PART - B

Practical

Applications
THE THIRD CHAPTER

SAMSKRĀRA-S

All the objects and human beings do require some or the other kind of refinement for the utility of oneself and others. There are three states for all the living and non-living objects. Those three stages are prakṛti (natural or original state), vikṛti (deteriorated condition) and saṁskṛti (refined form). Almost every object or being, in its journey of existence, undergoes a natural state. This state is neither good nor bad. It is basically neutral which can either go down or get elevated for higher purpose and use. That is the reason to refer a child as god incarnated. Even though no social rules and regulations, systems and customs are followed, at this state, they are basically free from sins. All the natural changes which take place in physical and mental stages are considered as prakṛti. Birth, childhood, youth, old age and even death are very much natural. All of them happen according to the natural laws on which we humans have no control. Here, nature is superior and every object and being is nothing but a devoted servant willing to take orders to abide by.

This natural state is a junction point which paves two different ways. If the natural state of existence is left unattended or untrained, it leads to deterioration. This down fall is called vikṛti, it is called so, only because the purpose of birth was not fulfilled. One of the main objectives of human life is get better in evolutionary journey, called human-life. If such a purpose is not served in the whole lifetime, then the life is said to be a set back.

The word saṁskāra is used in the sense of purification. It means religious refining rites and ceremonies for purifying body, mind and intellect of an individual, so that he may be an asset to the society. It is regarded as producing a peculiar indefinable kind of merit for the man who undergoes such saṁskāra-s. Even though Āśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra, Baudhāyana-grhya-sūtra and others vary in the exact number of saṁskāra-s, sixteen are the most popular and accepted by one and
all. The entire sāṃskāra-s, on the basis of their nature and similarity, are grouped under five heads i.e. (a) the pre-natal sāṃskāra-s, (b) the sāṃskāra-s of childhood, (c) the educational sāṃskāra-s, (d) the marriage sāṃskāra-s, and (e) funeral sāṃskāra-s. This forgoing study focuses only on educational sāṃskāra-s (Vidyārāmbha, Upanayana, Vedārāmbha, Keśānta and Samāvartana) as they carry significance in relation to the chosen topic. It does not mean that the other sāṃskāra-s are insignificant. The scope is limited for educational sāṃskāra-s.

Creating value for oneself and society was an integral part of sāṃskāra-s. Contributing to the well-being and development of society is an extension of sāṃskāra-s at individual level.

**The Purpose Of Sāṃskāra-s:** It is believed that the nature consists of two energies (superhuman influences) which are potent enough for good or evil consequences. The positive energies are regarded as gods, while the negative forces are called demons. It is important to remove the hostile influences and attract beneficial ones, so that man may grow and prosper without external hindrances and receive timely directions and help from gods (unseen forces). This belief had primary influence on all sāṃskāra-s. For removing the unfavorable influences, the evil-spirits were offered praise, oblations and food, so that they may return satisfied with offerings, without causing trouble. The householder also invokes gods (good-spirits) to drive away foul influences and to help him face difficulties. In order to attract favourable influences from divine energy, there were a number of mantra-s used to make them happy.

It was also a great tool of self-refinement. 'By birth, everyone is a Śūdra, by performing the sāṃskāra-s, he becomes Brāhma (dvija), by reading the sacred Veda-s he becomes vipra, and by realizing the God he attains the highest state called Brāhmaṇa.'

492 As a result of these practices, one may gain cattle, progeny, etc.
long life, wealth and prosperity, strength and intellect. Besides all of them, the purpose of performing sāṃskāra is to share one’s happiness and sorrow with other. It evokes social responsibility and helps individual to multiply the joy and minimize the sorrow. In modern context, it increases social interface and status.

The sāṃskāra-s cover the full span of life, and they even try to influence and impress the individual after his death through the cult of soul. They enable in consciously moulding the character of individual at all significant stages of growth. The Upanayana and other educational sāṃskāra-s formed the great cultural furnace where the emotions, desires and will of the boy were melted and shaped and he was prepared for an austere but a rich and cultural life. The various sacrifices and vows prescribed for a householder were introduced to remove selfishness clinging to one’s individuality and make him realize that he is the part and parcel of the whole community. By making sāṃskāra-s compulsory, the set of social norms and collective values are established without direct instructions. They impart gradual training in spiritualism. To put in a nutshell, sāṃskāra-s help in achieving puruṣārtha-s for individual and collective good.

1. **Vidyāraṁbha (Initiation To Primary Education)**

As the name signifies, it is a kind of marking the formal beginning of education. Though the child started learning from its birth, it is required to make the process much more refined and better. This sāṃskāra is also known in other terms like akṣarāraṁbha, akṣarasvikāra and akṣaralekhana. All these synonymous terms affirm the beginning of formal education through learning alphabets. It is preceded by Upanayana sāṃskāra which is of higher significance. It is marked the beginning of primary education. Hence, this sāṃskāra is a preparation of mind for learning. It was performed at the age of five or six. The proper time of performance was from the month of mārgaśirsha to jyestha. The months from āshādha to
kārtika, when lord Vishnu is supposed to be sleeping, were prohibited for this saṁskāra-s.493

When the sun is in the northern hemisphere (uttarāyana punyakāla), an auspicious day was fixed for performing the saṁskāra. In the beginning, the child is required to bathe and decorated. After worshipping lord Vināyaka, Saraswatī, Nārayana and Lakṣmi, and family deities, the sūtrakāra-s were paid respects. Homa is also performed. Later, the ācārya facing towards east performs aksarārambha to the child who is faced to west. It consists of writing and reading both. Saffron and other substance were scattered on a silver plank and letters were written with a golden pen. But as it was possible in the case of rich only, letters may be written on rice with any pen specially made for this occasion. A few mantra-s were written on. Then the child worships ācārya who makes it to read thrice what is already written. Having read, the child presented cloths and ornaments to the ācārya and made three circumambulations (pradakṣina) for gods. The Brāhmin-s were entertained and honoured for having conducted the saṁskāra and blessed the child.494

2. **Upanayana (Initiation To Higher Education)**

The term Upanayana is referred to the initiation of a child by a ācārya into sacred lore. It is the rite through which the child is taken to the ācārya. It is a saṁskāra by which a person becomes dvija (second born). It has been attached so much significance that the life is said to be gained. Yajñavalkya regards the reading of the Veda-s the highest object of the Upanayana: ‘the ācārya, having initiated the pupil with the Mahāvyāhriti-s, should teach him Veda-s and the rules of

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493 आपातदृष्टहस्तदृष्टवाय वधनं कुर्ले हि:। मित्रं त्यजति कारिकाः ततो: संयुज्यते हि:॥ (मि.पृ.-vol.1-pg.32)

494 Mārkandeya Purāṇa. Śodaśa Samskāra Vidhi-authored by Bhimasena Sharma.

495 उप समीपे अचार्यादिनों वद्यानानं तत्तीति: नर्णं प्राणमुपविनम॥ (बा.)
According to Aśṭamī-धर्मसूत्र, the Upanayana is meant for learning.\footnote{496} According to general rule, Upanayana sāṁskāra of a Brahman boy should be performed in the eighth year, that of a Kṣatriya in the eleventh and that of a Vaiśya in the twelfth.\footnote{498} Optional ages prescribed for securing special merits. Mahārṣi Manu says ‘the Upanayana of a Brāhmin child desirous of holy luster should be performed in the fifth year, that of a Kṣatriya child desirous of power, in the sixth year and that of a Vaiśya child desirous of wealth in the eighth year.’\footnote{499} An early age was preferred and the earliest possible age for Upanayana was fixed at five. The mind of the antevāsī is still receptive and he may get sufficient time to study. The last limit for the performance of Upanayana sāṁskāra in the case of a Brāhmin antevāsī was sixteen, of the Kṣatriya twenty two and of the Vaiśya twenty four.\footnote{500} The underlying purpose was to enlist all the possible young men of the community and stamp them with the peculiar culture of the race. The Upanayana must be performed some times before the marriage of the twice born.

One, who in spite of wide options allowed by the scriptures would not abide by the rules, was regarded fallen from the status of a twice-born. According to Mahārṣi Manu, ‘if after the last prescribed time people remain uninitiated, they become vrātya-s, fallen from Savitṛ and discarded by the community.’\footnote{501} Apart from Śūdra-s, all the others are considered twice-born.\footnote{502} All their rites from the very conception (garbhādhāna) to death (śrādhā) are performed with the recitation of

\footnote{496} उपनीय गुहा: किष्ठ्य महावादातिपुरुषकम्। वेदस्माप्येवें शौचांपारस्विनित्वं विश्वेत।॥ (वा.स्म.-१-१५)

\footnote{497} उपनिषत्विद्याप्यविद्या संकल्पति दिव्यि। (आप.प.सू.)

\footnote{498} गमीठेश्वरे वातंद्रे ब्रह्मण्यपन्तपन्तम्। राहामेकादशे चैव विवाहे यथाकुलम्।॥ (वा.स्म.-१-१७)।

\footnote{499} ब्रह्मचर्यकामस्य सर्वेनिष्ठय विश्वेत्॥ (सू.)

\footnote{500} आवीशादात आ द्रविष्रात आचाचिताश्च वस्ततात्। ब्रह्मचरिकावतो विवाहमात्रां विवाहापि: पर॥ (वा.स्म.-१-२७)

\footnote{501} अत उद्भवे त्रयोपेते पदाघातसंस्कृताः। सावित्रीपतिता मात्र भवत्याविभागिता:॥ (सू.)

\footnote{502} They are entitled to perform the ceremonies of sāṁskāra-s. After this upanayana sāṁskāra, they are said to be born again.
mantra-s.\textsuperscript{503} It implies that those who violate social norms were subjected to difficult impositions.

An auspicious time was selected for the performance of Upanayana. Different seasons were meant for different communities. The Upanayana of Brāhmin was performed in spring, of a Kṣatriya in summer, of a Vaiśya in autumn and of a rathakāra in the rainy season.\textsuperscript{504} These different seasons were symbolical of the temperament and occupation of different tastes. The moderation of spring symbolized the moderate life of a Brāhmin; the heat of summer represented the fervor of a Kṣatriya; autumn, when the commercial life of ancient Bhārata reopened after the rainy season, suggested the wealth and prosperity of a Vaiśya; and the easy time of rains indicated facility for a chariot-maker. The bright half of the month was preferred, as it was delightful time for any social function and its brightness was symbolical of knowledge and learning. Before the actual ceremony took place, a canopy was set up under which the saṁskāra would be performed.\textsuperscript{505}

On the previous day of Upanayana ceremony, many sacrifices (homa-s) were performed. The next morning the mother and the child ate together for the last time. It marked the end of irregular life of the child. The chudākarma (shaving the head) is performed, followed by the bath. The boy was given a kaupina (a piece of cloth). From now on, he has to observe the social decorum and to maintain his own dignity and self-respect. Then the boy went near to ācārya and announced his intention to become a brahmācāri: 'I have come here seeking studentship. I shall be your antevāsa.\textsuperscript{506} Having accepted his request, the ācārya offered him clothes with the verse, 'as Brhaspati put the garment of immortality on Indra, thus I put this garment on you, for the sake of long life, of old age, of strength, of

\textsuperscript{503} भ्रात्साथिचिन्हीह्य नात्र यात्रार्थकार्यिन्होऽहितः। निल्लिप्ताः। दिशानामसमा। तेषाः वै मन्नत: कित्वा: || (पाः स्म-१.२)

\textsuperscript{504} ततन्ने भ्रात्साथिमुपसर्गस्मीत हीहः राजस्व वसर्दिवैद्यस्य वै वसर्बर्धस्य साधारणपिताः || (वी. स्म-११.५४-५)

\textsuperscript{505} पवस्तं वशिः शास्त्राया किष्किन्दोहणव्यप्ने केवलाने सीमान्ताप्रत्यस्माने-इति || (पारस. स्म-१.४-२)

\textsuperscript{506} पारस. स्म-२.२-२-२ ||
splendour.\textsuperscript{507} Next, the ācārya tied round the waist of the youth the girdle with the verse, ‘here has come to me, keeping away evil words, purifying mankind as a purifier, clothing herself by power of inhalation and exhalation, with strength, this sisterly goddess the blessed girdle.\textsuperscript{508} It was originally meant to support the kaupina.

Later, the antevāsī should be blessed with sacred thread. Though none of the grhya sūtra-s contain the prescription of wearing the sacred thread, the later authorities strongly recommend wearing the sacred thread. It seems that the upper garment which was offered to the youth was the prototype from which the sacred thread descended. The ācārya, while investing the antevāsī with the sacred thread, repeated an appropriate mantra, asking for strength, long-life and illumination for the boy.\textsuperscript{509} A brahmacāri can put on only one set of the sacred thread, whereas a householder is supposed to wear two sets, as one for himself and other for his wife. The staff was given by the ācārya to the antevāsī, who accepted with the verse, ‘my staff which fell down to the ground in the open air, that I take up again for the sake of long life, of holy luster and of holiness.\textsuperscript{510}

After the antevāsī was fully equipped with the necessities of a antevāsī life in ancient times, a series of symbolical acts followed before the ācārya properly took the antevāsī in his charge. Now proper taking the charge of the antevāsī began. The ācārya seized the antevāsī’s right hand and asked his name. ācārya makes simple enquiries to his antevāsī and says “Indra’s pupil you are. Agni is your ācārya. I am your ācārya.” Thus the ācārya took the boy in his charge for education and protection. He commanded the antevāsī to the protection of gods and all

\textsuperscript{507} पारा.२०१.२-२-१०

\textsuperscript{508} पारा.२०१.२-२-११

\textsuperscript{509} यहोपवीत यथम पवित्र: प्रजापति परस्रात:। आपोपायमयः प्रतिमुख शूर्य यहोपवीत कल्यनस्वामिः। (पारा.२०१.२-२-११)

\textsuperscript{510} पारा.२०१.२-२-१४
creatures that were requested to guard him everywhere.\textsuperscript{511} Everything is done in front of fire (agni sākṣi). The ācārya taking the hold of the antevāsī, delivered the some commandments which were practical advices carrying symbolic significance.

Next, the most sacred Savitr mantra was taught to the antevāsī.\textsuperscript{512} 'Let us meditate on the divine light of sun god. May he guide our intellect.'\textsuperscript{513} The teaching of Savitr mantra signalized the second birth of the child, as the ācārya was regarded the father and Savitṛ the mother of the child.\textsuperscript{514} The prayer is simple yet tremendously powerful. The rite of first enkindling and feeding of the sacred fire was performed after the teaching of the Gāyatrī mantra.\textsuperscript{515} The verses uttered here were full of educational significance. The antevāsī prays 'oh, glorious agni, bring me to glory like you. As you are the preserver of the treasure of sacrifice for the gods, so may I become the preserver of the treasure of the Veda-s.\textsuperscript{516} The sacred fire was the symbol of life and light, for which the antevāsī strove. It was the centre of all religious activities of the Vedic religion. Its worship began in the antevāsī career and continued throughout his life.

Then the antevāsīs going the rounds for alms would begin.\textsuperscript{517} This was the ceremonious beginning of what was going to be the chief means of his maintenance throughout his antevāsī career. On the day of the Upanayana he begged from only those who would not refuse, e.g. his mother and other relatives. The ceremony of begging emphasized on the antevāsī's mind, 'being a non-economic entity, he was dependant on the public charity and he should discharge his duties in society when he would become its earning member. After initiation
ceremonies were over, the antevasī was required to observe three days continence, which was called ‘trirātra vrata’. This continence might extend to twelve days or one year. It was the beginning of a rigorous training. He was not to eat saline food, he had to sleep on the ground, and he was forbidden to take meat and wine and to sleep in the day-time. At the end of the vow, the medhājanana ritual was performed in order to evoke divine help in the sharpening of the intellect, memory and retaining power. It was called medhājanana because by performing it one could get intellect to grasp the Vedic knowledge. One of the most significant educational aspects of Upanayana is invocation of three most essential intellectual faculties i.e. śraddhā (firm faith), medhā (retentive competence) and prajñā (discriminating ability). In fact all of these are different facets of single natural power called ‘dhi’, which was prayed in Gāyatrī mantra. Before the invocation of these three faculties, one should get prepared for acquiring them. Therefore, in the initial stages, it was meant that the antevasī may no longer commit three sins, and thereby become responsible. Those three sins were – kāmachāra (wanton behavior), kāmavāda (uncontrolled speech) and kāmabhāksaṇa (whimsical food habits). To summarize the purpose of Upanayana, it is nothing but eradicating the vices and instilling the virtues for achieving higher goals. Since Upanayana is performed at the very young age, the personality can be developed on firm grounds and helps the child to grow with discipline. Hence it is called the marking of new era or getting the second life. It also symbolizes that the antevasī is a traveler, starting for the boundless realm of knowledge. To reach his destination he was asked to be firm and steadfast in his determination. Complete harmony between him and his ācārya was also essential. If the antevasī acted up to the

518 आ.गु.सू.१-२२-१२ (हिं.गु.सू.१-८-१२)
519 आ.गु.सू.१-२०-२
520 अतिदातनुमुनितकयु तक्षालप्रवाहीणि मति:। शुभायुधविचारस्वा प्रक्षा धीरित्यूदीरिता ॥ (अ.को.)
symbolisms and suggestions of the saṃskāra-s, he was bound to be a successful scholar and a full-fledged man, fit to share the responsibilities of the world.

3. **Vedārambha (The Beginning Of The Vedic Study)**

   The Vedic study was supposed to begin with the most sacred Gāyatrī mantra. When non-Vedic study started gaining grounds, it was thought necessary to perform another saṃskāra besides Upanayana, to mark the beginning of the Vedic study. For the performance of the Vedārambha saṃskāra, an auspicious day was fixed after Upanayana. In the beginning, mātrupuja, ābhuyadīka śrādha and other preliminary ceremonies were performed. Then the ācārya established the laukika agni, invited the antevāsī and seated him on the western side of the fire. The antevāsī has to make offerings in agni according to the Veda that he is willing to learn. After the performance of homa, the ācārya would begin the teaching of the Veda-s.

4. **Keśānta or Godāna (The Shaving Of Beard)**

   As its very name suggests, was a saṃskāra which consecrated the first shaving of the antevāsī’s beard. It was called godāna also, because it was characterized by the gift of a cow to the ācārya. This saṃskāra was performed at the age of sixteen and marked the arrival of youth when the antevāsī was no more a boy, and beard and moustaches appeared on his face.\(^{521}\) The consciousness of manhood dawned upon the young man. He required a greater watchfulness over his youthful impulses. Hence, it was thought necessary that the antevāsī should be reminded once more of his vows of Brahmacarya. He was, after shaving the beard and moustaches, required to take the vow of Brahmacarya anew and to live the life of strict continence for one year. The only difference between chūḍā saṃskāra and Keśānta was that the head was shaved in the earlier, while the beard and moustaches were shaved in the later. The antevāsī, then, offered a cow to the ācārya.

\(^{521}\) पारा.म.सु.-1.18॥
केदार न: पोढळे करे ब्राह्मणस्य विधीपते। राजन्यवस्थोऽभीविशे वैदेशस्य वधिके तत:॥ (म.सु.-2.95)
acārya. At the end of the ceremony he observed a vow of silence and led a life of austere discipline for full one year.

5. **Samāvartana or Snātaka (End Of Studentship)**

It was performed at the close of Brahmacarya period and it marked the termination of the antevāśī life. It was meant to return home from the house of his acārya. It was called snāna because bathing formed the most prominent item of the saṃskāra. Just as at the end of a sacrifice the sacrificial bath or avabhṛta was taken by the sacrifice, so the long sacrifice of Brahmacarya also required that the antevāśī should have a bath at the end. Another idea was also associated to this bathing. As learning was considered to be ocean and one who possessed great learning was supposed to have crossed that ocean. Similarly, a antevāśī, after completing his rigorous learning at gurukula, was regarded as vidyāsnātaka (one who has successfully completed his learning) and vratasnātaka (one who practiced Brahmacarya vrata). 522 Thus, Samāvartana symbolizes successful completion of studies and vows that were taken up.

After the end of Brahmacarya vrata, the antevāśī will have two paths ahead of his life. One of them was to get oneself married and plunge into the busy life of the world, sharing its full responsibilities. The other was that of retirement, that is, to keep off from the turmoil of the world and to lead a life of detachment, both physical and mental. Those antevāśī-ś who chose the first path were called 'upakurvana', and those who selected the second path were known as ‘naiṣṭhika brahmacāri’. 523 He lives along with his master pursuing the quest of supreme knowledge. Samāvartana saṃskāra is not performed for naiṣṭhika brahmacāri, as he lives in gurukula till his end.524

522 PP. G. 55 2-15 2-15 2-16
523 PP. G. 55 2-15 2-15 2-16
524 PP. G. 55 2-15 2-15 2-16
The Samāvartana ceremony was the ceremony corresponding to modern convocation function. Only those who had finished their education were allowed to take their bath. There were basically three types of snātaka-s. The first type was that of the vidyāsnātaka-s, who had completed their entire course of studies but not the full term of Brahmacarya. The second type consisted of the vratasnātaka-s, who had observed all the vows and spent the full period of Brahmacarya at the house of the guru but had not finished the full course of studies. The third type was constituted by the best antevasī-s, who had finished their full course of studies and observed all the vows. They were called the ubhayasnātaka-s or vidyāvratasnātaka-s.

The longest period of Brahmacarya was forty-eight years, allowing twelve years for the study of each Veda. The smaller periods stopped at thirty-six, twenty-four, eighteen and twelve years, according to the circumstances of the antevasī and his parents. Before the antevasī took bath, he had to discharge a very important duty. He asked the permission of his master to end his antevasī career and satisfied him with the gurudaksīna (paying money with the sense of gratitude and humility). It was necessary to take permission from the ācārya before taking bath. When the antevasī is going to leave gurukula, he is expected in all propriety, to pay his ācārya according to one's abilities. The ācārya should be given earth, gold, cow, horse, umbrella, shoes, clothes, fruits and vegetables. The guidance given by the ācārya was highly respected and none could pay too much for them. 'There is no object on this earth by giving which one can free himself from the debt of even a ācārya who teaches a single letter.' If one could not pay

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525 व्र: ालक्ष्म भवितत विद्यामानको भतातसत्तो विद्यामानकातः तत्त्व
526 मुगुंधान्नुमत: सारा सुमानवो युवाविविधि उद्धेष्ट द्विजो भारवी स्वर्णि त्वग्नामन्ति तमः (मा. सु.-२-१०)  
527 न पूर्ण गुरुविषिद्ध स्वसुवर्ति कर्मविविधि: आस्यन्त्य मुगुंधाद्वात् शक्त गृह्यवन्यमन्त्रेत् (मा. सु.-२-१४)  
528 क्षेत्र हिर्मण्य गामध्यर्व छोरायान्यमन्त्रात्: धारि शाक्वेष वासासि गुरुवै श्रीमिन्य माहेत् (मा. सु.-२-२४)  
529 एकमाक्षुरु वर्तु मुक्त हिर्मण्य बनमेवाद्वेदे: पृथिवियान्ति नालि तद्वर्त्य यहुः इमुः स्थायित्वेन (उ.ह.)
anything in the form of money or land, he should at least go to the ācārya formally and take his permission.

The antevāsī was required to shut himself up in a room throughout the morning. At the midday the antevāsī came out of the room, embraced the feet of his ācārya and paid his last tribute to the Vedic fire by putting some fuel on it. Eight vessels full of water were kept there. The number of eight indicated the eight quarters of the earth and suggested the idea of honour and praise being showered on the antevāsī from all over the earth. Then the antevāsī drew water out of one vessel with the words, 'the fires that dwell in the waters, the fire that must be hidden, the fire which must be covered, the ray of light, the fire which kills the mind, the unbearing one, the pain causing one, the destroyer of the body, the fire which kills the organs, these I leave behind. The shining one that I seize here... therewith I besprinkle for the sake of prosperity, of glory, of holiness, of holy luster.' With other appropriate verses, he bathed from other vessels. The body of a antevāsī was heated with the fire of austerity and penance, hence for the comfortable life of a householder it required a cooling influence, which was symbolized by bathing and indicated by the verses associated with it.

After the grand bath the antevāsī cast off his entire outfits and put on a new loin cloth. Having eaten some curd and sesame he cut off his beard, lock of hair, nails and cleansed his teeth. The antevāsī had practiced continence both in food and speech. Now he was going to prepare for a fuller and more active life of the world. At the time of Samāvartana, the austere life was over, and ācārya presented him the comforts and luxuries of life that were denied to him during his studentship. In the case of a Brāhmin antevāsī, a homa was performed and the hope was expressed that the snātaka would get plenty of antevāsīs to teach. The ācārya, then, offered to the antevāsī the madhuparka, indicating a great respect,

530 (Paippūlī śāstra 2.4, 8, 9, 10)
531 Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.9.11
for it was reserved for a few e.g. a king, a ācārya, a son-in-law etc. Dressed in his new attires, the snātaka would proceed to the nearest assembly of the learned in a chariot or on an elephant. There he was introduced as a competent scholar by his ācārya.

A survey of the Samāvartana ceremonies shows how high was the respect in which scholars, who had completed their education, were held by society in ancient Bhārata. A Brāhmaṇa passage quoted in Aśvalayana gṛhya sūtra asserts that the snātaka was a powerful personality.