



## STRI TATTVA: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE TRAJECTORY OF VEDIC VANGMAY

Himanshu Mishra, Research Scholar

Centre For Hindu Studies, University of Delhi, New Delhi-110009, BHARAT

Email - [himanshu.du.arts@cts.du.ac.in](mailto:himanshu.du.arts@cts.du.ac.in)

**Abstract:-** The Vedic scriptures present a profound and intricate understanding of the role of stri in ancient Bhartiya society, portraying them as equal participants in social, political, and spiritual life. This research explores the depiction of stri in Vedic literature, highlighting their contributions as philosophers, sages (ṛṣikās), warriors, and active participants in dharma. The study aims to analyze the Vedic conceptualization of stri's origin. By examining sacred texts such as the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Upanishads, and Manusmriti, this research highlights the significant reverence accorded to stri in Vedic society and the philosophical foundations of their rights and duties. Employing qualitative exploratory research, this study delves into primary Vedic texts to understand the principles governing the role of women in ancient Bhartiya society. The study also enquires about the origin of stri tattva and the related viewpoints in the vedas, upanishads and as per the samkhya darsana. The paper presents a contrasting picture from the west that is in disharmony to the laws of nature and also against the equality that should be accorded to women.

**Key Words:-** Vedic stri, Dharma, Upanishads, Gender roles, Bhāratīya Naari, Strī Vimarśh

**Methodology:-** This study employs a qualitative exploratory research approach, utilizing textual analysis of Vedic scriptures to explore the roles and significance of stri in Vedic society. The methodology involves:

- Primary Source Analysis – Examining key Vedic texts such as the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, and Upanishads to extract references to stri's roles, rights, and status.
- Comparative Textual Interpretation – Evaluating different interpretations of stri's depiction in Hindu Darsana, including ancient commentaries and modern scholarly perspectives.
- Content Analysis – Identifying recurring themes in the representation of stri, including their roles in religious rituals, education, and governance.
- Contextual Analysis – Placing Vedic references to stri within the broader sociocultural and

philosophical context of the time.

This research aims to provide an in-depth exploration of the divine and societal roles of stri in Vedic texts, reaffirming their intellectual, spiritual, and social contributions in shaping ancient Bhartiya civilization.

**Research Question:-**

- What is the conceptualization of the origin of stri in Vedic Vangmay?
- How does it differ from the western understanding of stri's origin?

**Hypothesis:-** Bharat has been a land of culture where stri has been always regarded as a Devi, one who is goddess herself. These notions have been established throughout the vedic vangmay and have been reaffirmed in different time periods. stri has always been an equal shareholder in the house as well as the society. stri has been considered to be of divine origin and is treated at par with the male counterparts.

**Literature review:-** The Vedas are considered the foremost among the most revered and authentic major religious scriptures of Hindus. The entire Vedic literature is based on these Vedas. Along with the interpretation of Vedic mantras, they also provide fundamental knowledge. The creation of various Upanishads and Darshanas is also based on the spiritual and philosophical principles described in the Vedas. From the Vedas, one gains the inspiration and knowledge to attain Abhyudaya (worldly prosperity) and Nihshreyasa (ultimate liberation), understanding how a person, by following the four stages of life (ashramas) and achieving the Purushartha Chatushtaya (fourfold aims of life), can attain the ultimate goal of life. The Vedas are such a unique source that they are not merely the literature of a particular era but are eternally related to an individual's personal, familial, social, and national life.

“भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च सर्वं वेदात्प्रसिध्यति”

This means that the entire knowledge of the past, present, and future is based on the Vedas. The Vedas are the mother of the universe. Among the four Vedic Samhitas, the Yajurveda holds the second position in sequence. Among the four Dharma-based Vedas, Yajurveda holds special significance because it is the foundation of the Shrauta Yajnas and Grihya Samskaras. Due to this reason, Yajurveda has been the greatest guiding force of Vedic society.

“सर्वज्ञानमयो हि स”

The entire Veda is free from all knowledge limitations.

“अशक्यं चाप्रमेयं च वेदशास्त्रमिति स्थितिः”

As per Manusmriti, Vedic scriptures are beyond human capability to compose and are filled with infinite knowledge.

The word "Upanishad" literally means the knowledge that is obtained by sitting very close to the Guru. The word "Upanishad" is formed by combining Upa + Ni + Sad (Dhatu) with the suffix Kvip. The root "Sad" has three meanings: dissolution (Visharana), knowledge (Gati), and liberation (Avasadana). Brahmagyda, meaning the knowledge that establishes the soul in the form of Brahman and the science that destroys ignorance, worldly bonds, birth, and death, leading to Moksha, is called Upanishad. That is why the scriptures that explain Brahmagyda in the Vedic corpus are called Upanishads. Due to this Brahmagyda, Upanishads have gained worldwide prestige. In the Prasthanatrayi, Upanishads have been given the primary position. They describe the nature of Brahman, the identity of the soul, the mystery of the afterlife, methods of meditation (Upasana), the attainment of Abhyudaya and Nishchreyasa through meditation, the secret of creation, and the means to perceive the soul and the Supreme Soul (Paramatma). The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is a Brahmana of Shukla Yajurveda and consists of six chapters. The first chapter, divided into six Brahmanas, explores the consumption of all entities by death, the supremacy of Prana (life force), and the principles of creation. The second chapter, also containing six Brahmanas, presents the dialogue between Gargya and Ajatashatru, the narration of Yajnavalkya dividing his wealth between his two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi, before renouncing worldly life, and the philosophical discourse given to Maitreyi. The third and fourth chapters narrate the dialogue between King Janaka and Yajnavalkya, shedding light on deep philosophical insights. The fifth chapter delves into various philosophical subjects, ethical teachings, the theory of creation, and the concept of the afterlife. The sixth chapter contains a philosophical dialogue between Pravahana, Jaibali, and Shvetaketu Aruneya, elaborating on the doctrine of Panchagni Vidya (the five fires). Additionally, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad provides significant insights into the role of stri as Brahmagyadinis (female seers of Brahmagyda), highlighting their eloquence, intellect, and philosophical prowess.

**Introduction:-** The stri is the incomparable companion of man because if the man is the day, then the stri is the night; if the man is the mind, then the stri is the speech; if the man is the sun, then the stri is the sky; if the man is Indra, then the stri is the earth; if the man is the doer, then the stri is his action. Thus, in reality, the stri is the left limb of man; therefore, both are complements to each other.

In the Vedic period, the mother was considered more venerable than the father. Since time immemorial, the stri has been regarded as the progenitor of human history. A stri is great in her significance and is the life image of the vast cosmic form. Every theistic person, considering the deity as everything, first worships it in the form of a mother.

In the Vedic period, after studying the Vedas and performing sacrificial rituals, stri used to fight in wars; they also performed the role of judges. Describing the bravery of stri, the Yajurveda refers to them as

“इन्द्राणी वै सेनाया देवता”,

meaning Indrani, the commander of the army. The Vedas mention heroic stri and state that an army of stri should also be formed just like an army of men:

From the Vedic period, men and stri have been described as the sustainers of creation. They are like the two wheels of a chariot, without which the chariot remains immobile; both are complements to each other. In the Vedas, the pair of man and stri has been compared to the pair of the Rigveda and Samaveda.

In that era, stri proficient in knowledge were praised. Such celibate stri were called Vidushis, and they were given great respect and honor. Parents used to send their daughters to these learned stri to gain knowledge.

Since the establishment of the Bhartiya social organization, a stri has never been devoid of power or identity. The scriptures state:

“स्त्री हि ब्रह्मा बभूविथ”

(A stri herself is Brahman).

Also:

“त्वे विश्वा सरस्वती”

(The entire world is dependent on you because you are in the form of Saraswati.)

The Bhartiya Nari was associated with Dharma, was traditional, and was full of a spirit of service. When other members of society talked about rights, she found satisfaction in her duties. Today, the stri has socialized herself, and in this context, whoever she is connected with in the family and society, she has given their life a new meaning. That is why a stri is called Sushma, meaning the one who inspires good qualities.

The Atharvaveda states:

“स्तुता मया बरदा वेदमाता प्र चोदयन्तां पावमानी द्विजानाम्।

आयुः प्राणं प्रजां पशुं कीर्तिं द्रविणं ब्रह्मवर्चसम्।

महां दत्त्वा ब्रजत ब्रह्मलोकम्॥”

The glory of the Vedas is immense. The Vedas are the source of knowledge. The credit for giving knowledge to the world first goes to the Vedas. The Vedas are the guiding light for all of humanity. Where there is the illumination of the Vedas, there is light, progress, happiness, peace, and continuous development. In this mantra, the Veda is referred to as a mother. Just as a mother protects her child, the

Vedas serve as a means of protecting the entire world. A mother nourishes a child with her milk, similarly, the gods, by feeding the world with the milk of knowledge, increase happiness in the world. It is through service to the Vedic mother that the Aryan lineage has remained eternal. The Vedic mother is the giver of boons. The study of the Vedas is a means of progress for every individual, society, nation, and the world. It is the inspiration for universal brotherhood and the foundation of universal Dharma.

### **ORIGIN OF stri IN THE VEDIC VANGMAY**

As per Brihadaranyak Upanishad

“ममैवांशे जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।

मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानिकर्षति॥”

At the beginning of creation, there was a pair of power and the powerful. This pair had an intense desire to have another pair like themselves. Then, this very fundamental pair created another pair of mind and speech.

“सोऽकामयत द्वितीयो म आत्मा स मनसा वाचं मिथुन् समभवत्”

After that, they created the bull and cow.

“सा गौरभवदृषभ इतर”

Along with other pairs, they also created the dyau and surya (sky and sun) as a pair.

“अथैतस्य मनसो द्यौः शरीरम्”

However, the Supreme Formless Being, even after creating these pairs, was not satisfied. Then, that Supreme Being, along with mind, speech, senses, and all its pairs, lay upon the waters in the form of the Virat (Cosmic) Being. This is referred to as the incarnation of Puruṣa. Even though all powers were contained within this Virat Puruṣa, he still felt dissatisfied and fearful due to being alone.

“सोऽविभेत्तस्मादेकाकी विभेति स हायमीक्षान्चक्रे॥”

When Parabrahma realized that his cosmic play of creation was not taking shape, his cosmic body fell apart. As soon as it fell, it divided into two halves, leading to the emergence of a husband and a wife.

“सा इममेवात्मानं द्वेषा पातयन्ततः पतिश्च पत्नी चाभवताम्।

तस्मादिदमर्थवृगलमिव स्व इति ह स्माह याज्ञवल्क्यः॥”

This primeval man became Svayambhuva Manu, and this primeval stri became Shatarupa.

“शतरूपां च तां नारी तपोनिधृतकल्मषाम्।  
स्वायम्भुवो मनुर्देवः पत्नीत्वे जगृहे प्रभुः॥”

Thus, according to the Upanishads, man and stri are two flames of the same light. One is name, and the other is form. In the Upanishads, the stri has sometimes been described as fire and in some scriptures as Uma. However, in reality, the stri is the inseparable power of the Supreme Brahman. That is why man is the all-supporting, omnipotent Supreme Lord, and stri, the Supreme Goddess, is the creator, sustainer, and dissolver of the world. Their eternal divine union is ever-existent. Thus, Radha and Madhava are also one.

“एक ज्योतिरषद् द्वेचा माधवनामकम्”

Thus, even in the material world, men and stri should be regarded as two aspects of the same reality. A stri is the incomparable companion of a man. If a man wanders as a living being, the stri is his intelligent associate. If the man toils as the sun, the stri provides him with rest as the night. If the man becomes the mind, full of thoughts, the stri becomes speech, resolving them. If the man illuminates the world as the sun, the stri acts as the sky, supporting him.

If the man is Indra, pouring rain, the stri is the earth, nourishing life. If the man is fire, the stri is the flame. If the man is Narayana, resting on the vast waters, the stri is Mahalakshmi, turning that bed of waters into a throne of prosperity.

Thus, the Upanishads affirm that the stri is the left limb of man.

As per Mundaka Upanishad

“द्वा सुवर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिश्रुत्वा।  
जाते तयोरेकः पिप्पलं स्वादवत्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिजाकशीति॥”

This means that man and stri are like two birds sitting on the same tree, and it is through their cooperation and harmony that the world exists.

The Vedic period is considered as the golden age for stri, as it reflects their high respect and prestige. Rishis believed that the miraculous powers of nature were symbols of divine strength, and they attributed divinity to these powers. In the Vedic tradition, stri are considered embodiments of all the forms of divine feminine energy. Goddesses are those who enhance Rita, the cosmic order which includes truth, righteousness, knowledge, harmony, water, food, sacrifice, simplicity, immortality,

justice, beauty, and vitality. stri who are truthful, righteous, knowledgeable, calm and peaceful like water, skilled in the art of cooking, diligent in performing sacrifices, just, wise, mindful of time, and those who increase all good qualities, are considered goddesses. These stri purify themselves and others, and they are revered for their selfless service, problem-solving abilities, and are considered the true divine beings. Such goddesses serve the gods, including in the role of marriage, for the well-being of society.

“विश्रयन्तामृतावृधः प्रयै देवेभ्यो महीः ।

पावकासः पुरुस्पृहो द्वारो देवीरसश्चतः ॥”

According to the Aitareya Upanishad, both men and stri are necessary for fulfilling the duties of creation. Neither can accomplish this task alone. stri are seen as the earth where the husband plants the seed, and just as a plant grows from the earth, life continues through the bond between husband and wife, each fulfilling their respective duties, making the process of creation flow.

“तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः

सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम्

पुमात्रेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां

बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषात् सम्प्रसूताः॥”

In the Mundaka Upanishad, the Panchagni Vidya and the birth of people from them are described. One of these fires is the stri herself. She is the fifth fire in which the divine energy is offered as a sacrifice, leading to the conception and birth of children. This comparison highlights how, just as sacrifices in fire yield results, the union of the divine energy within a stri's womb results in offspring.

Before the creation of this phenomenal universe, the first-born Lord of all creatures divided his own self into two halves, so that one half should be male and the other half female. This story establishes the fundamental equality between man and stri. Just as the equal halves of a fruit share the same essence, both man and stri, as parts of the same divine substance, are equal in rights, privileges, and powers. This concept of equality between the genders is a cornerstone of Hindu Dharmik and ethical teachings, enduring through time and resistant to challenges. Therefore, in Hindu Dharma, whatever is claimed for the man can also be claimed for the stri, without any partiality, whether in terms of ethics, morality, or religious standards.

The same idea of equality is clearly expressed in the Rig Veda (Book 5, hymn 61, verse 8), which states

that the wife and husband, as equal halves of one substance, should share equal parts in all works, both religious and secular. No other religious scripture in the world offers such equality to stri as the Vedas of Hindu Dharma do. In contrast, religious texts from other traditions, such as the Old Testament, the Quran, and the Zend Avesta, often place the blame on stri for the ills of the world.

### **PURUṢA AND PRAKṚTI**

As per the Sāṃkhya darsana Puruṣa and Prakṛti can be considered as the male and female counterparts which serve as the source of all creation and it is due to their union that all humanity exists today.

Puruṣa represents the transcendental self or pure consciousness, which is absolute, independent, free, and beyond perception by the mind or senses. It transcends all experiences and is indescribable in words. Puruṣa is devoid of the three Guṇas, remains eternal, unchanging, and inactive. It serves as the foundation of all knowledge and is regarded as the supreme knower.

Prakṛti, on the other hand, is the fundamental and ultimate cause of the universe, responsible for everything except Puruṣa. While it is also eternal, it is unconscious yet dynamic. Prakṛti exists in a state of equilibrium of the three Guṇas, sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. The creation of the world and all worldly objects arises due to the interaction between Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

According to the Sāṃkhya theory of Vikasavāda, Prakṛti alone cannot bring forth creation since it is purely material, and Puruṣa, being inactive, cannot independently create the world either. Therefore, for evolution to commence, the association of Prakṛti and Puruṣa is essential, despite their contrasting and opposite natures. However, there is no actual contact between them; rather, their mere proximity disturbs the equilibrium of the Guṇas within Prakṛti. This disturbance initiates the process of evolution, wherein transformations occur, leading one product to generate another in successive stages.

### **ORIGIN OF STRI AND HER POSITION FROM THE WESTERN LENS**

In the Old Testament, the creation of stri and the fall of man establishes the notion that stri was created for man's pleasure and that her duty was to obey him completely. She is portrayed as the instrument of Satan who tempts man, leading to his fall from paradise. Adam, in this narrative, shifts the burden of guilt onto Eve. In the New Testament, St. Paul suggests that through Adam's fall, women brought sin, suffering, and death into the world. While modern Christianity has tried to move away from this view, the underlying notion still remains within the traditional interpretations of womanhood in Christian cultures. For those who take the biblical creation story literally, the idea persists that stri are responsible for the temptation and fall of man, bringing sin and suffering into the world.

Many other religious traditions have historically placed women in subordinate roles. In the Abrahamic religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, the narrative often suggests that women were created

for men, and their actions (particularly Eve's temptation of Adam) are linked to the fall of man and the introduction of sin. These views have shaped societal attitudes towards women in these cultures, often relegating them to inferior positions in both spiritual and societal contexts.

**Conclusion:-** Peace in the world, morality in individuals, and adherence to rules in society cannot be made possible without dharma. Whenever a human violates the principles of dharma, in such a situation, he can never eliminate anarchy, immorality, inequality, injustice, ignorance, and oppression. Dharma maintains an equal balance between good and evil in the world. Through dharma, a person places a kind of restraint on evil tendencies, which prevents him from inclining towards wrongdoing.

Among stri, the inclination towards dharma, faith, devotion, and the tendency to follow discipline are the strongest. In the Vedic era, a stri was considered an assistant in dharma, and her presence in dharma-related rituals and sacraments was essential. Husband and wife together performed yajnas (sacrificial rituals), which were an integral part of dharma. Without a wife, a man was considered incomplete, as she was his partner in fulfilling dharma. At that time, it was believed that offerings made without a wife were not accepted by the gods. A man without a wife could not aspire to heaven, as his dharma was considered incomplete.

In the Vajapeya Yajna, while climbing the steps with the support of the sacrificial yupa (sacrificial post), the husband would say to his wife:

“आओ हम दोनों साथ-साथ स्वर्गारोहण करें।”

This statement symbolized the belief that husband and wife, as equal partners in dharma, would not only share responsibilities in this life but also ascend to the higher realms together. It reinforced the idea that dharma was a shared journey, requiring the unity of both partners to be truly fulfilled. The ancient Bhartiya philosophers have portrayed the stri as rashtra itself where the devi herself in Devi atharva sheersha sukta says that

“अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां मे राष्ट्र की स्वामी हूँ।”

This is why Bharat is considered as Bharatmata because it embodies the element of Shakti that sustains all life. Unlike the Western concept of a "Fatherland" or "Promised Land," Bharat is revered as Matrubhumi (Motherland), reflecting its nurturing, life-giving qualities. The idea of Bharatmata symbolizes the nation as a mother, whose energy, wisdom, and strength nourish and protect her children. This deeper connection to the divine feminine energy of shakti makes Bharat distinct in its cultural and spiritual identity.

In this way, stri is not merely a passive partner but a powerful force that sustains, nurtures, and unites the world. Together, man and woman, like Shakti and Shaktiman, are not separate but interdependent, creating an essential, harmonious unity fundamental to existence itself.

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