

SCANNED

PREFACE

The role of sex in the configuration of individual and social life is an interesting study. A number of books has been written on the subject. But most of them focuss attention on one-sided explanation of sex behaviour according as their approaches are from the standpoints of biology, sociology, psychology or anthropology, to which they profess their affiliations. Their viewpoints largely remain discordant and divergent.

A scientific or historical study should give due cognisance to the multi-sided aspects connected with sex. For, sex is associated with a myriad of interests and impulses in the sphere of mankind. Marriage, which is an evident and important institutional expression of sex life, combines within its orbit an abundance of values and interests. The present thesis is an attempt at presenting the multi-sided aspects and values of marriage, their origin and development through the passage of time,

In Indian civilisation, sex is integrated with motives and interests which are not only conjugal, parental, familial economic, aesthetic and ethical, but also spiritual and even metaphysical. Hindu mind has endeavoured hard to purify sex of its elemental dross and elevate it to the highest horizon of love and bliss. But this has been the result of progress achieved through many a curve and turn of social evolution. The blend of empirical concerns of life with metaphysical aspirations to give it balanced harmony and equi-pose is a characteristic trend of the mental attitude fostered by the teachings of Indian philosophy. Traditions, faiths and myths, mores and manners and a search for values and meanings toward poise and composure - all these have contributed toward maturation of sex in the experience of Indian civilisation. In tracing the course of the evolution

of Hindu marriage from historical and critical perspective, it will be also our object to have a glimpse of the composite picture of sex, love and marriage in the background of Indian culture.

The recent scholars of repute in East and West have thrown some light on the system of Hindu marriage. These are Buhler, Jolly, Meyer, G.D. Banerjee, Naresh Chandra Sengupta, Altakar, Rajabali Pandey and above all P.V. Kane. Their contributions are of inestimable value to the workers in the field. They have undoubtedly thrown some light on the track that I have proposed to traverse. But their findings have not exhausted the field of inquiry. On the other hand they leave decisive scope for more or less comprehensive and historical study of the facts and phenomena of Hindu marriage in the matrix of society. I need hardly say that the critical and historical method which I have pursued in the present study in the sampling of data, their co-ordinated treatment and in the deduction of conclusions, there is an indication of originality however insignificant it may be. I shall deem my labour rewarded if this humble venture of mine inspires more competent scholars of adequate means and resources to the task of historical exploration of the Hindu institution of marriage with better yields.

The sources of my information comprise the works of Vedic literature, Dharmasāstra, classical Sanskrit literature, Epigraphical Records, commentaries, Digests (Nibandhas Judicial Decisions and Legislative enactments. *They have been indicated as far as possible toward the end of each chapter.*)

As to the plan of the work, I make it a point to mention that the whole subject has been divided under different heads of enquiry and distributed among different chapters. It may be mentioned that in the chapter-wise distribution of topics there are some common grounds where a bit of repetition has been unavoidable.

I acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to the scholars and teachers whose valuable contributions in the field of my study have rendered me immense help.

My mind goes back to 1953 when I had the unique privilege of sitting at the feet of my late-lamented teacher Dr. P.C. Bagchi at Santiniketan. It is he who infused in me the spirit of historical research in the field of Indology. I am no less grateful to Dr. Siddheswar Bhattacharya, formerly Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Visva-Bharati, for his helpful suggestion and inspiration that I received from him from time to time.

I like to put on record my particular indebtedness to Professor Krishna Gopal Goswami, Reader in Sanskrit in the University of Calcutta, who was my teacher in the University and now happily my supervisor who with his deep-delved scholarship has given me valuable help and guidance at every stage of the progress of my work. But for his active help and guidance, I may frankly admit, the present venture could not have been accomplished at all.

I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not mention with gratitude some of my teachers, Dr. Satkari Mookerjee, Dr. Amareswar Thakur and Dr. Ramaranjan Mookerjee with whom I had the privilege of studying the various Sanskrit texts at the College and in the University.

In conclusion, I crave indulgence in my deficiencies and typographical mistakes, if any, that have escaped my attention.

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