



ISSN: 3049-2017

IJMH 2025; 2(3): 73-77

© 2025 IJMH

www.themultijournal.com

Received: 23-06-2025

Accepted: 27-06-2025

Publish : 28-06-2025

Dr. Anilkumar SAssociate Professor,
Govt Sanskrit college,
Pattambi, Palakkad,
Kerala**Laws Against Women in Manusmirti****Dr. Anilkumar S, Harsha. N, Dr. Sheena.V.J**

Manusmirti is a book that has been used as the basis of rule of law since ancient times. The literature that exists in the religious texts also has a significant influence on the people. The philosophical text Manusmirti has been instrumental in shaping ideas around the world. A review of the Manusmirti reveals that it describes the family and the gender-centric dharmas of its members. Aryanization happened and Manusmirti was written after the Sangha period when women were given the freedom and respect they deserved. Manusmirti aimed not only at the comfortable life of the Hindu people, but also at all sections of the people. The importance of Manusmirti in today's context needs to be discussed.

It must be said that human memory has made a mistake in some conceptual formations. In today's democratic India, it is not wrong to criticize some of the human memory. Dr. B. R Ambedkar was a person who opposed Manusmirti. He says about Manusmirti that it is against humanity, equality and justice. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the Manusmirti holds the highest position among the Smritis and provides the precise framework for morality. It is true that this work reflects the exact form of culture and civilization that once existed. Denigration of non-Brahmin castes, Panchamans and women is seen as a lack of human consciousness.

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः।

यतैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः॥¹

Although it is said in the 3rd chapter the woman is shown low level in the 9th and 5th chapter of Manusmirti. Manusmirti talks to us about salvation and spiritual purpose. Family life is given priority in the book. The Manusmirti focused on prescribing domestic rituals, asserting that the Garhasthya was the most important of the ashrams and that the others should belong to it. The Chaturvarnya system and the Chaturaashrama system discussed in the manusmirti were taken from the trayi sthapana chapter of Arthashastra. The Manusmirti, which is the legal code of caste persecutions (Brahmin, Vyshya..etc) and the basis of Hindu laws, was burnt in a public place on December 25, 1927 under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. It is doubtful whether there is another book in the world that has been criticized as much as Manusmirti. In Manusmirti, Manu is the one who does not even consider women and subordinates as human beings. Therefore it can be said that Manusmirti is the meaning of discrimination. When we go down to the depths of Manusmirti, we can understand how authentic Manusmirti once was. Manusmirti is the most important book that even the Constitution-making body of India relied on while framing the constitution. Manusmirti is prepared based on the Vedas. But why this one work had to receive so much criticism? The most important reason for that is that we can clearly see his aversion to women in the laws he wrote.

It is necessary to say that the antic- women laws revealed in the Manusmirti caused tarnish the book. The media shows that there were protests against Manusmirti in Tamil Nadu even during this last Corona pandemic period. The reason behind the protest was that women's lives are not valued and women are seen as prostitutes. Then on

Correspondence:**Dr. Anilkumar S**Associate Professor,
Govt Sanskrit college,
Pattambi, Palakkad,
Kerala

International Women's Day (March 8) they protested by burning Manusmriti. Manusmriti is the basis of the four-color system by classifying people as Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. In the fifth chapter, Manu also explains how women should live. In Manusmriti it is marked that a woman should be protected by her father during her childhood, her husband during her youth and her son during her old age (5.148). This rule prevailed in India for centuries. Dr. Ambedkar must have felt that such a book should be burnt. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar gave back to the Indian people the Constitution of India which guarantees equal justice to all irrespective of caste, religion, caste, gender, and language it guarantees the right of every Indian citizen to live with dignity and freedom. The struggle of B. R. Ambedkar may be treated of the best practice of the Indian people in the birthday of him. The book that was burnt on December 25, 1927 is still firmly in the minds of many people.

It is appropriate to draw an analogy here with women's discourse in the Western world. If we look at European history, throughout history the public sphere has been reserved for men. Meanwhile, women were primarily confined to the domestic sphere. European women did not have special rights to own property or receive an education. Even in the late 19th century, head scarves were compulsory for French women in public. German husbands could also sell their wives. The story of America is not different and women finally got the right to vote in 1920. Even today, every woman lives in the society facing many difficulties. However, Mira Bhai, Rani Lakshmi Bhai and Ahalya Bhai excelled in various fields. The fear of insecurity leads to the isolation and degradation of women as a result of the rise of many undesirable practices such as sati, early marriage and veiling.

The Widow Remarriage Act of 1829, the Female Infanticide Prohibition Act of 1856 and the Sati Control Act of 1872 give the impression that the British were uplifting the women of the country from their primitive ways. However, a "Sati" refers to an ancient Hindu funeral practice where a widow would immolate² herself on her husband's funeral pyre. This practice was prevalent in some parts of India until it was outlawed³ by British colonial authorities in the 19th century due to its perceived cruelty and human rights implications. Careful analysis of the jurisprudence developed by the English courts actually tells a different story. If we are genuinely concerned about the protection and promotion of women's rights in India, we should not study Manusmriti as a legal code. It is wrong to mention women in Manusmriti while arguing about women's rights in the 21st century. Many examples of this have been written in Manusmriti. But on the subject of women, Manu has said-

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः।

यतैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः॥⁴

Apart from this sloka, a few things are the topic of discussion today. The importance of Manusmriti in today's context deserves to be discussed. However, it has to be said that Manusmriti has made a mistake in women-related issues. In today's democratic India, it cannot be said that it is wrong to criticize some of the women-related issues that Manu has mentioned. It is a fact that the exact form of culture and civilization that once existed is reflected in human memory. Even so, Manusmriti is something that does not advance women's freedom. Verses 169 in the 5th chapter of Manusmriti describes the dharma of women. Manusmriti propagates the attitude of controlling the woman's essence.

अर्थस्य संग्रहे चैनां व्यये चैवं नियोजयेत्।

शैचे धर्मेऽन्नपक्त्यां च पारिणाद्यस्य वेक्षणो॥⁵

Manu says the main role of women should be to keep money, spend, clean the house, and oversee the home appliances etc. It has to be said that Manu was trying to destroy the woman's personality and keep them inside the house. Manu considered the measure of femininity to be obedient to men and a women's ability to look after the home and family planning. The third chapter deals with the male-centered marriage system. Even when talking about the eight types of marriage, there is only discussion about how a man should choose a woman. Manu does not specify the criteria for a woman to choose her own husband.

ब्रह्मो देवस्तथैवार्थः प्राजापत्यस्तथासुरः।

गान्धर्वो राक्षसश्चैव पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधमः॥⁶

The different types of marriage are Brahma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rāksasa and the most inferior types is Piśāca. Acārya Manu has prohibited superior Brahmins to get married in the Asura and Piśāca method. He has approved the Asura, Gandharva, Rāksasa and Piśāca methods of marriage for Kṣatriya. He has approved Asura, Gandharva and Piśāca method for the Vaiśya and Sudra castes.

➤ ब्राह्म विवाहः

आच्छाद्य चार्चयित्वा च श्रुतिशीलवते स्वयम्।

आहूय दानं कन्याय ब्राह्मो धर्मः प्रकीर्तितः॥⁷

The gift of a daughter, after decking her (with costly garments) and honouring (her present of jewels) to a man learned in the Veda and good conduct, whom (the father) himself invites, is called the Brahma rite.

➤ दैव विवाहः

यज्ञे तु वितते सम्यगृत्विजे कर्म कुर्वते।

अलंकृत्य सुतादानं दैवं धर्मः प्रचक्षते॥⁸

The gift of daughter who has been decked with ornaments to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice during the course of its performance they called the Daiva rite.

➤ आर्ष विवाहः

एकं गोमिथुनं द्वे वा वरादादाय धर्मतः।

कन्याप्रदानं विधिवदार्षो धर्मः स उच्यते॥⁹

The father gives away his own daughter to the bridegroom after receiving a couple of cow or two from him – is called Ārsa rite. Here Manu considers the woman as goods only. (Value of the woman is equal to a couple of cow only).

➤ **प्रजापत्य विवाहः**

सहोभौ चरतां धर्ममिति वाचाऽनुभाष्य च।

कन्याप्रदानमभ्यर्च्य प्राजापत्यो विधिः स्मृतः॥¹⁰

When the father gives away his daughter after addressing the couple with the mandate to perform their duties together in pursuit of dharma, artha and kama, this is known as the prājāpatya form of marriage.

➤ **असुर विवाहः**

ज्ञातिभ्यो द्रविणं दत्त्वा कन्यायै चैव शक्तिः।

कन्याप्रदानं स्वाच्छान्द्यादासुरो धर्म उच्यते॥¹¹

When (the bridegroom) receives a maiden, after having given as much wealth as he can afford, to the kinsmen and to the bride herself, according to his own will that is called Āsura rite.

➤ **गान्धर्व विवाहः**

इच्छयाऽन्योन्यसंयोगः कन्यायाश्च वरस्य च।

गान्धर्वः स तु विज्ञेयो मैथुन्यः कामसंभवः॥¹²

The voluntary union of a maiden and her lover one must know (to be) the Gandharva rite, which springs from desire and has sexual intercourse for its purpose.

➤ **राक्षस विवाहः**

हत्वा छित्वा च भित्वा च क्रोशन्तीं रुदतीं गृहात्।

प्रसह्य कन्याहरणं राक्षसो विधिरुच्यते॥¹³

The forcible abduction of a maiden from her home while she cries out and weep after (he kinsmen) have been slain or wounded and (their house) broken open is called the Rāksasa rite.

Here Manu describes a method of marriage which is unheard of in Vedic or secular literature. The said marriage method is against Arshavachana that everyone should follow the path of Dharma only. Saying that there is a way for a man who loves a woman to even marry the parents of the woman he loves by abducting them and marrying them etc. is justifying an eternal mistake. Cruelty is what makes a woman ruthlessly her own in order to fulfill a man's will. Here, without any legal code to listen to the side of the woman or to protect her, it is not acceptable to the feminists, social security advocates, thinking people and the worldly people.

➤ **पैशाच विवाहः**

सुप्तं मत्तां प्रमत्तां वा रहो यत्रोपगच्छति।

स पापिष्ठो विवाहानां पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधमः॥¹⁴

When (a man) by stealth seduces a girl who is sleeping, intoxicated or disordered in intellect, that is the eighth, the most base and sinful rite of the Piśācas. Forcibly marrying a woman is a man-centered marriage. So one

thing we can say for sure is that Manusmriti is an anti-human, anti-woman, demonic and primitive jurisprudence. In this Asura, Rāksasa and piśāca marriage practices are strictly male-centric.

चतुरो ब्राह्मणस्याद्यान्त्रशस्तान्कवयो विदुः।

राक्षसं क्षत्रियस्यैकमासुरं वैश्यशूद्रयोः॥¹⁵

Acārya Manu has prohibited superior Brahmins to get married in the Asura and Piśāca method. He has approved the Asura, Gandharva, Rāksasa and Piśāca methods of marriage for Ksatriya. He has approved Asura, Gandharva and Piśāca method for the Vaiśya and Sudra castes.

ज्ञातिभ्यो द्रविणं दत्त्वा कन्यायै चैव शक्तिः।

कन्याप्रदानं स्वाच्छान्द्यादासुरो धर्म उच्यते॥¹⁶

When (the bridegroom) receives a maiden, after having given as much wealth as he can afford, to the kinsmen and to the bride herself, according to his own will, that is called the Āsura rite.

In short, this type of marriage that Manu said sees the woman as a commodity to be bought by the man is a very objectionable thing. Through this, a woman's personal freedom, freedom of expression and self-respect are considered to be bought at a price by the man. This is unthinkable for a civilized society.

विशीलः कामवृत्तो वा गुणैर्वा परिवर्जितः।

उपचर्यः स्त्रीया साध्व्या सततं देववत्पतिः॥¹⁷

Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife. What logic is there in this?

भार्यायै पूर्वमारिण्यै दत्त्वाग्नीनन्त्यकर्मणि।

पुनर्दारक्रियां कुर्यात्पुनराधानमेव च॥¹⁸

Having thus, at the funeral, given the sacred fires to his wife who dies before him, he may marry again, and again kindle (the fires). Smritikara (Manu) explains in verse (5.168) that.

It is said that a man whose wife has died can remarry. But the same person also says that a woman should not remarry.

नोद्वाहिकेषु मन्त्रेषु नियोगः कीर्त्यते क्वचित्।

न विवाहविधावुक्तं विधवावेदनं पुनः॥¹⁹

In the sacred texts which refer to marriage the appointment (of widows) is now here mentioned, nor is the re-marriage of widows prescribed in the rules concerning marriage. In this concept, the word equality itself disappears and the woman is completely suppressed.

त्रिंशद्वर्षीवहेत्कन्यां हृद्यां द्वादशवार्षिकीम्।

त्र्यष्टवर्षीऽष्टवर्षी वा धर्मे सीदति सत्वरः॥²⁰

A man, aged thirty years, shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him, or a man of twenty-four a girl eight years of age; if (the performance of) his duties would (otherwise) be impeded, (he must marry) sooner.

(5.168) and (9.94) above, the strong misogyny is evident through these two laws. Smritikaran has set a marriage age of 8 years for girls. The rule is that after the age of 8 a man should be married off irrespective of his age and the chances of the girl becoming a widow at a young age is high if an older man marries a relatively younger woman. It is completely anti-feminist to have made the marriage law where the reason for the death of an older man is due to unscientific (sin, omen²¹) and she is not eligible for remarriage, but the widower must perform fire rituals and marry immediately after the death of his wife.

The duplicity in the Manusmriti is that he did not follow- what was said to be, “यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः”²² and made anti-women laws. What was decreed for men by the Freedom Act was to be applied to men as well. As a form of struggle, people like Manusmriti. Ambedkar has come under fire because of anti-women attitudes like this, the caste system and various punishments based on caste. But our constitution has corrected these mistakes and provided a law that is acceptable to all irrespective of sex, caste, colour, language and region. In Manusmriti, a widow is given rules that a man who has lost his wife does not have. How much equality is given to the society of men and women can be understood from these few things.

Smritikara has fixed the age of marriage for girls at the age of eight and should be married before Ritumati (minor). From this every woman is led into male servitude from childhood and Smritikaran approves of child marriage. The legal age of marriage in India is currently 18 years for women and 21 years for men. This is stipulated by the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006, which amended the previous legislation and raised the minimum age for marriage for both genders.

However, the legal landscape regarding marriage in India is complex and nuanced, with several aspects to consider: Current Minimum Age:

- ❖ Women: 18 years (as per Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006)
- ❖ Men: 21 years (as per Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006)

कामं तु क्षपयेद्देहं पुष्पमूलफलैः शुभैः।

न तु नामापि गृह्णीयात्पत्यौ प्रेते परस्य तु॥²³

आसीतामरणात्क्षान्ता नियता ब्रह्मचारिणी।

यो धर्म एकपत्नीनां काङ्क्षन्तीं तमनुत्तमम्॥²⁴

It is specified that a widowed woman should always remain confined to the house, observe fasts throughout her life, consume flowers and fruits and deplete her body, and should not utter the Parapurusha name. Here too, women's lives are said to be worthless, women are oppressed and male supremacy is established.

बालया वा युवत्या वा वृद्धया वाऽपि योषिता।

न स्वातन्त्र्येण कर्त्तव्यं किञ्चित्कार्यं गृहेऽपि॥²⁵

बाल्ये पितुर्वशे तिष्ठेत्पाणिग्राहस्य यौवने।

पुत्राणां भर्तरी प्रेते न भजेत्स्त्री स्वतन्त्रताम्॥²⁶

In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent (5.147). The verse becomes clear. What do we more say that where a woman has her own house is her father's house or her husband's house every woman is destined to live there and this is a clear declaration of patriarchy. In short, Manu himself strictly states in the legal code that a woman should not have an independent existence or an opinion of her own. Completely here too Manu tries to show women as incompetent and makes it clear that woman should never live independently.

वैवाहिको विधिः स्त्रीणां संस्कारो वैदिकः स्मृतः।

पतिसेवा गुरौ वासो गृहार्थोऽग्निपरिक्रिया॥²⁷

Manu even says that for a woman serving her husband is equivalent to studying the Vedas. Manu makes it clear that women should do marriage, patisevā (Serve your husband) house work instead of Vedic study. Through this, Manu asserts that there is no need for Vedic study and instead of Vedic study, Purusha Sevā (serve your husband,) is to be done. This is also a denial of scripture study for women.

नास्ति स्त्रीणां क्रिया मन्त्रैरिति धर्मे व्यवस्थितिः।

निरिन्द्रिया ह्यमन्त्राश्च स्त्रियोऽनुत्तमिति स्थितिः॥²⁸

It is scientifically proven that women do not have caste rituals with mantras. It is said that women are impure because they have no mental strength and no magic power. It also makes it clear that women are not eligible to study. Such a backward concept prohibits women from studying. A society that denies women education is full of darkness. Because of laws like this.

The woman is to be sold and abandoned is not befitting a civilized society. It is woman who actually creates and controls a generation. Woman is power. They have shown that a woman who controls the family and the generation can do things including the governance of the country. But when the opportunities of knowledge were blocked before them, many capable women were pushed to the back of the society without education. Abhijna Vachana says that education is the most important of all wealth.

पिता रक्षति कौमारे भर्ता रक्षति यौवने।

रक्षन्ति स्थविरे पुत्रा न स्त्री स्वातन्त्र्यमर्हति॥²⁹

This is the biggest anti-woman remark in human memory and it has also created more controversies. It is this sloka that prepared the pyre for Manu Smriti. Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence. Here too the identity of the woman goes without cost. In Manusmriti woman is enslaved and treated as a monosexual machine. Anyone can be convinced of that by reading the rules described in the fifth chapter and the ninth chapter.

प्रजनानर्थं स्त्रियः सृष्टाः संतानार्थं च मानवाः।

तस्मात्साधारणो धर्मः श्रुतौ पत्न्या सहोदितः॥³⁰

Manu states that woman was created for pregnancy and that if a woman fails to bear children, she is treated as machi (Infertile) and can be replaced. It is Manu who enslaves and demeans women to such an extent that he says that women are the ones to be worshipped. What is the relevance of saying that women should be worshiped? Even when a woman is said to be worshipped, she is worshiped with clothes, ornaments, food and even there her becomes worthless.

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः।

यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः॥³¹

Smritikaran is teaching women only about sin and punishment. Manu nowhere in this book mentions that women should be educated and made self-sufficient. From Manu's point of view womanhood is to live as a clan woman who loves her husband and forgets her own affairs and lives for her husband and children. Manu pretends that an ideal woman is one who controls mind, body and speech. Such is the false influence of a philosophical book like Manusmriti, which is still believed by a large section of people. The reference to woman's world as home and her sole purpose is to protect the home makes Manusmriti critical. Below are some of the lines that seem to be among the most blatantly anti-feminist remarks in human memory.

मृते भर्त्तरि साध्वी स्त्री ब्रह्मचर्ये व्यवस्थिता।

स्वर्गं गच्छत्यपुत्रापि यथा ते ब्रह्मचारिणः॥³²

Which suggests that a woman whose husband dies can attain heaven by remaining elibate. This viewpoint reflects a historical context where women's roles and rights were often dictated by patriarchal norms, emphasizing celibacy and widowhood as virtuous states. This can be seen as an example of philosophical and theological anti-feminism, as it restricts women's autonomy and reinforces traditional gender roles that prioritize male authority and control over female sexuality and life choices.

Although it is said that the man should protect the woman, it is easy to understand that protection means the woman's mind and control. The different justice available to men and women illustrates the flaw in this text. It is no wonder that many things seem odd to a reader with the advanced thinking of the 21st century. The subordination of the wife and the dominance of the man as the husband are evident in the book. It is impossible to correct the human memory that sees women as mere objects without character and identity even when they are worshipped. But its code of conduct definitely needs to be re-read. Manu praised the Brahmin highly and did not think that the Shudra had any right. Not to mention outsiders colour. Although women are praised in many places, Manu wholeheartedly accepted the supremacy of men. For this reason, it is impossible to imagine a life in

today's democratic system that follows the instructions of Manusmriti.

Conclusion

This study 'Laws against woman in Manusmriti' reveals the various anti-lady saying of Manu in his Manusmriti. Each and every verses against woman is found out and presented in this research paper. This type of studies are relevant in this era. It gives answer for why the women are treated as slaves in the olden days. They were not allowed for education especially for higher education. So one thing we can say for sure is that Manusmriti is an anti- human, anti-woman, demonic and primitive jurisprudence. That is why Ambedkar burned Manusmriti.

Bibliography

1. Kautilya Arthashastra, T.Ganapati Shastri, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Oriental Publishers, Delhi.
2. Manusmriti of Manu.
3. Yajnavalkyasmriti of Yajnavalkya.

Foot note

1. Manu:3.56
2. To kill somebody or to destroy something by burning them; to offer somebody /something as a sacrifice.
3. To make something illegal.
4. Manu:3.56
5. Manu:9.11
6. Manu:3.21
7. Manu:3.27
8. Manu:3.28
9. Manu:3.29
10. Manu:3.30
11. Manu:3.31
12. Manu:3.32
13. Manu:3.33
14. Manu:3.34
15. Manu:3.24
16. Manu:3.31
17. Manu: 5.154
18. Manu:5.168
19. Manu:9.65
20. Manu: 9.94
21. A sign of something that will happen in the future.
22. Manu: 3.56
23. Manu:5.157
24. Manu: 5.158
25. Manu:5.147
26. Manu:5.148
27. Manu. 2.67
28. Manu :9.18
29. Manu:9.3
30. Manu:9.96
31. Manu:3.56
32. Manu5.160