a superior position of women thus the superiority

of only the male gods in the Rig veda indicates that the Purusa was conceived as a male. Now, in the post-vedic society the importance of male god declined because either he was Ardhanarishwar Shiva, or vishnu in his various incarnation was worshipped together with his wife; again, it is interesting that the name of the spouse - precedes the avatars of vishnu and not succeeds (in almost all Kirtans and the utterance of devotees). For example, people utter Sita-Ram and Radha - Krishna and not Ram-Sita and Krishna - Radha. In the case of Vishnu himself it is interesting to mention that in the calender of Hindu festival - people have fixed a date for Lakshmi and not Vishnu and on that occasion Lakshmi is worshipped alone. Again, students celebrate the worship of Saraswati alone and not with Brahma (her husband according to wilkins) or Vishnu (her husband according to the popular view). Thus Gatwood is not correct in saying that spouse - goddess is not free and is controlled by the male - god i.e. her husband god. Because her husband is also controlled by her in the sense that he cannot be worshipped alone by the devotee. However, if we compare <sup>it</sup> from the Rig-Veda then the post vedic male-god seems only half male and the other

The only exception in this connection is Krishna who is said to have one hundred twenty five queens and eight super-queens besides innumerable beloved called Gopikas. However, it is again a fact that this legend is linked with Bhakti-movement in which Krishna was seen as the universal lover and every human creature was capable of being his beloved. Thus we have Mirabai and Chaitanya both as the beloved of Krishna. This trend of Hinduism was possible according to Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (1979) after Ramanuj (12th century A.D.) established Dwait against the Advait of Shankar. In this philosophy both men and women are equated - however both are given the feminine role against the male god Krishna who is said the embodiment of Brahma. Thus, although man and women were equated but not feminity and masculinity. How it happened should be a separate object of research but this much may not be out of context that Vaishnavism emerged in the south which has been the battle-field of Saivites and vashnavites and it is again a fact that after their defeat by Aryans in the Indus valley, Dravidians fled to deep south and Shiva and mother-goddess were their deities. Moreover, Ramanuj was not an independent philosopher

like Shankar. rather he was related with the ancient sect of Vaisnavas. Thus it is possible that his philosophy tried to purify the Aryan religion out of the Dravidian influence which was recognised in the Post - vedic Philosophy and which was attested by Shankar in his grand synthesis.

Thus if we have the vaishnava bhakti-movement on the one hand, we see the SAKHA BHAVA in Shakti cult also. We accept the fact that shakti cult was not so popular as Vaishnavism become during the so-called Bhakti movement, nonetheless, there was reassertion of female principle and feminity again, perhaps in reaction to the vaishnava assertion. In the Shakti cult we have the female principle of the cosmos as the lover and all men and women are her SAKHA or beloved.

I strongly feel that Ramanuj and others did not oppose Shankar so much for his philosophy of Advaita as for his love for the Tripur-Sundari Kali or Shakti.

Thus the question remains how the male-principle of Rig-veda became the principle of male-female unity

in the post vedic society? And the answer to this question is that there was a need to synthesize the pre-existing female principle of mother-goddess for the smooth organisation of society to the male-principle of the victor aryaans. Rig-veda is said to be composed before the Aryans came in India and thus only Rig - Veda represents the pure Aryan world - view. Thus, to understand Ardhanarishwar couple worship and inclusion of Mahadevi we have to look at the Indus - valley situation. However, before we take it, let us look at the other part of the argument Gatwood put forward that Mahadevi is control free. We have proved so far that spouse goddesses were not controlled by their husbands rather their was assimilation of male and female principle and both ardhanarishwar and the couple worship are two sides of the same coin; now, we look at the Mahadevi :-

Gatwood writes on page 171 that ' The mythical conceptualization of Kali represents the most sophisticated exegesis of Mahadevi in Hindu thought". Again she writes on page 183 that "--- prototypes of Mahadevi and Shiva were undoubtedly worshipped in Pre-Indus times as well as in and around the village-like Indus valley civilization". Thus it is clear that she is obsessed with the Dravidian mother-

goddess and does not give much importance to the fact that Kali is worshiped by Post-vedic Hindus who came as a synthesis<sup>of</sup> the aryan and Dravidian elements. Again, the same myth which depicts Kali standing on the chest of Shiva gives reason as to how Shiva came under her feet. Wilkins writes "This position of Kali is accounted for by the fact that, when her victory over the giants was won, she danced for joy so furiously that the earth trembled beneath her weight. AT the request of the gods Shiva asked her to desist, but as owing to her excitement, she did not notice him, he lay down amongst the slain. She continued dancing; until she caught sight of her husband under her feet; immediately she thrust out her tongue with shame at the disrespect she has shown him (page 309)" Thus it is clear that she considers her husband as equal and not junior and she has to control her feelings according to the wish of her husband. However on many occasions Shiva was also guided by his wife. But the same was the case with other couple gods. Thus it is not very correct to say that Mahadevi is control-free and spouse-goddesses are. In reality mahadevi is also a spouse-goddess-the wife of Mahadeva Shiva. Thus, I wrote earlier



that I agree with Gatwood that there are two female principle in India and that there is a conflict between the nature of the non - Sanskritic goddess and the Sanskritic goddess. But I do not agree with her that these principles operate simultaneously , rather, my argument is that the principle of non-sanskritic goddess operated only in the Dravidian culture in the form of mother- goddess and in the post-vedic society this female principle was united with the Aryan male principle and the unity of male and female principles led to the couple worship and we got sanskritic spouse gods as well as goddesses.

(ii) The mother Goddess and the pre-aryan world view :-

In the Indus - valley civilization people worshipped mother goddess or the female principle and they engaged in tantra or Vamachar. Pashupati or Shiva was also worshipped. The above facts are historical common sense these days and we are not required to give sources of information in this regard. However, there is a need to explain Tantra or Vamachar as well as the relationship these religious partices had with women in particular. My analysis in this regard is based of D.P. Chattopadhyaya's LOKAYAT (1959) and Govinda Shastri's TANTRA - DHARSHAN (1980).

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Chattopadhyaya begins his thesis with the assumption that agriculture has been a women's discovery in its initial stage whereas hunting and pastoral economy was man's invention. And since Indus people were essentially agricultural, therefore, women had superior position in society. Whereas Rig - vedic people were predominantly pastoral. Agriculture not only played a secondary role in the vedic tradition but it was actually looked down upon according to Manu, agriculture was forbidden to the Brahmins. More-over, anthropologists report that in the pastoral community- women are purchased for cattle. Thus, Chattopadhyaya asserts that the pastoral economy had a natural tendency towards a social organization in which the males-dominate. There is, in fact, no pastoral people which are not patriarchal for cattle - raising is almost universally the work of men. Thus, it is fairly natural that in the Purusa-sukta of the Rig veda - Purusa means the male and the cosmic order was conceived in terms of the original male and all the important gods were male.

Whereas the basis of Indus- valley civilization was agriculture and since agriculture has been invented as well as dominated by women, it was natural that the cosmic order was conceived in terms of the original

female and mother goddess was invented to symbolise the superior position of women. Even in the vedic literature where agriculture is referred to, the deities connected with it are generally conceived as females, for example Sita. However, she is made subordinate to the male gods like Indra and Pushan. Yet, what is significant in this context is the fact that being an agricultural deity she is conceived as a female.

The change in vedic pantheon from the Rig-vedic period to the post-vedic period looks logical to Chattopadhyaya because in his opinion the pastoral economy which generated the vedic pantheon was no longer there in the post - vedic period to nourish it to vedic gods had to wither away. However, he himself accepts the fact that the importance of the female principle in the religious history of India was not the product of the peaceful conditions of the post - vedic period. Thus consciously or unconsciously Chattopadhyaya implies the possibility of conscious attempt by Aryans to synthesize the Dravidian element into their religion so that defeated Dravidians can be assimilated into the Hindu fold.

## TANTRA AND VAMACHARA

Chattopadhyaya says that Tantrism too, originally consisted of ritual practices in which only the women participated. The reason is that Tantrism had its sources in agricultural ritual. Later in order to adjust the religion to the patriarchal conditions, these functions began to be transferred to man. However, even then, the male as male could not discharge these. They could become priests only by changing their sex to that of females. The male, in order to adapt himself to the priestly functions, had to surrender his sex, as it were, and to fuse himself with the female. The commonest way of surrendering the male sex had been the use of the female dress on the part of the priests. The significance of this practice is to be understood in the context of the fact that, according to the primitive belief clothes are parts of its wearer's person.

However, the above facts described by Chattopadhyaya give only the situation in which Tantra emerged in the pre-aryan India. But it does not describe Tantra or Vamachar as such. At one place Chattopadhyaya gives the literal meaning of VAMACHAR that 'vama'

means woman or the sexual urge (KAMA). Thus Tantrism is the ritual practices of women and of sex. It lays a very great emphasis on the female because in Tantra the female force is propitiated and it requires that while propitiating one has to become a woman.

But it does not explain many facts, for example, what is the role of the sexual urge in the Tantra? Again, how it is related with the Shiva-linga and what about the relation of Tantra with the two most important gods of the Indus people, i.e., the mother goddess or the Shakti of the universe and the Pashupati or Shiva. This we get from Govind Shastri. He writes that central to the understanding of Tantra is the word YAMAL or YUGAL which signifies attraction and sexual union of Shiva and Shakti. This union of Siva and Shakti is the cause of creation of the universe. Shakti is the active part of Shiva. Shiva is inert in his nature because he is always in still and whenever there is a natural burst in Shiva - Shakti emerges and the two comes together in union (sexual) and out of their play emerges the universe in its various manifestations. (page 5). He writes further that

the beginning point is Shiva, the seed is Shakti and their union is NADA which creates various forms <sup>of</sup> power and energy which in turn make the world. (page 7). Nada cannot be translated exactly into English but perhaps it is some sort of sound. And if it is sound then it cannot be other than MANTRA or the formula of various creations. The Tantrics are said to perfect these mantras or formulas and in this act of perfection they usually engage in sexual acts or atleast they worship a woman or a virgin girl. However, it is probable that their worship of the virgin included intercourse because Tantric cult essentially worships the sexual urge or force. However, it is so secretly done and Tantrics are so sceptical to disclose their methods that we cannot be sure about it.

But this much is clear that the union of Shiva and Shakti is symbolised in the Shiva-lingam, worship of male and female reproductive organs and it was also the basis of conceptualisation of Shiva as ~~ARDHANARISHWAR~~ or half male and half-female and when Aryans synthesized Drawidian elements into their religion, it was this trantric union which gave rise to couple worship of gods and goddesses.

But the most striking fact in the Tantra is

conceptualization of Shiva as the inert primeaval material and Shakti as the active seed. The description of Shiva in Govind Shastri makes me tempted to add that Shiva symbolized nature or Prakriti and Shakti, <sup>symbolized</sup> PURUSHA of the Shankhya Philosophy; or, Shiva symbolized the earth and the Shakti, women, who seeded and invented agriculture. However, my primary aim in this section has been to search the root of post -vedic couple-worship and the entry of various manifestations of Shakti in the vedic pantheon signifying the superior conceptualization of women in post - vedic religion in comparison to the Rig-vedic one. And perhaps, I have succeeding in doing so.

### (iii) PERIOD OF THE BUDDHA

By the time of the Buddha, empire building in India began and patrilineal and patriarchal local communities were integrated into the empire. By this time women's world began to be concentrated into home and she specialized into so-called feminine arts with the house-keeping. The public domain of society was gradually closing its doors for wives and a new category of woman called Ganikas (dancing girls at the court who combined prostitution as well) came into

being. Perhaps Devadasi system also evolved by this time. Both these category of women were denied married life and since women ceased to be the inheritor of father's property in patrilineal society, those women became dependent on the public mercy or their own skill to exploit income for their livelihood. In this process they became public property.

Before the empire building and its related developments took place post-vedic society was of course, patrilineal and patrilocal but under the influence of Dravidian culture as well as the Rig-vedic tradition (Anthropologists opine that even in pastoral economy the rights and privileges of men and women are not so unequal as it becomes in Empires and industrial society)- Women's right and status was safely safeguarded by making marriage universal as well as indissoluble in the post vedic religion. GARHASTHA or the married life was accepted as the most ideal and all the upanisdic Risis are said to live in GARHASTHA. The priest are also usually the married men and it was claimed that for all important samskaras, the wife is necessary. It was also claimed that God lives there where women are worshipped. Women participated



in social activities and the wife of Risis were not much inferior to their husbands. In the eyes of god married men and women were alike. Women were made the IJJAT or honour<sup>of</sup> men and thus men took enough care to see the comfort of their wives and sisters so that they do not malign ~~their~~ (men's honour for their (women's) comfort. If in this process women were imposed certain restrictions, men took extra burden but since there was not much scope of luxury in the public domain at that socio-economic - technological level-women's disadvantages within the patrilineal ideology was almost compensated. Thus, post-vedic religion and its ARDHANARISHWAR pantheon was in favour of women from many angles.

However, by the time of the Buddha society underwent a drastic socio-economic changes and new religions came to express, legitimize as well as to guide Indian people. They were Jainism and Buddhism.

(a) Jainism - Though Mahavira, a senior contemporary of the Buddha, is reckored as the bounder of Jainism he was but a forceful personality belonging to the sect of Jainism founded by a sage named Rishabhadeva. And between Rishabhadeva and Mahavira the Jain ; recognise 22more tirthankaras. After Mahavi:

the Jains were divided into two sects the Digambaras (who wear nothing) and the Svetambaras (who wear white robes).

As most of the writers of Jain Texts were monks who believed in the superiority of the celibate life to that of the married life, they considered woman as the temptress that perpetuated the misery that was life. Though there are some references in Jain literature about the desirability of women, its general trend is that woman, by nature, is bad (p. Thomas, 1964).

Women have been admitted to the religious order of nuns from the time of Parsvanath (the 23rd tirthankara). Some people say even from the earlier periods. There is, however, some difference of opinion between the Digambaras and Svetambaras about their title to liberation. The former hold the view that they cannot become perfect without getting reborn as men while the latter maintain that they can in their own right. The Digambaras further maintain that nudity is absolutely essential for perfection, while the Svetambaras hold the view that no harm can happen to the soul by the wearing of white garments.

Anyway, the Digambaras admit the difficulty of nuns appearing in public without

cloths and that is one of the reasons for their belief in the incompetence of women for direct salvation (chiefly by P. Thomas, *ibid*).

The Digambaras have greater regard for celibacy than the Svetambaras, and as such, according to their canon, Mahavira was a life-long celibate, while the Svetambaras maintain that, in deference to the wishes of his parents, he married and had children and took to the ascetic life only after the death of his parents.

Anyway, marriage did not involve any indissoluble ties for the early Jains, and men were free, like the Buddhists, to leave their wives and take to the monastic life if they so choose. In the earlier stages of Jainism, women too had the privilege of leaving their husbands and joining convents, but later as inter-marriage with the Hindus became common among the Jains, the practice came under censure. But all Jains, whether Digambaras or Svetambaras, maintain that in the monastic life, the nun is inferior to the monk. "They (nuns) are prohibited to study chapters of MAHAPARIJANANA and ARUNOPAPATA and DARSHTIVADA. It is stated that the DARSHTIVADA deals

with magical formulae and as women are not strong enough but fickle, they are not allowed to study the above mentioned scripture. The climax is reached in the rule which lays down that a monk of three year' standing can become a teacher of a nun of thirty years' standing" (J.C. Jain - Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain canons quoted in P. Thomas, 1964).

From the Jain canon, it would appear that adultery was punished in Jain India with particular severity but a more tolerant attitude was adopted towards nuns who erred. This was possible due to the fact that the Jains had no regular convents of the type of the Buddhists and the Christians, and the nuns took like the monks, led, for the most part a wandering life and wicked men often took advantage of their helplessness. Many cases of seduction molestation and rape of nuns are recorded, but the children born to nuns in such unions were not condemned. Besides, the Jain text BRIHATKALPA BHASYA maintains that it is possible for women to become pregnant without actual intercourse, and the mere fact of pregnancy should not be taken as proof of guilt in an unmarried woman or nun. Four causes

are mentioned as capable of producing pregnancy in women without coitus, namely (1) sitting without cover at a place smeared with semen. (2) introduction of semen into the genitals of a sleeping woman by a designing person. (3) use of a garment stained with semen by a woman in her Ritu, and (4) drinking of water containing semen by a woman. Thus, if a nun got pregnant, she should not be turned out of the order. If possible, the culprit was to be punished but the nun herself was to be protected.

- (b) Buddhism :- The Buddha belonged to the 6th Century B.C. He was a Kshatriya prince like Mahavira. Before he became ascetic he was a married man having a son. This incident is important because the Buddha considered wives and children as an impediment to the higher life 'Celibacy he maintained, was superior to sex life which he just permitted to his lay followers as a concession to human nature married people who lived with their wife and children seldom obtained Nirvana? (P. Thomas, 1964).

The Buddha does not seem to have had a very high opinion of women and he was not in favour to found an order for nuns. His foster-mother Mahaprajapati begged to be admitted into the Sangha but he refused. It was only when Ananda argued and silenced the Buddha in favour of the entry of women that the Buddha

agreed for an order for nuns but he said to Ananda that, "If...women had not received permission to enter the order, the pure religion would have lasted long, the good law would have stood for a thousand years. But since they have received that permission it will now stand only for five hundred years...". Thus even after their entry in the Sangha, women could not get the same recognition in the eyes of the Buddha which men got.

Souls, according to the Buddha, are not equal at any given time but are in different stages of development some nearing *Nirvana*, others on the road, still others having lost their way in the wilderness. Hence the same code of conduct was not applicable to all; to his lay followers, the Buddha recommended marriage as they were in a lower stage of evolution and could not be expected to live up to the austere standards demanded of monks and nuns; by living the life of householders in the proper way, they could hope to accumulate sufficient merit for the practice of that self-control necessary for the religious life which would eventually lead them to *Nirvana*.

The above concept becomes evident when we get the information in the Buddhist texts about Buddha's acceptance of the invitation of Ambapali, a ganike (harlot of Vaishali) and the Buddha being her guest. The text opine that the Buddha, no doubt, considered prostitution an evil. But so were many institutions and occupations to the Buddha.

Fishing and hunting, for instance, were undesirable occupations according to Buddhism; even the married life was evil of a sort. But the Buddha did not ask the fisherman or the fowler to give up his occupation; nor did he order all his followers to desert their women and children and join the monastery. Therefore, the Buddha did not ask Ambapali or any other ganika to leave their occupation of prostitution. *Nirvana* was never obtained in a hurry. Souls had to pass through many lives, might be thousands, before they could be freed from the entanglements of *Karma* and attain perfection. The Buddha himself had to undergo more than five hundred births after he became the *Bodhisatva* or Buddha-elect, and his lives prior to attaining this state of *Bodhisatva* were almost countless. So all that the Buddha asked for was a step in the right direction; once this step was taken, he was content to let the followers take his leisurely course to the destination. (P. Thoman, 1964)

We know from the Buddhist text that after some-time the Buddha visited her, Ambapali decided to join the Sangha and was accepted by the Buddha himself. Perhaps because he had already accepted women. Then does it mean that the Buddha was confident that like the prostitute, every woman was at an immature stage of soul. and nuns of the Sangha were taking only a right direction towards the *nirvana*. and were very far behind

the monks? Was the inequal stage of female soul in comparison to the male one . . . . ., when the Buddha was denying entry to women in the Sangha or he had fear of the women's sexuality as a threat to the unnatural attempt to get *nirvana*? What may be the reason the Buddha did not had a high opinion about women. He rejected the sacramental notion of marriage and his secular notion of marriage made marriage something of a contract to be made or broken according to convenience. No widow was expected to remain single in memory of her dead husband. She could either marry or join the nunnery. The husband was free to leave his wife. Nowhere is *Pativrityam* or all-absorbing devotion to the husband is preached. However, the ideal wife is enjoined to practice the universal virtues of loyalty, obedience to elders, efficiency in housekeeping, love of peace etc. She was expected obedience and fidelity like a servant; the Buddha . . . . considered the position of the wife as subordinate to that of her husband, but he did not believe in the unity and inseparability of husband and wife (P, Thoman, page 93, para II, *ibid*).

Given the patrilineal society of India, the above concept of marriage deteriorated the position of women in marriage. Moreover, by not denouncing prostitution on the one hand and viewing the women's sexuality as a



hurdle in the way of *nirvana*, on the other, the Buddha degraded women to the beastly level. If Jain texts mention the frequent rape, molestation and pregnancy of nuns - it is probable that this sort of exploitation may be happening also with the Buddhist nuns. It is also probable that the Jain monks themselves may be pregnating the nuns under the cover of insecurity of nuns to the villainous man because the causes of pregnancy without coitus look like a cover up in a situation when pregnancy is very frequent. From any standard, the religion of Buddhism and Jainism was more favourable to men than women - because the religions which look down upon sexuality and glorify asceticism have been universally against the interest of women. But in the case of Buddhism in particular, the situation is more pathetic because it can approve an occupation like prostitution by clubbing it with marriage. Jainism is not better because it leaves women as a humble victim of usual rape and molestation and they are forced to choose the inhonourable path of begetting illegitimate children even after choosing a path of renunciation.

Actually, the unnatural and unrealistic philosophy of any kind cannot be the able guide of social organization. And if we see the position and conceptualisation of women in Jainism and Buddhism this fact becomes too obvious that these religions were unrealistic, unnatural

and partial in their outlook and in their haste to replace Hinduism they put forward bold theses without anticipating the implications. Perhaps, it is the cause that Jainism became a sect of Hinduism and Buddhism was swept away from the mainland of India in the course of time.

#### IV. SHANKARACHARYA AND THE MAKING OF HINDUISM AS A RELIGION:-

Shankaracharya was born in the year 788 A.D. and after living a life of glory for 32 years died around 810 A.D. After four years of his birth his father died and his mother became his sole guardian and he remained loyal to his mother even after taking renunciation. He did not take renunciation without his mother's permission. His mother was against Shankar taking renunciation and thus losing the only stake of her life and Shankar was firm in his decision to renounce the world but neither disobeyed his mother nor fled from the home without informing her as the Buddha did earlier. He persisted in persuasion and atlast his mother allowed him to go. Shankar promised his presence during her death and when she died Shankar was not only present there, but lit the funeral pyre of his mother himself against the accepted rules of *sanyas*. His 32 years life is generally divided into four parts - the first eight years of childhood he remained with his mother in the community of *Namboodari brahmins* of which his family was a member and studied in the gurukul. In the

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eight  
next years he lived a rigorous life of *sanyasi* and saw no women during this period. After that he spent eight years in winning over various sects and ideological groups in intellectual debates. During these debates he came into contact of only one woman Bharati, the wife of Mandan Mishra and it happened in the last debate he had with any opponent in his life. After winning over Mandan Mishra, he was *jagatvijay* or the conqueror of the world. Here the world denoted India which included 72 sects of religious groups and intellectual denominations and his victory was intellectual. In the last eight years he integrated the social, political and religious life of India by making a grand synthesis at a higher level. He made BRAHMA *nirguna* or qualityless principle of the cosmos and claimed that every *jiva* male or female was the embodiment of the same Brahma. He opined that there is no essential difference between *jiva* and the *Brahma* -because there is one and the only reality and everything is the manifestation of that. However, due to ignorance people do not understand this supreme reality and live in illusion that they are different from others as well as from the *Brahma*. He emphasized that no *mukti, moksha* or *nirvana* is possible without this recognition of oneness between human beings as well as the *jiva* and the *Brahma* because the difference is only in appearance which is an embodiment of *maya* or

*illusion* (Pandit Nawal Kishore Sharma, Oral exchange; Dr Dashrath Ojha 1988; Agheyand Bharati, 1981 and Jawahrlal Nehry, 1946).

However, it is interesting that people call it other wordly and essentially spiritual religion against the wordly or synthetic religion giving due importance to all four elements *Dharma* (right acknowledge and right conduct), *Arth*(economy and economic pursuit), *Kama* (sex and the married life) and *moksha* ( liberation) which was recognised as the *Sanatana dharma* by the post-vedic people in India. How it happened has to be investigated separately - but it is a fact that neither Shankar, himself nor his *Adavita* ever preached asceticism. Rather his four maths became the guardian of the *sanatana dharmi* hindus from the days of their establish-ment and they are doing the same job even today. More-over, it is ridiculous to say that he called the existing world as *maya* or illusion and he recommended a flight from this illusion to the superior life of the *nirguna* *Bharma*. Had it been his aim what was the need for making the "Buddha and the Mahavira as the Hindu gods" (Ojha, *ibid*, page 34) or 'risking his life in searching for idol of *Chaturbhuj Narayan of the Badrinath mandir* from a dangerous well and establishing that idol in the mandir for the daily worship? (D. Ojha, *ibid*, page 33). We are given many such examples of Shankar respecting the

existing religious practices of the people of 8th century A.D. Agheyananda Bharati(ibid) accepts the authorship of the *Saundaryalahari* as that of Shankar and by this fact claims that Shankar wrote these hymns as a prayer to the *Tripursundari* of the Shakti of the Tantriks. *Srividhya* also originated from Shankar. A.Bharati claims and writes, " *Srividya*... has two aspects, external and internal... The whole concept of the *vidya* is represented in the diagrams or *yantras*, the most potent of which represents all the categories of the universe and of the human body and their final absorption in the centre which is 'siva-sakti'. Sankara installed the *Sriyantra* not only in the maths (monasteries) he founded but also in several temples of rather (sic) all-India importance" (A.Bharati, ibid pp.35-36). A.Bharati goes further and says that, " In all *digvijayas*, we have recurrent emphasis on his establishing shrines for the *devi* in various forms. In a synoptic reading of five *digvijayas* and three *stotrams*, there are references to a total of eighteen *pratisthans* (establishments and consecrations or empowerments of a shrine) of which thirteen are to various *devis* and only five to male divinities, both *siva* and his derivatives, and *vishnu*" (page 37). Thus it is wrong to say that Shankar made this world as illusion and ignored it as well as recommended a flight from it. Rather, the truth is that Shankar's encompassing philosophy was the need of the hour. India was divided into 72 sects and denominations and every sect

was fighting with the other. Various political groups were also fighting and India had become very weak after this fighting, pre-judice and disbelief between various components of the Indian population and the Arabs had already conquered *sindh* and *Madra* from the Indian rulers. Shankar foresaw the dangerous implication of all this and tried to make India a united country of similar people by claiming that every way of worshipping is essentially the same because there is only one supreme being and all sorts of deities and pantheon leads to Him only. He made the *Barhma* as *nirguna* and thus he was neither male nor female. Again, <sup>his equation of</sup> every *jiva* with *Brahma* or *atma* with *paramatma* was really revolutionary because he equated the two - rather made, both inseparable one unit. Thus Hinduism as a pantheistic religion (a religion which sees all things in god and god in every apparently different things) came into being for the first time under the leadership of Shankar and for the first time Hinduism got its organization of church in the form of the four *maths* in the four corners of India i.e in the north the *Joshi Math* of Badrinath, in the south *Sringeri Math* of Rameshwardham, in the east *Govardhan Math* of Puri and in the west *Sharda Math* of Dwarka. (Chiefly, Pandit Nawal Kishore Sharma, oral exchange and the unpublished thesis on Hinduism).

Thus, we see that Shankar again made women as equal to men by equating male and female *jiva* as one and by making God as the *nirguna*. *Moksha* was also equally possible for both because they had to perceive the illusory differences and recognise the unity of the universe. Again, he worshipped *shakti*, composed *Saundryalahiri* in her honour and out of eighteen *pratisthan* he established various forms of *devi* in thirteen and in the remaining five, he established the *Srines* of *Ardhanarishwar*, *Shiva* and *Vishnu*. It is not clear whether *Vishnu* was worshipped alone or with his spouse - but in any case Shankar made female deity in majority and thus recognised the superiority of women on earth.

Obviously one would like to know the causes of the reemergence of female importance in the religion of Shankar after the marked decline of women in Buddhism and Jainism. And we can see the root of this superior recognition of women in the contemporary situation of India as well as in the personal life of Shankar himself.

1. Shankar was brought up by his mother and he was emotionally bound to her. He respected her so much that he could not disobey her and renounced the world only when he got her permission. Again, he ignored the established tradition of *Sanyasis* for his mother and not only came to see her at the time of her dying but also lit the funeral pyre.

2. It is generally believed and A. Bharati attests it that the only women in his life were his mother and the wife of Mandana Mishra - Bharati "He left his mother when he was eight, to become a *sanyasi*. Between that event and his encounter with Bharati in the last moment of *digvijaya* (i.e. when he was around 24 years of age)" the *vijaya literature* does not mention a single encounter with another woman. Thus Shankar saw a woman after 16 years. Bharati is described as a very beautiful intellectual in her own way. But at first sight one can see only beauty and not intellect. Shankar, became so impressed by her at first sight that he accepted her as the judge in the intellectual debate, he was having with her husband, Mandan Mishra. And it was Bharati who declared him victorious over her husband. But she reminded Shankar, that his victory was not complete unless he defeats her also because husband and wife are considered one unity. She asked Shankar, a question on the *Kamasashtra* and told that if he could answer it, she would *cede* victory to him. Having been chaste all his life as well as having been ignorant about the person of a young female (his mother was very old when Shankar came in the world and he left her when he was only eight years old), he was not able to answer such a question and to answer this question he entered to the body of a king through the power of *kayapravesh*,



which is one of the many *siddhis* a great *yogi* controls. For a while then, he lived a king's life learning all there was to be learnt about the art of love, among the king's wives and concubines. His real body was kept and protected by his disciples for the duration of his 'absence' in a royal body. As he returned and resumed his own body, he answered all the questions of Bharati to her satisfaction and became victor. 'Mandana kept his promise and followed Shankar, as a monastic disciple, and the lady took on her real form - she proved to be none less than the goddess of learning herself - Bharati (Saraswati). Therefore, she is called *upahayabharati*' (A. Bharati, *ibid* page 33). I think, Shankar, elevated Bharati as a goddess because she was the only one who defeated him, because she taught him new things about life and society by asking him questions of sex and sexual knowledge and thus giving an opportunity to live a <sup>new</sup> life, he saw the first young beautiful female in the form of Bharati and he became hypnotised. Almost the similar encounter occurs between the hero (Raikva) and heroine (Jabala) of the novel under study and in that novel also Raikva calls Jabala a goddess and throughout the novel he respects women as equal or superior to him.

3. Shankar was a Namboodri and among the patrilineal patrilocal Namboodri's- only the eldest son married a Namboodri woman; the other sons did not 'marry' at all in

in the emically optimal sense of the term, but lived in alliances with Nayar and sometimes other non-brahmin women. Thus, the most of the Nambcodri woman could not get married at all, since only the eldest Namboodri brother married. A Bharati says "whether by infanticide, or by diversion of Nambuthiri women into religious pursuits, the literature, both indigenou and foreign was vague about the lot of Nambuthiri women. The fact remains, however, that the Nambuthiri women were the only women in the entire sub-continent who could not reckon with marriage and who must have posed severe problems to the Nambuthiri men" He writes further, that a Nambuthiri in the 9th century motivated to be a sannyasi, and one who would see the elimination of opponents as his ideological aim has lots to compensate for as he sets out to do these things; the women his caste mates live with are low caste women, and they are 'known' for their beauty and sensuality; his sisters, and other adolescent Nambuthiri woman will remain unmarried - i.e. the majority will, and they will move around either as distant, religious models of renunciation and near - divinity, as they should, or else they will be perceived as potentially or actually unchaste - potentially by the Nambuthiri males, and actually by the Nayars, among whom it has been the rule to regard Nambuthiri women as targets

of lewd thoughts, because they were not 'protected' i.e. married except for the lucky one among many who was (Page 28029).

Now Bharati concludes that Shankar, exonerated women by making her Goddess (Page 31). And it was the first time in Hindu Worldview that woman was equated with Goddess. 'True, later vaisnava and Saiva Saints accorded women high status - either as reflections of Radha, the divine lover, or as modification of the divine mother principle. But there was no precedent at ~~Shankara's~~ time' (Page 31).

Thus we see that the Mother Goodness as the female principle travelled a clumsy path upto Shankar where woman was made a Goddess. Thus we have proved that mother Goddess was a reflection of the superior position of women in society and the equation of woman herself as a goddess was a compensation to the disadvantages they had in society. But as a religion or a world - view Shankar's religion was the first attempt to conceptualize God as *nirguna* and making the person of men and women as identical incarnation of that *nirguna* God.

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## CHAPTER - 4

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN IN  
ANAMDAS KA POTHHA

I.

*Anamdas Ka Potha* is a hindi novel written by Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. It is the last of the four novels he wrote to describe the ancient Indian society with its various dimensions. The critics of hindi literature accept his all four novels as historical with minor difference among themselves (Bhagwat Sharan Upadhyaya, 1967; Nalinvilochan Sharma, 1967; Prabhakar Machve, 1967; Bachchan Singh, 1967; Nawal-Kishore, 1967; Tribhuvan Singh, 1967; Arunesh Niran, 1980; Gopal Rai, 1980; Vishwanath Tripathi, 1985 and many others). However, his famous disciple and important critic Namvar Singh (1981, 1983, 1985 etc.) has tried to prove that his all four novels are the novels of love, love is the soul of them and without understanding the nature of love - Hazari Prasad Dwivedi imputes - his novels can not be understood properly (Namvar Singh, 1985, page 62-63). He says further that in his opinion Acharya Dwivedi has written modern socio-philosophical novel and used historical and mythical materials of ancient India just to make his views forceful and to make them *gulp* (story) in the true sense of the word

(oral exchange).

Another important critic Dr. Dashrath Ojha (1985) opines that his novels should be seen with his own views about novels as well as with the writing of contemporary hindi literature : 'Acharya Dwivedi came in the field of hindi novel at such a time when realism was becoming the dominant mode. By that time (after independence) the portreyal of naked truth in the characterization of human character - without any care about its bad effects on the readers - had been established as the ideal craft of the novelists. Dwivediji himself wrote in his *Granthawali* (Volume 7, page 233) that the realist found that the world is full of bad characters and even assumed idealists were not without spots. Dwivedi further wrote that Premchand recognised the bad effects of realism and cautioned the countrymen that realism is leading towards the disbelief in human nature. It is true that realism is useful in the portrayal of social evils and superstition but when it transcends the limit of civilization it becomes objectionable ?? (Dashrath Ojha, 1985, page 24) He further writes that Dwivediji was a scholar of veda and vedanta, Jainism and Buddhism, *Prakrit and Apbhransh* as well as ancient and contemporary literature of India. Besides, he was aware of the modern world view based on

the new scientific discoveries. He lived with Rabindra nath and understood the myths he used in his poetry. "Thus synthesizing them all, he took the help of myth to unfold the reality of present political social economic and literary problems. For his purpose literal description of living characters was not useful. About myth he had a feeling that one can move with two or three levels simultaneously in the process of analysing various dimensions of present life" (ibid).

I think they all take only a partial account of the novels of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. The first category of critics recognize the fact that all four novels deal with the historical periods of ancient India, most of the characters are either historical figures or they are found in the ancient religious, philosophical and literary texts and his novels portray the historically reliable contemporary situations - life-styles, world-view and socio-economic situations, although sometimes he supplements the known facts with his own interpretation. But no body has, so far, claimed that these supplements or interpretations are inconsistent with the known facts or they are not possible in that milieu. Dr. Namvar Singh does not disagree with the facts the first category of people claim, he only adds that the thread

which binds them all is 'love' and it is the Dwivedian interpretation of (Indian) love, which is the essence of these novels. But if we see the statement of Singh it becomes clear that he is not talking of love in the ordinary sense of the term but in the Dwivedian sense and if we read the novels as well as non-fiction writing of Dwivediji it becomes clear that for him love is the essence of Indian Culture. And it is not that Namvar is unaware of this fact, he himself opines that "Although the novels of Acharya Dwivedi are the novels of love, but this love was very powerful and it was expressed either in the form of patriotism or in the form of peoples power in the struggle against foreign invaders, or in the form of love for common people, or in form of struggle against old superstition..... or in the form of Vaisnava Bhakti". (1985, page 68, 69). Not only this, Namvar also accepts that "... Dwivediji has accepted love as the human nature ..... Perhaps love is the human nature in the same sense in which social relationship or living in society is ". (quoted in Abdul Bismillah, 1985 page 55). Again, he writes that Dwivediji has accepted "women and not man as the source of love" (Namvar, 1985 page 66) a love which 'makes one fearless not only before Vedas and Gurus but also before lok (other people,

society, custom)' (ibid, page 68). This love enabled one to be fearless even before great emperors and seats of power. Thus, it is clear that Dwivediji was interpreting Indian civilization in *the idiom of love* and it is another matter that his intention was to relate it with modern conditions of India - the India which was just emerging as an independent country, the India which had lost its confidence under the centuries of foreign rule, the India which was following the formality of the west without understanding properly the spirit behind it as well as its suitability and insuitability in the centuries old Indian tradition. It is also important that Dwivediji began the writings of his novels in Rabindranath's Shantiniketan. And it is an open secret that Rabindra was trying to synthesize a new self for India out of the East west mixture to bolden up the Indian people's moral sense of being an Indian. Thus, it is natural that Dwivediji tried to establish the glorious tradition of India through his four novels. Thus, there is no inconsistency between the views of Namvar Singh and those who claim that these novels are historical. The only difference is their emphasis on different aspects - viz. the nature of novels and the aims of novels. The view of Dashrath Ojha is similar to that of Namvar in one sense and in the other he mediates between the above



mentioned two views.

Thus, we conclude that all four novels are historical novels which try to reconstruct Indian tradition with its various dimensions for the purpose of solving the modern problems of Indian Society. Dashrath Ojha echoes this view and any one can see it after reading the four novels under the light (Context) of his other writings as well as his own personality which emerged 'in the protest against colonialism, Brahmanical Dogmatism under the impact of Rabindranath's humanism and his own diverse knowledge of things' (Namvar Singh, 1982, Dashrath Ojha, 1985).

And it is in tune with the emphasis of this study that to conceptualize the present of Indian reality one has to understand the Indian tradition and for this purpose, if need be, one has to reconstruct a suitable idiom to express it in comprehensible language. The first category of critics say that Dwivedi's novels are an attempt to conceptualize the historical past and in this sense they are historical novels and Namvar says that all four novels have been written in the idiom of love and without understanding this idiom, it is difficult to understand them.

The first novel is called *Banabhatta ki Atmakatha* which was published in 1946 and which tries to reconstruct the Indian society during the early period of Harsha (about 606 - 608 A.D.). The second novel is called *Charuchandra-Lekha* which was published in 1963 and which deals with the India of about 1195-1205 i.e. with the period after the defeat of Jaichandra of Garhwar (1194 A.D.). The third novel *Poonarnava* came in 1973 which depicts the India during Samudragupta (about 335 - 340 A.D.). And the fourth novel (under study) *Anamdas Ka Potha* came in 1976 when Dwivedi was 70 years old. It deals with the upanisadic period or the post-vedic society.

*Anamdas Ka Potha* is chiefly based on *Brihadaranya* and *Chandogya Upanisads*. Raikva, Janshruti, Jabala, Aausasthi and Ritambhara have been taken from *Chandogya*. Arundhati, Rijuka, Mama, Aashwalayan and Jatilemuni are the creation of the author but they are wholly consistent with the contemporary situation found in the novel as well as the facts which are known to the historians or sociologist of that period. Again, it is said about Hazari Prasad Dwivedi that his all supplements events and ideas employed in his novels including the *Potha* has its basis in the ancient myths and the ancient, medieval or contemporary literature.

Now, as I said in the very beginning (i.e. introduction) that it is not primarily a study in the sociology of literature, neither it is a criticism of the novel for its literary value, rather a sociological study aimed at the discovery of Indian tradition particularly the social construction of women in Indian tradition - I am not concerned with the whole novel or all the events and characters. I am only concerned with those events and those characters which highlight the conceptualization of man-woman relationship and thus shed light on the social construction of woman and womanhood in this novel. For this purpose, first of all I am re-writing the story in brief and then I hope to interpret it into sociological language.

II. Anamdas Ka Potha has been sub-titled as *Raikva - Aakhyan* or the story of the Raikva. The author of the *Potha* says that it is a part of the original *Potha* which he received from a man who does not believe in disclosing his name - because for him what is there in the name. Therefore, the author has titled the book as the *Potha* (book of a large size) of a man without name (Anamdas) = *Anamdas ka Potha*. The author says that this book or *Raikva Aakhyan* is a part of the original *Potha* of Anamdas which he wrote on the basis of

*Raikva-Akhyan* of the *Chandogya* upanisad. However it is believed that Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has used the veil of Ananddas just to create suspense. The story is supplemented by *Brihdaranya upanisad* and other myths also. We can see the main story in the following lines :-

Raikva was the son of famous *Rikva Muni*. His mother died after giving him birth. He had no other brothers and sisters. *Rikva Muni* was a great scholar and in his school people from distant part came to study philosophy and meditation. The child Raikva was very enthusiastic about knowing things. He listened to his father curiously that 'there is one basis (source) of the diversity of the world. Everything came from that and is bound to go there again? He began to imagine various possibilities of that one source of the world' (page 17) But he was unfortunate that his father died when he was yet a child. However, he did not loose heart. He began to think and meditate on his own. Gradually, he became a youth but was aware only of his name and the fact that he was a sone of *Rikva*. Besides that he knew only thinking, meditating and grammer. He was a lustless medicant and people respected him for his higher knowledge and his spiritual *siddhis*. He did not care for anything else.

Once he was meditating for a long time. When he broken his meditation there was darkness as well as flood everywhere. He began to search way to his hut. In the meantime, he saw two 'beings' lying on the earth and there was no body in the nearby. One 'being' was dead but he found some life in the other being. Raikva was surprized to see the other 'being'. It was full of garments and ornaments which he never knew. Its clothes were not covering the whole body. It appeared like human - being but it looked strange to him. He never saw such a human being. Those days he was meditating on 'air' as the possible source of world, therefore he tried to test it by making air from the clothes of the being. He saw that clothes were drying and there was some consiousness in the being. He decided to dry all the clothes after removing from the body of the being. when he tried to remove the clothes inciently he saw the eyes of the being. Raikva could not believe that it can be the eye of a human being. He wanted to test if it were original or it were joined from the eye ofadeer by moving his fingers around the eyes. He bended upon the face of the being to solve his puzzle. At the same time the being came in sense and suddenly sat down seeing Raikva in that position. The being was

angry to see Raikva in that state and asked who was he and what was he doing? Raikva had never heard such a melodius voice. He thought that he is a divine man of heaven. He closed his hands in respect and said that 'I am very happy the heavenly man! you are conscious now. I was trying to dry your clothes'. The divine body became curious now. He asked about him. Raikva thanked the god and said about him. Then he asked about him. To see the innocence of Raikva, the 'god' was pleased. He made his clothes proper and sat at a comfortable place. Raikva followed 'Him' (like an iron follows the magnet). Raikva saw that the heavenly man is wounded on certain places and he looked weak, tired and pensive. He wanted to make him comfortable and happy thus he spoke to him that if he could be of any service to him, he would be very grateful to him. His further words were. "O divine man! my whole essence wants to come out in your service. I have listened to the sweet-hyms of *samveda*, but I never listened such sweet and melodius language. I am feeling strongly that today my life has got reward, my whole meditation and prayers have been rewarded. My self and existence has become perfect and complete now. Oh, what a beautiful form! I am speaking the truth, god, I never saw such beautiful eyes ! when you smile I feel that flowers are raining and when you speak, I feel that nector is coming out

from heaven what a fantasy ! I never saw such soft and beautiful hair. I never saw such a brightness in the lips of any son of the risi. Please, tell me correctly you live in which heaven and how you came here on earth? "(page 24). Then in the process of extreme happiness he touched his cheeks by his hand and felt the softness of the hair also by saying what a bright face! How red are your cheeks! How soft are your hair!

Now, the heavenly body chided him mildly - 'The son of the Risi (Risi Kumar) please, go a little further. Are you seeing a woman for the first time? Raikva could not understand anything and just began to look at him attentively. The person told, "See the son of Risi! I am the daughter of king Janshruti you must know atleast the manner that it is improper to touch women in this way, it is a sin, but I am fascinated by your innocence. I think you have not seen such a girl before. I am a daughter of the king. Do you get something?"

Raikva replied that he knew the world daughter but he did not know what it meant. The princess asked, "you must have learnt grammar and the masculine and the feminine you are masculine and I am feminine? Raikva told that he knew terms but not the content of

them. Jabala told Raikva that a woman should be addressed by a feminine term and she suggested that he can address her as SHUBHA. Then she told her story that she was going to her relative that the tempest came and the rain started. The bulls flew and they killed the driver by their nails then you came and saved my life'. She asked Raikva if he can make her reach her home. Raikva told that he did not know her home but if she orders he can make her reach her home by taking her on his back. The Princess began to laugh. "see the son of the Risis, your proposal is not proper. It will call people's criticism. No man thinks of taking a female on his back. you only take me to the route from which my bullock - cart came. My father's men must be searching me there!" But Raikva could not understand where he was wrong he tried to argue that it is desirable to help somebody in distress. He requested Shubha again to come on his back and put forward his back to her. He thought that she will come on it. The back began to fill with sensation. The sensation remained. But the princess did not come, instead, she told "you are very innocent, son of the Risi (Risi Kumar)." The sensation remained.



Then in frustration he saw to the princess. She was laughing Raikva became fascinated to her laughter. He asked her "Do you laugh at me Shubha? Had I done something ridiculous?" Jabala replied. "No, Risikumar. You are the divine light. It is impossible to get a heart like you. But Risikumar, how do you feel to see at me?"

Raikva said that 'air is the cause of everything. In you, in me, in the whole world it is air which is doing everything. The life-air in me has become active (restless) to see you. I am feeling a tempest blowing within me. I do not know where it will blow me. But I am blowing with it. It is forcing my internal life-air to insert in you. My life - force has become restless. I never knew this power of the air. I am getting new light to see you. But the cause of light is air." Jabala requested Raikva for a pause and suggested that she thinks that what is air in the view of Raikva is perhaps the same what yagnavalka said ATMA or soul. Thus he should think in this direction. Raikva was so hypnotised that he agreed to think. At the same time, Jabala saw some men coming and requested Raikva to hide himself in a lonely place, so that people could not know that they were talking in a lonely place. Raikva could not understand the hurry of Jabala but he followed her instructions and Jabala went home with her

men. Raikva became sad. He went near the broken bullock cart, removed it from mud, spend three days and three nights near that cart in the hope of getting any news of her. But nobody came to take the cart. Then Raikva brought that cart to the place his Shubha was sitting and began to meditate under its' shadow. The sensation in his back remained. He usually rubbed it to soothe. But it remained. Time passed. The SIDDHI of Raikva spread. One day the GURU of Jabala's father came to Raikva and said to see the ailing Jabala. Jabala had become ill in the eyes of her family after coming from the accident. She became silent and pensive. She was not laughing like usual. She was not happy also. Doctors came and went. No body was able to detect the cause of her illness and Jabala was not saying anything to anybody. And Audambarayan, the GURU of Janshruti and the guardian of Jabala, at last came to take the help of Raikva. Raikva listened every thing and said bluntly that he cannot help him, he does not know anything, he is himself very worried and searching his GURU Shubha to solve his problems 'please do not waste my time. If you get a woman like subha she can help you. I have many work' and he began his meditation. He was rubbing his back during his conversation with Audambarayan. People told Audambarayan that MUNI is a great SIDDHA. There is

no need to mention one's griet, he knows everything. Thus he should not worry. The next day Raikva told him politely that he is sorry for his bluntness but he really does not know anything. Only Shubha knows. Then he began to concentrate but he could not succeed. Then he decided to discover his GURU.

In the process of his discovery of Subha, he came in contact of another woman Ritambhara, the wife of Aausasthi Muni. She listened his story and adopted him as her son. Aausasthi accepted her decision and Raikva was initiated there by both Ritambhara and Aausasthi. Ritambhara told Raikva that his sensation is not due to any sin rather it is the result of a powerful unconscious desire in him. And Raikva was right that only shubha can remedy it. 'You should know that deep within you is the desire to get Shubha. And it is reflected in your sensation. It will be cured you should not worry.'



Aausasthi told Raikva that only meditation is not sufficient, SATSANG or conversation with knowledgeable is also essential to correct one's weaknesses and limitations. The lonely meditation is not a great thing. The world is full of misery, poverty and bad manners. People are full of sorrow. One should go among them and try to remove their misery. It is

the real TAP or meditation. The same soul pervades everywhere thus one should not ignore the sorrow of others for the cause of lonely meditation. He taught Raikva that the company of good men, the study of good books, strong belief in truth and the service of the humble and needy is the real DHARMA. He advised Raikva to become the full man. He called Raikva to fulfill all four PURUSHARTHA-DHARMA, ARTH, KAMA and MOKSHA by suggesting that the first three are means and the fourth is the end. One should follow DHARMA while earning ARTHA (economy) and doing KAMA (sex, marriage). He told Raikva that since he has crossed BRAHMACHARYA, the time has come to enter the GRIHASTHA - (married life). He explained that people enter GRIHASTHA ASHRAM by marriage. Through the medium of marriage male and female get perfection as well as the greatest goal of the world, love (PP-51-57).

Again, he told Raikva that there is one truth and one energy which pervades the whole world. However, this whole truth has many dimensions and one can reach the whole truth by taking any dimension as the starting point. He said that in his opinion every body has his own way to truth and it is not essential that every body follows the same path. If one follows any path

honestly according to one's nature (sva-bhava), he can reach to the whole truth (p. 78). He told Raikva that his inclination is towards the PRIYA-BRAHMA and he can get THE BRAHMA through the PRIYA (love) form of the BRAHMA. In other words, the SVA-BHAVA of Raikva is love and he can encounter absolute truth through the path of love (p.80).

It was also the suggestion of Ritambhara that his desire (for subha) is neither wrong nor a hurdle in the way to absolute truth. Because human beings are essentially desireous and ones decision is influenced by one's desires and one does one's duty (karma) according to one's decision and he gets the reward according to his duty ----- PRAN MANA, INDRIYA, SHARIR, they are our means & one should not ignore or suppress them. Rather one should make them the means to the absolute end. Therefore, there is no harm in making shubha, THE LOVE-BRAHMA, as the means to the BRAHMA.

However, the main difference between Aausasthi and Ritambhara is that if he is a great scholar, a more knowledgeable man than her she is more related to the society of common men and women than him. But both

recognise the importance of the other. They are complement to each other. They are the most ideal husband-wife, a perfect embodiment of two body and one self . Thus, he underlies the importance of FOLK CULTURE and she helps the FOLK PEOPLE. She underlies the IMPORTANCE OF INCLINATION in the discovery of absolute truth and he integrates it in the well-knit philosophy. He meditates and She sings. And both husband wife initiates Raikva in the vedic world-view. When his preparations for Grihasthi is completed,, Ritambhara arranges VIVAH of Raikva with Jabala but Raikva insists on UDWAH. The difference between VIVAH and UDWAH is that in VIVAH sexual relationship is a must, because the aim of VIVAH is said begetting of the sons in particular and children in general. But in UDWAH it is not essential. In UDWAH, the husband-wife live more like friends than usual husband-wife and both aim to enrich the other for the attainment of the absolute truth.

Just before his marriage, Raikva borrowed that broken cart from Jabala and after repairing that he used that cart in the service of the needy people. It is symbolic of the personal love taking the form of social love.

Thus we see that in this novel, Raikva, a man has been presented as a raw natural being full of potentiality who has been transformed by women (Jabala and Ritambhara) as a cultural being. Aausasthi comes only as the symbol of post-vedic Hinduism, otherwise, it was Ritambhara who adopts Raikva and she anticipates all the arguments of Aausasthi. Her adoption of Raikva as well as her doing the social or public work places her more in the category of culture than her husband who appears as the private or the super-culture (spiritual) than culture *per se*. Thus instead of dictotomy, in this novel, we find trichotomy where we can equate

1. Raikva with NATURE (full of potentiality)
2. Jabala and Ritambhara with *culture* in the full sociological sense of the term.
3. Aausasthi with *superculture or spiritual who*.  
mediates between the two.

But as husband-wife Aausasthi and Ritambhara and Jabala and Raikva can be termed complements to each other, the human embodiment of the Ardhanarishwar concept which came into being in the post-vedic society.

The first encounter of Raikva and Jabala looks very similar, in essence, to the encounter of Shankaracharya

with Bharati - both called their first lady in youth goddesses and even after knowing the other fully-the goddess form remained. Shankar made Bharati, the goddess of wisdom in reality and he took only Mandon as his disciple and not Bharati. It is not logical to accept that the same Bharati who was living with Mandon for so many years and who presided over the debate as a judge as well as the wife of Mandon become Saraswati in reality. Rather Shankar made her a goddess either because he did not want to make an order for nuns like the Buddha and had he not made her goddess she could have demanded discipleship with her husband who became a monk after the defeat ; or Shankar considered her superior to him and he respected her like goddess Bharati.

In the same way, Raikva remained a devotee of the goddess Shubha till the end . His insistence on UDWAH against VIVAH testifies it. In UDWAH, sexual relationship is not essential and it is possible that Raikva remained a devotee to his goddess, debating with her and thus making her the PRIYA-BRAHMA until the last breath. However, it is a hypothesis and we cannot be very sure about it. However, from the conversation of Raikva and Aushasthi as well as Raikva and Pitambhara



it is evident that women, sex, married life, desire, etc. were not conceived as evil as in christianity or Buddhism. Here mere asceticism was not recognised as superior to GRIHASTI. Rather GRIHASTI was glorified. So was woman as wife and mother as well as in her own respect as a person women were learned and they debated with men (e.g. Ritambhara and Jabala) they moved freely and alone (e.g. Jabala) without their husband and his permission (e.g. Ritambhara). They adopted son and daughter on their own and their husbands accepted (eg. Ritambhara). In marriage the voice of ladies including the bride herself was counted (eg. Ritambhara, Jabala).

Again, love was glorified both as one of the medium of the absolute truth (Priya - Brahma) and as the greatest goal of the world - and this love was rooted in woman (e.g. Jabala). Thus, we conclude that ANAMDAS KA POTHHA attests our thesis in the second chapter that womanhood and woman got a unique construction in Hindu India which cannot be studied by the sociological parameters of equating woman with nature.

## CHAPTER - 5

## CONCLUSION

At the end of the study let me summarize what I wanted to do and what I have done :

## I.

I began my introduction by emphasizing the need to reconstruct sociological concepts to include women as the equal partner of men in the construction of human culture. I tried to underline the fact that every culture is primarily shaped by the relationship man and woman have with its world - view i.e. the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity in the 'deep structure' of a culture. Every aspect of culture is a testimony to my above assertion.

Then, I emphasized another fact that man and woman or masculinity and femininity has not been conceptualized by every culture at all times in the same way. And if we employ one standard concept on every culture our analysis will be usually faulty. It does not mean that, we cannot have a universal language for sociology, but before we can have such a language we have to discover the language of

particular culture under study. It is not a new argument rather it is the standard anthropological argument which came into being as the resolution to the 'emic' and 'etic' approaches. In the Indian case, it has been strongly emphasized by Dumont, in his *Homo Heirarchicus* (1970). However, it has not been so successful for a civilization as it is claimed for a primitive culture. Because, without completing the subjective world - view of the culture under study - people began to impose sociological categories on subjective meaning by posing alien questions and employing standardized criteria on the collection of data. Thus, the very basis of study - data - became inauthentic. It remained neither 'emic' nor 'etic' and we landed up with a caricature of civilization. The most obvious example of this sort, in my view, is *Homo Heirarchiches* of Dumont. His methodology, as explained, has been reasonably good but his data is not impartial. He imposed his ideas, categories and relations on Hinduism in such a way that we got a caricature of Hinduism. It is, however, interesting to see that in the evaluation of Dumont people have, generally not differentiated between his claimed approach (which has definitely

been a development over the existing approach of contemporary Indian sociologist) and his interpretation of Hinduism. And the result has been either total rejection of Dumont or his total approval with some reservations. Thus, I emphasized the need of impartial conceptualization of the data (Indian Society) as the pre-requisite of an authentic study of it.

Moreover, I pressed the need of broadening sociological concepts by taking man and woman as the equal half in the basic relationships of a culture. It is not a demand for including women's point of view with the existing dominant view of men, rather, it is a demand to broaden the concept of culture per se as the uniquely human creation which takes various forms by altering the relationship of man and woman in the process of making the 'deep' structures of various societies. This is not possible unless we have data of every important civilization conceptualized as a meaningful whole. Thus, I conclude that before a sociology for or of India we need an authentic ethnography of Indian tradition/traditions through ages. And then under the light of a new concept of culture and cultural concepts we have to make a

sociology of or for India.

## II.

In the second chapter of this study, I tried to prove the gender bias in western sociology which I demonstrated to be rooted in the Biblical tradition of the west. I ended with the conclusion that woman as a person is missing in the main-stream sociology and there is a need to broaden its concept of culture. Thus, implicitly I proved my thesis that sociological concepts of today are not useful in the study of Indian tradition which conceptualized man-woman relationship in a different way than it is found in the Biblical west.

## III.

The third chapter is an attempt to reconstruct Indian tradition through the idiom of women as data. I have a feeling that so far the study of Indian Culture has been revolving around the *Hinduism thesis* of Weber and Dumont and the dominant mode has been to conceptualize Hinduism as the other worldly religion. The criticism of this view does not try to replace it, rather, some worldly features are added in it. But, here, in the third chapter I have tried to prove that Hinduism

has essentially been a worldly religion with *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha* as the goal and married life as the most ideal life - making husband and wife as a complement to each other and man and woman as the two wheels of the cart of Hindu culture.

#### IV.

The fourth chapter is intimately related with the third chapter and they should be taken as parts to the one whole (ethnography of Indian tradition) I have tried to present here. The meaning of third chapter is attested by the fourth chapter.

I have taken *the novel* as a source of data following the path of Burns and Burns (1973) and T.N. Madan (1987). I agree with M. Berger (1978) that in dealing with human actions and their underlying motives at the most general level, the social scientist has not yet succeeded in going beyond the truly great novelist. And Hazari Prasad Dwivedi is not only a great novelist of Hindi, but he has been a noted historian of Indian tradition also. Moreover, the novel under study is based on reliable sources of historical

importance and critics have claimed with approval the authenticity of Dwivedi's creation of upanisdic Hinduism in this novel. Thus, the novel under study has aided us in the discovery or reconstruction of Indian tradition.

Thus, it is clear that the novel is not focal point of the study rather it has been used as illustration of the sociological reasoning. Therefore, one may question the appropriateness of the title of the dissertation. But as the said author of the novel Mr. Anamdas (a man without name) says what is there in the name ! The important thing is the message. Nonetheless, the title is not without significance: the message of the study is that conceptualization of woman in particular and man - woman relationship in general is a prerequisite of the proper understanding<sup>of</sup> culture and this study is an attempt to conceptualize women in India with the aid of Anamdas Ka Potha - therefore, I have titled the study as "*Social Construction of Women in Anamdas Ka Potha : a socioligical study*".

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