Chapter II

THE SPACE PROVIDED IN FOUR SAMHITAS
The texts of the Vedic Samhita allotted the space for women which is neither too narrow nor to wide. The compilation of the whole vedic Samhita is extended to a considerable period of time. Rgveda Samhita, the earliest production of Vedic Literature, is a text of more than ten thousand verses. In this voluminous text there is the mention of the name of a particular seer and the god. There are few names of women who visualised the hymn. The numbers of female Ṛṣikās comes to about thirty.

The Arsanukramani and the Bṛhaddevatā enumerated in the Rigveda 414 seers have contributed on the wide range of its content. Among them the names of twenty seven Ṛṣikās in the Rv and they are referred to as Bṛahmavādinī. Bṛahmavādinis are those women who were well versed in the vedas and they did not enter into the domestic livelihood.

Based on this forms and traits, they can be categorised in the following classifications.
CLASSIFICATION OF THE ṚSIKĀS

1. Related to the gods or goddess themselves: Indramātāraḥ, Aditi, Indrasnusā, Indrānī, Sūryā, Yamī-Vaivasvati, Śacī-Paulomī.


3. Apsaras; Urvasī, Śikhaṇḍīnyau, Kāśyapī.

4. Creatures other than human being: Devasuṇī, Sāramā, Sarparājīṇī.

5. Inanimate objects. Nodhā, Rātrī, Daḵṣiṇā


7. Ṛṣikās of Kukta Śnseta: Srī, Lākṣā, Medhā and Niṣad.

8. Those who offered prayers to the different deities. They are Ghoṣā, Godhā, Viśvavārā, Apālā, Niṣad, Juhū Brahmajāyā, Aditi and Agastyasvasā.

9. Under this category come those who have either talked to the deities or had discussions with seers and they are Indrāṇī, Yamī, Indramātā, Saramā, Romasā, Urvasī, Lopāmudrā, Nodhā and Śasvaṭī.
10. Under this group come those seers whose Prayers are centered around self. In other words, they themselves are the Rsis as well as Devatās. They are Śrī, Lākṣā, Sārparājñī, Vāk Sraddhā, Medhā, Dakṣiṇā, Rāṭrī and Sūryā, Sāvitrī.

11. Independent Rishihood – Indramātarah, Indraśnuśā, Viśvavārā etc.

12. Vaikalpika Rishihood – Aditi, Dākṣāyanī, Rāṭrī, Śīkhaṇḍīryau.

13. Combined Rishihood – Nodhā, Indramātāraḥ. etc.¹

From a detail information of the contribution of the female Ṛṣikās and their skill from their composition it can be deduced that they had to go through certain training along with the usual vedic studies. The female students who studied the vedas were divided into two categories – Brahmavādinis and Sadyodvaha. The formers are lifelong students, while Sadyodvahas continue their studies till their marriage.²

A brief sketch of Brahmavādinis are discussed herewith –

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2. VMS: 'Dvibidhah Stryo brahmavādinyah Sadyodvāhāsca. Tatra brahmavādinī nāmagnī dhanam vedadhayanaīnī Svagṛhe ca Vaikṣya caryeti.' P 402.
Visvavāra: Visvavārā belongs to Atri family and composed, the hymn 28 of Vth maṇḍala the family book of the Atris of Ṛgveda. Her style of composing the hymns show the high position of women composers in the Ṛgvedic times. She is the most brilliant seer, whose hymn gives us a glimpse into the inner heart of a woman. Her scholarly talent place her in a high and respective place in vedic culture. We have not found such a high thought of feeling in other female seer’s composition as she did. She gave unrestrained expression of the intimate joys and sorrows of homely life. One of the verse reveals that ‘Visvāvāra after her marriage approaches the blazing sacrificial fire at dawn. With her face towards the east, offers oblations to the gods and prays for love and happiness in wedded life’.3

The hymn 28 of the Vth book of Ṛgveda states the right to sacrifice or to perform the sacrifices was granted to the womenfolk. In this hymn Visvāvāra prays the God Agni to preserve in harmony the relationship of man and his wife. She also asked for granting profuse happiness and

3. Ṛv.V. 28.1: Samiddho agnirdibi soucirsret pratya......
Eti Prāci Visvāvāra namobhideva ......... grīcī.
welfare. The verse records as ‘Repress, Agni our foes to ensure our exceeding prosperity may your riches ever be excellent, preserve in concord the relation of man and wife and overpower the energies of the hostile’. The hymn describes the domestic aspirations of a woman. The ambitions as depicted in this hymn, reminds limitations of a woman in society.

**Apala**: Apālā belonged to the Atri family. Apālā has been credited with a hymn 91 in the VIIIth book of Rgveda. Available evidence witnessed that, she was a married woman and abandoned by her husband, due to some skin diseases. The Apālā sukta is generally considered as one of the popular hymn. The hymn is also counted among the so-called Itihasa-hymn, which are based on legends. Having the skin disease in her, which would not allow hair to grow on her body, she had devoted her life to meditation. The hymn describes the story of Ātreyi Apālā, which states how she met and worshipped Lord Indra to get rid of her disease.

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The story is as follows – one day she went out to have bath, intending to make a some offering to Indra, and when she was returning she found some soma plants in her way to home. She gathered them and chew them with her teeth. Lord Indra was there and hearing the sound of her jaws, he thought it was the sound of some stones and appeared to her asking about the sound. She explained the reason of the sound, and Indra turned away. Then she uttered this hymn as stated below – ‘You who so from house to house; a hero bright in your splendour, drink this soma pressed by my teeth together with fried grains of barley and the karambha cakes.’\(^5\) However, when she felt that, it was really Lord Indra, then she addressed the latter half of the third Verse as – ‘O soma, flow forth for Indra first slowly, then quickly.’\(^6\) Then Indra became pleased and drank the juice of soma as she wished. She then proudly exclaimed a verse as – ‘May he (Indra) repeatedly make us very rich; often hated by our husband and forced to leave him.’\(^7\) This verse reflects the truth that some women were used to abandoned by their husband and live in

   Imam jambhsutair Pibo dhānabantaṁ Karambhīṇam
   Pūpabantaṁ ukithanam.

6. Rv. VIII : 91 : 3 ‘Sanairiva sanakair iva indrayendro Pari staba.’

7. Rv. VIII : 91 : 4 Kubicchakat Kuvitkarat kubinno basyasaskarat kubit
   Patidviśo Yatīh indrena sangamāmahe.
their parent’s house. Indra then granted her a boon and she then chose as – ‘These three places do you cause them all to grow my father’s bald head, his barren field and my body.’ Indra granted the three boons.

**Ghosa**: Ghosa belongs to the family of great seers. Her grandfather was Dirghatamas and her father was Kaksívat. Both the seers were composers of several hymns in praise of the Aśvins. Among the women seers, Ghosa made the largest contribution. Two entire hymns of the tenth maṇḍala of Rigveda, each containing 14 verses are assigned to Ghosa. On account of the white leprosy, she could not get married and grew old in her parents house. In a verse we find her praying ‘Aśvins’ as follows - ‘Here my invocations, Aśvins, give me wealth as parents give to a son; before it come beyond the reach of a course that has no relatives; save me from that curse before it reach me.’ The seer, a daughter of mighty seer’ is equally mighty in her conception of divinity and the invocation of the Aśvins. In the hymn she was praying for the remedies of her physical conditions as. ‘Attending upon you Aśvins,

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leaders of rites, I Ghosā, the daughter of king Kaksīvat, request you be present at my sacrifice.'\textsuperscript{10} Due to unrestrained invocation to As'vins, they became pleased and cured her. Finally she got married with the great seer Kakshivan.

\textbf{Sraddhā:} Sraddhā, the goddess of faith belongs to the family of Kāma. She is, so recognised as Sraddhā kāmāyani, Sraddhā is credited with the hymn 151 of the Xth book of the Rigveda, of which she herself is the deity. Sraddhā is also known as the symbolical representative of the yearning in the heart for the gods. All offerings and processes of sacrifice must be accompanied with faith. If there is no faith, in the offering or in the prayer, the mechanical chanting of the mantra is of no avail; hence Sraddhā; the ṛṣikās points out: Through Sraddhā Agni is kindled by Sraddhā is oblation offered; with our praise we glorify Sraddhā.'\textsuperscript{11} All those who perform sacrifice draw Sraddhā the goddess faith for strength of their prayer to gods. She can be pleased only by

10.Rv. X : 40 : 5 Yubam ha Ghosā Payarśvima yat rajña uche duhitā .......
Saktambarte.

Sraddhāṁ bhagasya mūdharni ....... vaeas ā Vedāyāmasi.
constant yearning of the heart. In another verse we find the goddess Śraddhā is prayed to endow the worshipper with their wished boons.¹²

**Indrāni:** Indrāni, who is the beautiful wife of Lord Indra, is honoured as ṛṣikā as well as goddess of the Rgveda. She is the speaker of the stanzas 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 15, 18, 22, and 23 in the hymn 86 of the Tenth book, entitled the jealous wife’s spell’ which she uttered while digging out a herb by which her co-wife will be killed. The whole hymn depicts the charms and magic of destroying the co-wives. We again find Indrāni as a ṛṣikā of the hymn 146 of the Xth book of the Rigveda. The very ideal of an Aryan wife has been brought out in the verse 6 of hymn 86 of the Xth book, declared by Indrāni; ‘There is no woman more amiable than I am; none who bears fairer sons than I; none with more ardour offers all her beauty to lord’s embrace’.¹³ Such an ideal in practice as one embodied in the above lines, nowhere can be found. In this passage we find a total negation of the self on the part of a woman for the man she adores. Such kind of conjugal love is a great characteristic of an Aryan household of Rigvedic civilization.

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¹². **Rv X : 151 : 2** Priyam Śraddhā dadataḥ Priyam Śraddhā didāsataḥ Priyam bhōjesu yajvasvidaṁ ma uditam Kṛdhi.

**Mandhata:** The female seer Māndhātā has made her contribution in Rigveda by composing some verses. She composed the first five verses of the hymn 134 of the Xth Mandala. In the hymn, she made an eulogy to Lord Indra. There is nothing remarkable in these verses, except the eulogies of God Indra and the Viśvadevas. One of the verse, runs ad follows – ‘you, Indra, who fill both heaven and earth (with light) like the dawn – the divine Progenitors has given birth to you. The mightily of the mighty gods. The sovereign of man ; the auspicious Progenitress has given you birth.’

**Vak:** Vāk was the daughter of the renown seer Āmbhrina. Hence, she was identified as Āmbhrini Vāk. Vāk is the composer of the most remarkable hymn known as Devisukta which occurs in the Tenth Mandala of the Rv, 125. In the hymn 125 of the Xth Mandala we find her as female seer as well as the female deity of the hymn in which she emphatically expresses the idea of the unity of the universe. In this

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hymn Vak comprehended in a pantheistic mood, her unity with the universe as the source and regulating spirit of every worldly beings. Vāk is compared to a wife who dwells in the inner chamber of the house. In a verse we find her praising herself as ‘I am the sovereign queen, the collectress of treasurers, cognizant (of the supreme Being), the chief of objects of worship; as such the gods have put me in many places, abiding in manifold conditions, entering into numerous (forms).

It has been described that, her dwelling is in the ocean where from she extends over all existing creatures and touches even the far off heaven.

So mighty in her grandeur she appears from beyond the heaven and earth. Describing her nature she has cited a verse as ‘He who eats food eats through me; he who sees; who breathes, hears, what is spoken, does so through me; those who are ignorant of me perish; hear you have hearing. I tell that which is deserving of belief.’


Lopāmudra: This female Ṛṣikās was a member of the family of Atri. But she has been founded as addressing Rati, the goddess of carnal desires. The first two verses of the hymn 179 of the 1st Maṇḍala of Rikṣaṇhitā is composed by Lopāmudrā. In the hymn she expressed her desire as—'Many years have I been serving you diligently, both day and night, and through mornings, bringing on old age; decay now impairs the beauty of my limbs; what therefore, is now to be done; let husbands approach their wives.'

In the two verses, she has been found praying for the couple to approach each other.

Śace Paulomi — Sacī Paulomi is another female Ṛṣikā and goddess as well as. The hymn 159 of the Xth book of Rigveda is credited with Sacī Paulomi. The hymn has its remarkable lyrical beauty. Literally, this hymn is regarded as a song of exultation by Sacī over her rival wives; there in she triumphs over her success, which made her supreme over her rivals. In a verse we find her as winner of her rivals. The

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  Minātī sriyāṁ jārimā tanūnāṁ apyā nu patnīrūṣano jāgamyūh.

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verse runs thus – ‘Triumphant, I conquered these my rivals so that I might rule this hero and his people.’ In a verse we found her Praising her children as – ‘My sons are the destroyers of my enemies, my daughter is an empress; and I am victorious, my fame is most precious to my husband.’

Wife of Vasukra: It has been observed that among the female seers, many of them hailed from the family of Atri. Though other’s female seer’s name have not distinctly mentioned. But their contribution makes the numbering the name of the female ṛṣikās more. Some of them are known by their husband’s name. Such as a female ṛṣikā who was known by her husband’s name Vasukra. The anonymous wife of Vasukra is credited with the first stanza of the hymn 28 of the tenth maṇḍala. She composed the hymn by Praising God Indra. Her husband is the seer of a part of this hymn. Another lady character is the sister of Agastya, whose name was not known. She contributes a single stanza of the hymn 60:6 of Xth book of the Rv. The real part of which is assigned to her sons,


20. Rv. X: 159:3

Momo Putrāḥ Satruhano atho me duhitā viraṭ.
Utahamasmi Saṁjayā Patyouv me sloka uttamaḥ.
the Gaupāyanas. She is the independent seer of the 6th stanza of the hymn 60.

**Sūrya**: In Ṛgveda we find Sūryā as a ṛṣikā and a goddess as well. The hymn 85 of the Xth book of Ṛgveda is credited with the name of Sūryā. The hymn consists of 47 verses loosely strung together. This hymn is also known as wedding hymn. Sūryā has been described as the typical Aryan bride and her wedding hymn 85 of the Xth book may be quoted and analysed to show the various rites in the wedding ceremony. A verse of this hymn has beautifully describes the blessings which offered to the bride, as reflecting in this lines as ‘Abide here together; may you never be separated; live together all your lives, sporting with sons and grandsons, happy in your own home.’ Moreover, in another verse we come across a beautiful description of the bridal procession of Sūryā to her husband’s dwelling as – ‘Sūryā’s bridal procession which Savitā despatched had advanced; the oxen are whipped along in the Magha; She is borne (to her husband’s house) in the Arjunī – 22 (constellations)’. It has noticed that the whole hymn contains a traditional set of verses

*Kriṭrantou Putraiva naptrvirmamānou sve grhe.*

*Aghāsu hanyante gābo arjunyoh paryuhyate.*
which were ascribed to Sūryā on her wedding. To add the excellency on the description of her bridal procession a verse has cited as – ‘Mind was her chariot and heaven was the covering, the two shining orbs were the oxen when Sūryā went to her husband’s dwelling.’ 23 The hymn contains the rites of Hindu marriage in which the bridegroom has to uttered the mantras during the wedding ceremony as reflected in this verse – ‘I take your hand for good fortune, that you may attain old age with me as your husband; the gods Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitā Purandhi have given to me, that I may be the master of a household.’ 24

Yami Vaivasvati: Yami Vaivasvati is another īṣikā, who compose the hymn 154 of the Xth manḍala of the Rgveda. In the hymn we find her asking to the god Bhavabṛtta as – ‘To those who through penance are unassailable by sin to those who through penance have gone to heaven, to those who have performed abundant penance, do you repair.’ 25

   Bhago Ayarmā Savitā Purandhi mahyāṁ tvādugārhapatsvāya devāḥ.
   Tapo ye cakrire Mahastāncidebāpi gacchatāt.
**Romaśā**: Romaśā is a ṛṣikā and a goddess as well. She is known as the wife of Bhavya. In stanza 7 of the hymn 126 of the 1st maṇḍala of Rgveda, we find her as female ṛṣikā and in the stanza 6 of same hymn we find her as a goddess. She has been praised by her husband in one verse as – ‘She, who when her desires are assented to, clings as tenaciously as a female weasel, and who is ripe for enjoyment, yields me infinite delight.’ On which she replied as – ‘Approach me, deem me not immature; I am covered with dawn like a eve of the Gandharins’.

**Indramata**: In the hymn 153 of the Xth Maṇḍala of Rv, we find Indra’s mother as ṛṣikā. One of the verse cited as followings – ‘Desirous of fulfilling their functions, (the mothers of Indra) approaching, worship him as soon as born, and enjoy together with male progeny.’

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27. *Rv I : 126 : 7* ‘Upaupa me parā mrsha mā me davrāṇi manyathah Sarbāham asmi Romaśā gandharēnāmibābikā.

Nodhā: Nodhā is a female ṛṣikā of Rgveda. The hymn 88 of the 8th Maṇḍala has assigned to Nodhā. In which we find her praising Indra as ‘The vast firm mountains cannot stop you Indra, Whatever wealth you would give to a worshipper such as I none can hinder you there in.’ 29

Ghodhā: Ghodhā is a female ṛṣikā of Rgveda. She has been known by composing a verse of the hymn, 134 of the Xth book of the Rgveda. The verse runs thus – ‘O Gods, we never injure you, we never inflict annoyance on you, we follow the teaching of the mantra, we take hold of you at this sacrifice with wings and arms.’ 30

VEDIC GODDESSES

The goddesses involved in the vedas are – Ușā, Vāk, Aditi, Pṛthvi, Saraswati, Sarparājñī and Sinivātī and Indrāni. In the whole extent of the vedic gods numbering 152, among them the prominent female deities are only eight. Yami and Ratri are other two goddesses along with their inmates.

Ușa: The most beautiful conception of a goddess which the Rv presents to us in Ușā, the goddess dawn. The entire hymn 75 and 76 - 81 of VIIth book is credited with Ușā. She has been inspired the finest lyrical hymns in the Rgveda. She is the daughter of the heaven, the lady of the light. In a verse of the hymn 76 of the VIIth book of Rgveda, who find her describing as – ‘The Dawn, the daughter of heaven, has risen, she comes manifesting her magnificence in light, she scatters our foes as well as the odious darkness and relumes the path that are to be trodden by living beings.’ Moreover, she has been described by the hymn, as the goddess usā is awakening creatures and sending them off to their respective deities is a more or less passive act. The goddess Ușā has

described as beautiful, fresh and ever young, dressed in a red garment, glowing with youth, freshness and beauty. She is who awakens men to new life on a new day. As many as twenty hymns are addressed to her which made the best part of the Ōrgvedic poetry. Amongst the hymns, which are assigned to her, we find her in a verse as a wife who is taking care of a vagrant husband. The verse records as – ‘Many are the days that have dawned before the rising of the Sun, on which you. Uṣās, have been beheld like a wife repairing to an inconstant husband and not like one deserting him.’ In a verse, we find her as ‘The laughing Uṣā reveals her body as the smiling wife who desires her husband; she dressed beautifully for his sake and reveals herself to him.

Rigveda poetry presents a sense of ardour, grandeur, lofty ideals and poetic portrayal of various emotions, which can be proved by the description of Uṣā in several verses of the hymn 76 of VIIth Maṇḍala. In a verse, the goddess Uṣā has been described as ‘smiling young maiden’


who go to the resplendent Sun; like a youthful bride before her husband.\textsuperscript{34} Whose mother has decorated her as a bride.\textsuperscript{35}

The goddess, Dawn appears as fresh as ever in each day uninterrupted, each day the goddess uṣā resembling the other new dawn. So sometime it is difficult to determine which is the most earliest? The naive wonder of the each day arriving in the same glory, finds an expression in the following verse as – ‘Unimpending divine rites, although wearing away the ages of mankind the dawn shines the resemblance of the mornings that have passed.’ \textsuperscript{36}

**Aditi**: Who is known as a goddess of Rgveda and also known as mother of Lord Indra, Mitra and Ādityās. In Rgveda many times she is spoken of protecting men from distress and danger. A hymn runs as ‘May Savitā drive away our disease may the mountains keep off our sin, where the stone (the effuser) of the sweet juice us abundantly praised.

\textsuperscript{34} Rv. I : 123 : 10 Kanyeba tanvāo śhasadāna esi divi debamiyaksamānam. Samsmayamānā yubatih purastādābibarksāmsi ......


\textsuperscript{36} Rv. I : 124 : 2 ’Amenatā daivyāni vratāni praminatē manusyā yugāni. Īyusināmupamā sasvatīnām āyatinām Prathosā vyadyaut.
We long for the universal Aditi.' 37 In a verse of Rv, we come across a description of Aditi as "this spacious for pervading and perfect Goddess is not only the mother of Indra, Mitra and Ādityās but has like her son Varuna. 38 Hence, in the Rgveda the motherhood is no doubt, the essential and the most characteristic platform in the domestic social context.

**Saraswati**: Saraswati is one of a goddesses of the Rgveda. The stanzas 1-14 of the hymn 61 of the VIth Maṇḍala and the verses 49 of the hymn 164 of 1st Maṇḍala of Rgveda are credited with Saraswat. Beyond this, we find her as a female deity with other gods and goddess. Such as she appeared as a goddess in the verses (Rv. I : 164 : 49, Rv. I : 3 : 11 - 12 and in Rv X. 17 : 7 - 9). To describe the nature of this goddess a verse has been cited as follows – 'With impetus and mighty waves she breaks down the precipices of the mountains, like a digger for the lotus fibres, we adore for our protection with sacred rites, Saraswati the underminer of both her banks’. 39 In this verse, she has been praised as a river. Again in the verse 49 of the hymn 164 of the 1st

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mandala she has been described as Saraswatī that retiring breast, which is the source delight, with which you bestow all good things, the container of wealth, the distributor of riches, the giver of good fortune.\textsuperscript{40}

**Sarparajñī:** Who is the lady seer of hymn 189 of the Xth book of the Rgveda. She is known as the mother of the serpent race. In the hymn we find her as a deity too. Although the form and nature of the hymn are hazy and not clear.

**Prthivi:** Prthvi is recognised as a goddess in the Rgveda. The verse 15 of the hymn 22 is ascribed to her as ‘Earth be your widespread, free from thorns and our abiding place; give us great happiness.’\textsuperscript{41}

A few passages of the Rgveda, mention has made celestial nymph called Apsaras. Urvasī is one of them. In the category of Apsaras Urvasī is worth mentioning. The hymn 95 of the Xth book of Rgveda has depicted the anecdote of pururava Urvasī. In this hymn we come across the dialogues between the Pururava and Urvasī. In this hymn there are

\textsuperscript{40} Rv. I : 164 : 49. *Yaste stanaḥ śaśayo yo mayabhūryena viśva pusyasi vāryāni Yo ratnadha Vasuvidyah sudatraḥ Saraswati tamiha dhātate kah.*


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eighteen verses in all containing a conversation between the nymph Urvasī and the king Pururava. Out of the eighteen verses, Urvasī is said to have composed nine verses. In the hymn, we find the passage referring to a story of contractual marriage. Here we find a sort of agreement for the breach of which the king had to ruin afterwards when Urvasī would disappear from the earth. The story narrates that Urvasī got engaged with Pururavas in an alliance. The permanence of which depends on a condition. She had consented to live with the king on the condition that the latter must watch her ewes and must not go naked before her eyes. But unfortunately in a certain circumstance in one night a flash of lightning revealed the naked king to Urvasī and she was free from the contract. Repairing to the stipulation of the agreement she addressed the king as – ‘Return purusava, to your dwelling; I am as hard to catch as the wind.’

Yami: The hymn 10 of the Xth book of Rv is ascribed to Yama and Yami. In this hymn both Yami and Yama are the ṛṣīkās and ṛṣī respectively and at the sometime we found them as the devatās of the hymn. The dialogue of Yama and Yami has been pointed out to contain a

42. Rv. X : 95 : 2 ‘Purūrabah punarastāṁ parehi durāpanā vātāivāhamsmi.’
reference to incest. But in fact, it is entirely a metaphysical dialogue. Yama and Yami, are the sons and daughters of Vivasvan. In the dialogue of Yama and Yami, we come across the conversation of Yama and Yami as, the eternal laws of gods, which forbid the union of blood relations, the sister Yami draws the brother on to love. We find Yami as praying her brother to obtain a child from their union but Yama repels her uttering this following verse: “Thy friend love not the friendship which considers her who is near in kindred as a stranger.” This passage shows that exogamy was the rule and order of the society. In the dialogue of yami with her brother she puts another plea – that the principles of law are meant for the mortals and not for the gods and so Yama could be her husband. But Yama retorted that invest had never been a practice among the Aryans. Finally, Yami herself realises the implications of social laws.

EXPOSITIONS IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

In Atharvaveda, some references are found at a number of places where unmarried girls' were growing old in their parent’s houses, and the Atharvaveda records a number of charms and spells intended for compelling the love of reluctant man or woman. Some of these spells must have been used by maidens and bachelors not succeeding in winning the affection of the desired person. In a verse of Av. we come across a reference to a maiden pining for a husband approaching a youth anxious for a wife. The verse runs thus - 'Here had this woman come, desiring a husband, desiring a wife have I come, like a loud-neighing horse, together with fortune have I come.'

There are also some other verses which describes brides were naturally received affection and respectful treatment in their new homes as they were grown up and educated at the time of marriage. This is evidenced by a verse of Av. The verse states 'As the mighty river Sindhu won the supremacy of the streams so be thou supreme, having gone away to thy husband’s home.'

44. Av. II : 30 : 5 Iyamganpatikāmā janikamouhamāganam. Aṣvah kanikradadyatha bhagenahām sahaṃgamam.
Moreover, the Vedic marriage hymn lays down that the bride should immediately take the responsibilities of household. Her views were usually to prevail in the household management. As this verse states – ‘Be thou supreme among father-in-law, supreme also among brothers-in-law, be thou supreme over sister-in-law, supreme also over mother-in-law.’ The verse is from Rv. X. 85 - 46. But in Atharvaveda also this occurs with similar spirit. However, the word samrājñi is not at all intended to convey controls. But we must admit that the wife’s power and position in the day-to-day administration of the house was fully recognised in Rgvedic age.

The Atharvavedic age treated the brides with very good considerations, regard and affection as well. Available evidence shows that the wives were used to receive love and respect from their husbands. A verse of Atharvavedia runs thus – ‘I grasp thy hand in order to good-fortune, that with me as husband thou may be long-lived; Bhaga. Aryaman, Savita, Purandhi – the gods have given thee to me in order to housewifeship.’


In another verse, we come across same kind signifi- cancy of a wife as ‘Be this woman mine, bringing prosperity; Brhaspati has given thee to me; in company with me as husband, do thou live, rich in offspring, a husband autumns.’

There are ample of verses which refers to have progeny soon after getting married. The brides were blessed to have male child as soon as they enter their new home. A verse truely states so – ‘Prajapati, Anumati, Sinivale had shaped; may he put elsewhere woman-birth but may be put here a male.’

In Av. we find the relation of husband and his wife very affectionate to each other. One of the verse records as – ‘I make you cling to my arms, make you cling to my heart; So that you will be one in desire with me and will be one in thought with me. i.e., pleasing to my heart.’


49. Av. VI : 11 : 3.

50. Av. VI : 9 : 2 ‘Mamo tva dosanisrinusa kramam hariyasriyam ...... yatha mamo katbasou mamo chittamupayaasi.
Though supreme authority was assigned to the husband the wife’s position was one of honourable subordination. In the Atharvavedic society we find that the wife was treated with utmost courtesy and regard. In this context, a verse runs thus – ‘This woman, choosing her husband’s world, lies down, by thee that art departed, O mortal, containing to keep ancient duty; to her assign thou here progeny and property.’

It is the AV where we come across such instances which refers a wife is the ultimate source of love and tenderness. In a verse a wife has been found as longing the love of her husband, as – ‘May you long for my body, for my feet, may you long for my eyes, and my thighs, let eyes and hair of yours, passionately desirous of me, parch me with love.’

In the Atharva veda two entire hymns, 8 and 9 of the VIth Kanda is ascribed with the description of how to win a woman’s love. In a verse we observed the depth of a husband’s love towards his wife as – ‘As the creeper has completely embraced the tree, so do thou embrace me;

51. Av. VIII : 3 : 1. Iyam nare patilokam vrññaññ āni padyata upa tvā martya pretam. Dharmam purañam anupālayantē tasyai prajāṁ dravināṁ cheha dhehi.

52. Av. VI : 9 : 1. Vāñcha me tanva pādāu Vāñchaoksyāu vāñcha Sakathyou. ....... māṁ te kāmena Susyantu.
that thou mayest be one loving me, that thou mayest be one going away from me.\textsuperscript{53}

In AV we come across few passages which we devoted to the delineation of the ideal family. The verse records as – ‘May the son act in accordance with the father’s wishes as well as mother’s, brothers and sisters are to be of one accord; May the wife talk to her husband in sweet words as honey and soothing.’\textsuperscript{54}

This verse refers, the matron has to be sweet in of speech. We come across another reference which refers the nature of the love of a wife towards her husband - As a wife who has been abandoned rejoices to find her husband, as a cloud expanding when pouring forth rain with the aid of the earth’s disc;\textsuperscript{55} Thus this verses reflects the picture of the ideal family which is indeed very attractive.

\textbf{53.} \textit{Av. VI : 8 : 1. Yathä vrksaṁ libuṣja Samantam Parisasvaje ... Eba pari śvajasva main yatha main kaminyaso ..... asah.}

\textbf{54.} \textit{Av. III : 30 : 2 ‘Anubratah pituh putro mātrā bhavatu samanah jāyā patye madhumati bacaṁ bādatu santibām mā bhrāta bhratarānī ..... bhadrayā.}

Available references which got space in the marriage hymn of Rv. has shown the position of a bride in public assemblies. The presence of ladies in the public gatherings was a normal feature the Vedic era. In a passage of A.V., we come across a verse stated as – 'O Lord, may a young man, sweet of tongue, come to us, seeking this sweet hearted maiden, and may he accept her along with gifts; May this girl pleasing to the wooers and attractive and accomplished at the company of this young man as her husband.'

Available evidences indicates some rituals which prescribed the bride to be shown to all the assembled guests at the end of the marriage ritual. In Rv we observed such rituals in a verse. A desire has further expressed that 'the bride should be able to speak with composure in public assemblies down to her old age.' It has laid down in this verse that 'May pusan lead you hence, taking you by the hand, may the Áśvins convey you away in their car, go to the dwelling (of your husband) as

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Juṣṭa naresu Samanesu balgurosaiṃ patya Soubhagam astu asyai.’

you are the mistress of the house; you submissive (to your husband) give orders to his household.’

and same context we find in Atharva veda also the verse records – ‘Let what is dear succeed, here for Thy progeny: watch thou over this house in order to housewifeship; mingle thyself with this husband, then shall thou in advanced age speak to the council.’ This verse also refers the duties of a newly married bride.

It is undeniably true that there are some passages in vedic literature where the wife is mentioned in connection with the husbands in plural. Though the custom of polyandry was practically unknown in Vedic culture. But some passages of Atharva Veda refer the existence of this custom. The verse states – ‘Even if there have been ten non-intellectual husbands of a women previously and latter antellectual seizes her hand then he alone will be her husband. Moreover, we observed this custom in another verse too, which truely states – ‘She, who wedded to a former husband, later finds another, if those two offer a goat with five rice


59. AV. XIV : 1 : 21:

60. Av. V : 17 : 8 – Ut yat patayo daso stryah purbe abrahamanah, brahmā cheddham grahīta eba patirekadha.
dishes (Pancaudana aja) then they shall not be separated. In this context we met another verse which records thus – 'Of equal place with the remarried wife becomes the second husband, who offers a goat with five rice dishes, brightened with sacrificial gift.' Hence it can be well infer that in some cases, polyandry was not prohibited to women.

There is no doubt that, the purda system was unknown in vedic age. As it is evident that maiden were used to attend festive gatherings as unvailed.

The participation of women in sacrifices implied that they had gone through the vedic studies and it has been observed how girls used to devote themselves to the Brahmachārya discipline during their maidenhood. We find several verses which refers that the vedic age held a Brahmachārya discipline and training which was indispensable for girls as it was for boys. Moreover, after, their Upanayana girls used to follow a discipline more or less similar to that of boys. But it

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63. Av. XI : 5 : 18 Brahmacāryen kanyā yubanaṁ bindate patim.
was great pity that they were allowed to discontinue their course, while their marriages were suppose to happen at about the age of 16 or 17. However those who were continued their studies for a longer time and were regarded as Bṛahmavādinis. Mention has made their name earlier.

A reference has been founded which refers that among the female heirs the brotherless daughter was the first preference to establishing her right of inheritance. In Av. we find brotherless women were staying as spinster at their father’s house, to take care of their parents and the property. Sometimes they were facing problems to get marry and had often remain as spinster for whole life along. In Av. we find a passage states – ‘Women that go, veins with red garments, like brotherless sisters; let them stop, with their splendor smitten.’

In Av, a verse has been found which refers to dowry or else bride price, the verse records as – ‘Not on his bed lies his wedded good wife, who brought a hundred dowers, in whose domain an intellectual’s wife is detained thoughtlessly.’

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64. Av. I : 17 : 1 – Amuryah santi jāmayah sarbā louhitabasasah.
   Abhrātāra eba yosāstistantu hatabatmarnah. (Abhrātāra) ..........

   Yasmin rāstre nirudhyate brahmajāyācittyā.

54
The space for women in the Vedic texts has been discussed with reference to the Ṛgveda and Atharva Veda in this chapter. The account of the woman in the Ṛgveda reveals a bright picture especially in respect of their education. Atharvaveda goes a step further and there it depicts a picture of women fighting for their rights and privileges. The other side of the coin is that deprivation started therefrom.