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## Varna and other identity's in Upanisads

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### Abstract:

The Upanisad's have been considered one of the most ancient philosophical texts which defines and helps to expand the philosophy of Veda's, while expanding the Vedic philosophy it also brings its own philosophical distinctiveness. However, as Hinduism with its philosophical form also carries the social division based on caste. This paper will seek to analyse the caste and gender dimensions Of earlier Upanisad's mainly from the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad and Chandogya Upanishad. These two Upanisad's not only carries the philosophical aspects of self such as Atman and Brahmins but the fourfold strata of the society. How this text defines the gender and Varna division will be discussed with the socially relevant stories ascribed in these texts.

Keywords: #caste, #Varna, #Upanisad, #women.

### Introduction:

The Upanisads are being considered very important text for reconstructing the past of our ancient India. Each and every Upanisads represent different aspects of India; in order to understand the entirety of India at that phase we need to be have considered reading these Upanisads. These Upanisads not only gives us the account of spiritual life of that time but it also helps us for the understanding of cultural, social economical and philosophical life of that time. In this paper our aim will be to inquire the situational analyses of Varna and other identity's ascribed in Upanisads . Therefore we will take the help of two major (firstly written) Upanisads Brahadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanisads in order to look the situations of Varnas and other identities in these texts. According to Deussen (the philosophy of Upanisads ) the entire Upanisads can be classified into fivefold according to the content and the nature of these Upanisads . They are: the pure Vedanta Upanisads , Yoga Upanisads , Sanyasa Upanisads , Síva Upanisads and Vishnu Upanisads .<sup>1</sup> When we look these text from upside it clearly looks like religious in nature. Where rishi's expressed their ideas and thoughts for the betterment of the society. but to have a clear picture about the past; the following questions should be asked: Does these text only represent religious and spiritual life of that time? Does it contained only the spiritual and religious aspect of that era? Does it contained only the discussion about Brahman and Atman? Can we not look these texts from the other aspects after analyzing these? Through the description of the vivid text we will try to look upon the Varna and other identity's of Upanisads ; we will see how Upanisads looked

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<sup>1</sup> Richmond:p.10.

upon women's, the priests and other identities. How these texts view them. Does these identity's have acquired proper place in Indian society?

much discriminatory attitude was present there for women's and ksudra community. For them education was unimaginable; there was clear-cut instruction that they should not avail the knowledge contained in the Upanishada. The same feeling inspires the warning repeated again and again in the Upanisads, not to impart a certain doctrine to unworthy students. The teacher shall not impart to anyone who is not his immediate pupil (antevdsin), who has not already lived for a year in his house, who does not himself intend to be a teacher.<sup>2</sup> Therefore only to his eldest son shall the father as Brahman communicate it (this doctrine), but to no one else, whoever he may be."<sup>34</sup> This (the mixed drink, mantha, and its ritual) shall be communicated to no one, except the son or the pupil." Give this supreme secret to none who is not tranquil, who is not a son or at least a pupil." But if a woman or a S'udra learns the Savitri formula, the Lakshmi formula, the Pralava, one and all go downwards after death. Therefore let these never be communicated to such! If anyone communicates these to them, they and the teacher alike go downwards after death."<sup>5</sup>

Some of this source material consists of dialogues, debates, and formal teachings by well-known teachers of the time, who are identified. Prominent and notable among these are Yajnavalkya (in the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad), Uddalaka Aruni (in the Chandogya Upanisad), Janaka, Pravahana Jaivali, Ajatasatru, Sandilya, and Satyakama Jabala. Many of these are, of course, Brahmins, who were not only priests but also the theologians and teachers within the social hierarchy of the time. It is, therefore, surprising that several prominent teachers of Upanisadic doctrines are presented as kings, or at least as belonging to the Kshatriya class. Many scholars have gone so far as to claim that the creative and new elements of Upanisadic doctrines were the creation of Kshatriyas. The Upanisads themselves appear to lend support to such a view. They record numerous episodes where a Brahmin or a group of Brahmins who claim to be learned are worsted in debate by a Kshatriya, who then goes to establish their rule over the territory.

As Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanisad's will be extensively quoted and used as a primary source for this paper it is evident to know that scholars agreed upon the dating of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad between eighth to sixth century BCE. As Olivelle believes "In its present form, this Upanisad has seen at least three editorial phases."<sup>6</sup> The first phase consists of individual passages, dialogues, and stories that may have been preserved in the memory of individuals or groups. While coming to the second phase different editors of this Upanisad have created three independent collections of them, these collections were preserved as the three sections of the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad.<sup>7</sup> While looking to genealogy's attributed to different teachers it is evident that these sections were available of that time as we found the repetition of the story of Yajnavalkya and his two wives in both the first and the second sections

<sup>2</sup> See Chandogya Upanishad, verse 3.11.5.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Deussen, The philosophy of Upanisads (1906): p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>See Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, verse 6.3.12.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid:p.21.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998):p. 29-30.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid: p. 29.

(2.4 and 4.5). It is, of course, likely that these sections underwent further expansion in the third - phase, when an editor appears to have woven these separate texts into a whole and included them within the Satapatha Brahmana. Of the three, the first two sections exhibit greater internal consistency, while the third, which even the native tradition regards as supplementary, consists of disparate and often unconnected fragments. Nevertheless, this section is important especially in showing the diversity of secret recipes—rites, incantations, and esoteric knowledge—that constituted the literature that we have come to call Upanisads.

Similarly, The Chandogya Upanishad was written during the same time when Brihadaranyaka Upanisads were written. The Chandogya (the Upanisad of "the singers of the Samaveda," i.e., the Udgatr priest) is a section of the Chandogya Brahmana belonging to the Tandy school of the Samaveda. Like the Brhadaranyaka, the Chandogya is the work of an editor or a series of editors who created an anthology of passages and stories that must have previously existed as separate texts.<sup>8</sup>

There has been very few works originated among scholar's with special concern with Upanisads. In the recent decades These texts have been critically looked in the prospective of different individuality. Apart from giving individual focus they have also starts looking these texts in terms-of class conscious (Varna Conscious) in Indian context. the much celebrated Upanisads has to be looked critically from the different aspects; "how Upanisads looks different identity's?" "how these texts represent the women's?" "how these texts defined the power struggle and conflicts?" "does the nature of fight was only philosophical?" these are the pertinent questions which has to be explored and analyzed; this paper will try to seek answers to the asked questions and stablished Upanisadic view of Varna and other identities ascribed in the Upanisad.

### **The Brahmin: priest or authority**

when we flips the pages of Upanisad to see how much power the Brahmins' have, it is very difficult to observe; the main work they perform was performing sacrifice's for the Yajna; apart from this they took part of various debates in order to gain various things such as cow's, land's etc. as the performing sacrifice are not only most important for the king but for the priest it is also the matter of great importance. To gain this priestly work these Brahmin's focus more of a ritual knowledge. When any Brahmin's have more ritual knowledge he prefer always to perform the great Yajna or sacrifice organized by the king. And when he did-not get the opportunity of performing Yajna than he went to give threats like this: "Your head will shatter apart." This types of threats are given for mainly two reasons: the first one is to gain the economic benefits coming from the sacrifice, and the second is to gain greater acceptance of priesthood among their counterparts. the debates and discussion in Upanisads are characterized as competitive and aggressive, risking the reputations of brahmins and sometimes exhibiting political rivalries. the story of Uṣasti Cākṛāyaṁ (aka Uṣasta Cākṛāyaṁ) (CU 1.10–11). In this episode Uṣasti accuses a number of brahmins of performing a sacrifice without having proper knowledge.

<sup>8</sup>Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998):p. 166.

### As a teacher: the relationship with the students

Like-wise other ancient religious texts the importance of teacher and the duties of students has highlighted in both the Upanisad's. The teachers were mostly from the priestly class who taught the students after the consideration of his or her Varna. The student is taken in the Upanayana sanskara after the process of taking water from him.

In the Upanisads teaching becomes an object of discourse. In these examples it is not merely the knowledge itself that is emphasized, but the process of teaching and the interaction between teacher and student. With the discussion with the teacher a student try to grab the knowledge. And the students have to repay this by serving him with his utmost capability.

Whenw Indra and Virocana decided to learn about atman and initially approach Prajāpati, they arrive in the presence of their prospective teacher carrying firewood.<sup>9</sup> These two narrative details, the approach of the student and the offering of firewood, feature in the atapatha Brāhmaṇa account of the upanayana, and appear in a number of the teacher/student dialogues throughout the Upanisads. Together, these descriptions establish that it is up to students to seek out a teacher and that they should arrive willing to work for him. The usual tasks that students perform for teachers are tending the fires and taking care of the cows.<sup>10</sup> Thus the lives of the Brahmin's were depended upon the work consistaly performed by the students in order to gain worldly and spiritually knowledge. They were being continuously tested by the teacher's to prove that they are the worthy of knowledge.

### Threatening the competitive power: you're head will shatter apart

The Brahmin's were always in competition with each-other; they engaged in dialogs, debates, and other types of philosophical discussion. When we closely look into these discussion we found that these dissentful discussion's carried the indirect threats, struggle for the monetary and other wealth and aggressive political and intellectual competition among Brahman's.

We found this type of aggressive threats and tactical strategy mainly between the dialogs of Yagyavalka and kurupunchala. Where, when Yagyavalka applies the same methods to silence their opponents. While elaborating to the same; Brian Black wrote: "Certainly, the most curious aspect of the brahmodya is the recurring warning: "your head will shatter apart!" (mā te mṛdha vyapaptat). This threat appears in almost every significant brahmodya, both public and private, and is thus a vital characteristic of these exchanges. Additionally, this threat is one of the elements of the brahmodya that distinguishes these exchanges from dialogues between teachers and students, as well as dialogues between Brahmins and kings. Whether this warning represents the loss of face or the curse of death, these words are employed as a threat to silence opponents and clearly point to the highly competitive character of these exchanges between brahmins."<sup>11</sup> Even the same tactics is also applied upon the Rishi Gargi who was women which we will look in the sections; "women's in Upanisads".

<sup>9</sup> Patrick olivelle (1998) (Chandogya Upanishad 8.7.2)

<sup>10</sup> Brian Black, The Character of the Self in Ancient India Priest, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanisads, New York univercity Press (2007): p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid: p. 80.

in Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 3.9.18 there is also very interesting thing to observe: when sakalya answers all of the questions fearsly yagyavalka accuse him: “Poor Sakalya! I'm afraid these Brahmins have made you their cat's-paw.” It might be also said that in BU the most influential scholar was Yajnavalkya and more than 50% contents carry his idea's. but the threat of shattering apart the head also comes in Chandogya Upanisad; when discussion was heated slowly and between Silaka Salavatya and Caikitayana Dalbhya Salaka accuse Caikitayana of carrying lack of knowledge he threaten him by saying: ““It is very clear, Dalbhya, that your Saman lacks a foundation. And now if someone were to say, 'Your head will shatter apart!' your head is bound to shatter apart.”” After this threat he surrender's himself and offered to learn from him.

Similarly when the Kuru region was devastated and every one was struggling for food; Usasti Cakrayana went to get in the Yajna of king for the purpose of getting sacrificial rights. Where he threaten the competitive priest by saying this: "Hey Pras-totr! If you sing the Introductory Praise without knowing the deity that is linked to it, your head will shatter apart!" He said the same thing to the Udgatr priest: "Hey Udgatr! If you sing the High Chant without knowing the deity that is linked to it, your head will shatter apart!" And he said the same thing also to the Pratihatr priest: "Hey Pratihatr! If you sing the Response without knowing the deity that is linked to it, your head will shatter apart!"<sup>12</sup> after that they stopped singing and sat down in silence. Then the patron of the sacrifice said to him: "Sir, I'd very much like to know who you are." And he replied: "I am Usasti Cakrayana." "It is you, sir, whom I have been searching for to carry out all these priestly functions. I selected these others only when I couldn't find you. But now, sir, you yourself should carry out all the priestly functions for me." "All right. But let these same priests, who were authorized at that time, sing the songs of praise. You must, however, give me the same amount of money that you give them." "All right," said the patron of the sacrifice. In this description of the story two thing is evident: the first one is the superiority of the knowledge and struggle for the wealth. And the other one was the threats offered for getting the priestly power.<sup>13</sup>

### **Representing the power: The Kshatriya class**

After the Brahman the much celebrated class depicted in the Upanishad's are the Kshatriya's. they entire state power are vested on them. in the Upanisads we found a number of dialogs and discussion between Kshatriya's and Brahman's. while looking to these discussion some of the scholar's even goes to claim that the Upanishad's possess Kshatriya Authorship. some of these discussion features a Brahmin giving a king a private instruction, while others depict the king teaching the brahmin. Indeed, the king teaching a brahmin is a prominent motif throughout the late Brahma as and early Upanisads , according to Olivelle and Brian Black both believes that the dialogues not only featuring the king as teacher, but overtly claiming that particular teachings

<sup>12</sup>Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): p. 210.

<sup>13</sup>Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): p. 206. CU 1.11.6-11.

actually originated among the Kshatriya's.<sup>1415</sup> In both the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Chandogya Upanishad, King Pravāhaṇa Jaivali explicitly asserts that his knowledge had never reached the brahmins before. The Chandogya Upanishad account makes an even stronger claim, maintaining that the Kshatriya monopoly on political power is founded on an exclusive possession of this knowledge: "Prior to you, this knowledge has not gone to the brahmins. Therefore, in all the worlds government has belonged only to the Kshatriya's" (CU5.3.7).<sup>16</sup>

Similar episodes are narrated with reference to kings Asvapati Kaikeya (CU 5.11-24),<sup>17</sup> Ajatasatru (BU 2.1),<sup>18</sup> and others. The relationship between the priestly and royal classes in ancient India was complex. At one level it was symbiotic; the cooperation between these two groups, in whose hands power was concentrated, permitted both to thrive. At another level, the two groups were rivals for power and prestige. The entire Brahmanical ideology of society and the science and practice of ritual were designed, on the one hand, to enhance Kshatriya power and, on the other, to ensure the recognition by the Kshatriyas that the source of their power was the Brahmin. It is naive, therefore, to accept the literary evidence of the Upanisads regarding their Kshatriya authorship at face value and as historical fact.

We also get to know many kings who taught kings and Brahman's for competing power and authority. For example, Ajātaśatru, the king of Kāśī, teaches about the vital functions in an attempt to compete with Janaka, his political rival. His teaching is characteristic of the knowledge attributed to kings throughout the Upanisads and is presented in direct contrast to the ritual knowledge of the brahmin Gārgya. Asvapati, the king of the Kaikeyas, teaches about ātman vaiśvānara to six brahmins (ĪB 10.6.1.2; CU 5.11.4). He is depicted as a generous patron who provides food and accommodation for brahmins and who privileges brahmins known for their knowledge of Upanishadic teachings over priests who perform sacrifices. Finally, Pravāhaṇa, the king of Pañcāla, teaches Uddālaka aruni about the five fires and the two paths of the dead and claims that his knowledge is directly responsible for his royal power. Pravāhaṇa's these encounter's not only depict him as an ideal king, but also outline the proper etiquette by which brahmins should approach the king when seeking patronage. Taken together, these stories about kings illustrate a Kshatriya orientation in many teachings in the early Upanisads. The texts not only present kings as major characters, but also frame many of the teachings specifically within a political context that addresses the concerns of kings.

### **Women's in Upanishad**

"How do religious texts looked women's?" this is the one of the most essential question which every one should ask to get the clear-cut idea that "how these religious texts have depicted the other fifty% population. Which has always remain unrecognizable through-out the history." now

<sup>14</sup> Brian Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India Priest, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanisads*, New York university Press (2007):p. 103.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick Olivelle, *The early Upanisads annotated text and translation*, Oxford University Press (1998):p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Olivelle, *The early Upanisads annotated text and translation*, Oxford University Press (1998) Chandogya Upanisad 5.3.7 "As you have told me, Gautama, before you this knowledge has never reached Brahmins. In all the worlds, therefore, government has belonged exclusively to royalty." :p. 258.

<sup>17</sup> Patrick Olivelle, *The early Upanisads annotated text and translation*, Oxford University Press (1998):p. 261.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid: p. 81.

during the 21<sup>st</sup> century when while during researching in any topic all types of aspects social, economic, cultural, religious, even environment factor's have been analyzed carefully by the scholar's. even in every subjects of research the gender aspects have been encourage to look upon. So with the same spirit I will also try to look how the women's have been represented in these Upanisads . Looking into the gender aspects we will critically comment in these texts. as Brian Black put; demonstrate that gender is an essential aspect of philosophy in the Upanisads both because of the explicitly male soteriology represented by a number of the teachings and because the genders of the literary characters have an impact on what they say and how they interact with each other.<sup>19</sup> According to the formulations of classical Hinduism, knowledge of the Vedic literature was restricted to men of the upper three classes (Varna's) who had become 'twice-born' by undergoing initiation with the sacred thread. But in the Upanisad's we meet women who can debate Sruti as equals with men. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, Yajñavalkya's wife Maitreyi is called a 'scholar of sacred lore', and her interest is treated as entirely admirable. In the great debate of brihadaranyaka Book III, Gargi Vacaknavi disputes on equal terms with the male scholars. Not only does she regard herself as the equal of anyone there except Yajñavalkya himself (III.8.1, 12),<sup>20</sup> but the other Brahma?as17 seem to take her at her own estimation. (In view of what subsequently happens to Vidagdha Sakalya,<sup>18</sup> I do not think we can take Yajñavalkya's warning about 'asking too many questions' (BU III. 6.1) as being patronizing.)

Indeed, throughout the Upanisads the portrayals of female characters are neither static nor consistent. As wives, mothers, and philosophers, female characters are not reduced to one uniform image or a single social role.<sup>21</sup> Despite the diversity of the characters, however, most of the women portrayed in the Upanisads face similar obstacles in their discussions with men, with another recurring theme in these dialogues being the lack of authority of female speakers. Women do speak, but their speech is not assigned the same status as the words of men. In the Upanisads, although the presence of women is necessary, the voices of female speakers are continually restricted and muted.<sup>22</sup>

### Questioning beyond everything: Women rishi's

The early Upanisads also present at least two women, Gargi Vacaknavi<sup>23</sup> and Maitreyi, the wife of Yajnavalkya<sup>24</sup> as participating in theological disputes and discussions. The fact that these women are introduced without any attempt to justify or to explain how women could be engaged in theo-logical matters suggests the relatively high social and religious position of at least women of some social strata during this period. This is confirmed by a ritual for obtaining "a learned daughter" recorded in brahadaranyaka Upanishad<sup>2526</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Brian Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India* (2007):p. 140.

<sup>20</sup>Patrick Olivelle, *The early Upanisads annotated text and translation*, Oxford University Press (1998):p. 108-109.

<sup>21</sup> Brian black : p. 143.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid :p. 144.

<sup>23</sup> Patrick Olivelle, *The early Upanisads annotated text and translation*, Oxford University Press (1998): (BU 3.6, 8)

<sup>24</sup> Olevelle (1998) BU 2.4; 4.5,

<sup>25</sup> Olevelle (1998) BU 6.4.17.

<sup>26</sup> Valerie J. Roebuck, *The Upanisads*, second ed, Penguin Books (2003):p.22.

In this regard These Upanisads have been prays for asking difficult questions. There are also arguments that the Upanisads have bring dialogs and debates. But the actual fact whether these texts allow's critical thinking or simply saying does these texts encourage asking critical questions specially if these questions were being asked by the women. Let us look these questions asked by the women rishi's and what it meant in those days. Apart from this we will also looked how scholar's have interpreted these questions.

### **The fierce Gargi and her questions**

In the Upanishad we know that only few women's has able to make in the Upanishad; Gargi Vacaknavi is only one who ask very difficult questions. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad she enquire upon two questions in other words we can say she had opportunity to ask two questions. Her question cross the boundary of existence and reach till God; the questions were so threatening and curiously asked that at the end Yajnavalkya had to threaten her that "if you asks such question regarding God your head will shatter apart". Let us move towards first question she directly asked to Yajnavalkya in chapter 3 of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.6.1 Then Gargi Vacaknavi began to question him. "Yajnavalkya," she said, "tell me—since this whole world is woven back and forth on water, on what, then, is water woven back and forth?" "On air, Gargi." "On what, then, is air woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of the intermediate region, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of the intermediate region woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of the Gandharvas, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of the Gandharvas woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of the sun, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of the sun woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of the moon, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of the moon woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of the stars, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of the stars woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of the gods, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of the gods woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of Indra, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of Indra woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of Prajapati, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of Prajapati woven back and forth?" "On the worlds of brahman, Gargi." "On what, then, are the worlds of brahman woven back and forth?" At this point Yajnavalkya told her: "Don't ask too many questions, Gargi, or your head will shatter apart! You are asking too many questions about a deity about whom one should not ask too many questions. So, Gargi, don't ask too many questions!" Thereupon, Gargi Vacaknavi fell silent.<sup>2728</sup>

In the above Sloka we saw that Gargi continuously asked her question to Yajnavalkya (woven back and forth?) until he threatens her "You're head will shatter apart". After this threat she fell client because their might be many reason's the first one could be the threat of her life for questioning God. The other one could be the widespread presence of Brahmin and king could make her life danger. The interesting point to note in the questing session is that while replying to Gargi

<sup>27</sup> See brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.6.1 for the further detail.

<sup>28</sup> See olivelle translation of the Upanishad (1998) :p. 85 for the full description.

Yajnavalkya while answering to her question repeats her name: (on the world of this and that Gargi).<sup>29</sup>

### Her second question

When Gargi returns with the discussion she ask another two question by expressing these words to his fellow Brahman's: "Distinguished Brahmins!" she said. "I am going to ask this man two questions. If he can give me the answers to them, none of you will be able to defeat him in a theological debate."<sup>30</sup> It testify her confidence where without afraid she challenge to Yajnavalkya "I rise to challenge you, Yajnavalkya, with two questions, much as a fierce warrior of Kasi or Videha, stringing his unstrung bow and taking two deadly arrows in his hand, would rise to challenge a rival. Give me the answers to them!"<sup>31</sup> after that she ask's another two philosophical questions regarding the nature of time and Brahman and when Yajnavalkya successfully answer to these then Gargi told to his fellow Brahman's that none of you can ever defeat him in the theological arguments.

### Maitreyi and Katyayani: the wives of Yajnavalkya

In the brihadaranyaka Upanisad we found the short and breaf discussion about the wives of Yajnavalkya namely maitreyi and Katyayani. The same story is repeated in two times as it is in the second and fourth chapter of Brihadaranyaka Upanisad with miner editing.<sup>32</sup> In this story discussion between Yajnavalkya and his wife is being explained. Yajnavalkya said to his wife "Look—I am about to depart from this place. So come, let me make a settlement between you and Katyayani."<sup>33</sup> In this, Maitreyi asked in reply: "If I were to possess the entire world filled with wealth, sir, would it make me immortal?" "No," said Yajnavalkya, "it will only permit you to live the life of a wealthy person. Through wealth one cannot expect immortality." the desire of wealth of Matreyi made us to thing that those days either possessing wealth was preferred the most. Weather she had economic freedom or not is not known. When he informs that she can not attain immortality by possessing the wealth, she surrender's herself and asked "Tell me instead, sir, all that you know."<sup>34</sup> Through the reply of Yajnavalkya we also got to know that between his twowives he loves the Matreyi the most the possible reason might be that she was good in theological and intellectual discussion. on the other hand, Katyayani was only have knowledge of womanly work as we got to know from the BU 4.5.1 where it is clearly written: "Now, Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani. Of the two, Maitreyi was a woman who took part in theological discussions, while Katyayani's understanding was limited to womanly matters."<sup>35</sup> That

<sup>29</sup>Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): p. 108.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid: p. 89.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid: p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> The same story appear in brihadaranyaka Upanisad 2.4.4 (olivelle :p. 90) and 4.5.51 (olivelle: p. 127).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid: p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid: BU. 2.4.4

<sup>35</sup>Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): p.127.

was the reason that Yajnavalkya share's his knowledge to Matreyi; "You have always been very dear to me, and now you speak something very dear to me! Come and sit down. I will explain it to you. But while I am explaining, try to concentrate." Then he inform the philosophical secret that in this world every-one hold everything for the love of him or herself.

In this discussion the life of Katyayani remain behind the wall's. through the description of this Sloka we can assume that Katyayani was involve on doing house-old chores such as cooking, cleaning and other womanly matter's. she carries the responsibility of the all the arrangement for the house. Despite absence from the philosophical and intellectual sphere she manage everything but still unable to get the ultimate love and respect from her husband.

### **Usasti Cakrayana and his wife, Atiki**

In the previous section while discussing the life of matreyi and Katyayani we found that Katyayani possess knowledge of "womanly matter's" but still her exact characteristic is not been revealed. But in the Chandogya Upanisad we found the description of Atiki the wife of Usasti Cakrayana; who is been portrayed as the ideal wife who sacrifices her food to save her husband. Later his husband went to the king and performed the Yajna by giving the same threat 'you're head will shatter apart'

The story is based on the land of the Kuru which is devested and the crises of food was evident in those regions. It goes like this: "One day he came to beg from the rich man while he was eating some groats. And he told Usasti: "All I have is what I have been served here. I have nothing else." Usasti replied: "Give me some of that." So he gave him some and said: "Here is something to drink." And Usasti replied: "That would be drinking your leftovers!" "But aren't these also leftovers?" "Yes," he replied, "but if I don't eat them I'll die. Drinking the water, on the other hand, is optional." After he had eaten himself, Usasti took the remainder to his wife. But she had already gathered ample almsfood. So she took what Usasti gave her and saved it. The next morning Usasti got up and said: "If only I had some food, I'd be able to earn a little money. That king over there is getting ready to perform a sacrifice,<sup>36</sup> and he may well choose me to carry out all the priestly functions." listening to this; His wife told him: "But, my lord, we still have the groats." And gave him the groats she saves in the previous night. He ate them and arrived at the sacrifice after it had already started. And later while claiming to the superiority of his knowledge and threatening the Brahman's of shattering the head if they pronounce wrongly; he got the priestly functions with the same amount of wealth like other Brahman's were given. The process of getting priestly rights had already looked in the previous section.

### **Women's: playing subordinate role**

There is very vague and unscientific theory's is being propagated which defies the creation of human's and animal's in very differently which is somewhat quite similar to the Christian theory of creation of men. The first thing that âtman does with his wife after creating her is to copulate with her, with the result of their union being that human beings are born (1.4.3). In this myth,

<sup>36</sup>Ibid: p. 210.

âtman is linked to a particular construction of gender relations that prioritizes male over female and defines women as created by, from, and for men.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the privileging of the male role, however, procreation is represented as a process that is inherently interactive. After their initial copulation, âtman's wife thinks to herself, "How can he have intercourse with me after having generated me from himself. Now, I will hide myself" (1.4.4). The story then relates how she hides in the form of a cow, but then he becomes a bull and copulates with her. From this union cattle are born. She then takes the form of various other animals, and in every case âtman assumes the male form of each animal and copulates with her. From these unions all the animals are born. Significantly, this account points towards later creation myths where the primordial female takes a more active role in creation. At the end of this myth, âtman thinks to himself, "I, indeed, am creation, because I created all this" (BU 1.4.5). according to brian black The comments of âtman, however, do not seem to represent the creation process as it is described in this myth. As we have seen, each case in which the specific animals are born happens because the wife has initially taken on the identity of each animal. Thus, the first instance of every species occurs only when the wife assumes a new form for the sake of hiding. Despite the fact that âtman takes credit for creation, the narrative shows us that living beings did not come into existence from âtman alone, but by means of patnî's activity. As in the Prajâpati myth, this Upanishadic account defines creation in such a way that it downplays the procreative agency of the woman, yet nevertheless illustrates the inherent complementarity among male and female in the process of creation.<sup>38</sup> Despite this active female participation, these creation myths tend to reduce the images of the female body to that of a sexual body.<sup>39</sup>

### objectification of women through the discriptive semenal process

as through the description of above sections we have almost got the idea that in these texts the importance of women's have remain very less; not only they were given subordinate role. In Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 6.4.13 the objectification of the women's could also be found where she had compare with the Yajna and doing sex with her is also a form of Yajna or sacrifice. When Prajapati eats the sacrificial food he thought "Now, why don't I prepare a base for that semen?"<sup>40</sup> thereafter, he created woman and, after creating her, had intercourse with her. Her vagina is compare with the sacrificial duties. It stated: "Her vulva is the sacrificial ground; her pubic hair is the sacred grass; her labia majora are the Soma-press; and her labia minora are the fire blazing at the center. A man who engages in sexual intercourse with this knowledge obtains as great a world as a man who performs a Soma sacrifice, and he appropriates to himself the merits of the women with whom he has sex. The women, on the other hand, appropriate to themselves the merits of a man who engages in sexual intercourse with them with- out this knowledge."<sup>41</sup> Thus in the above verse it is evident to note that her sexuality is being objectified by these texts. her parts of the body

<sup>37</sup> For the full description see olivelle translation of the Upanishad (1998) :p. 48-49.

<sup>38</sup> Brian black, (2007) :p. 152.

<sup>39</sup> Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998):p. 50.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid: p. 154.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid : p. 154, BU 6.4.13.

is compare with the worldly pleasure and her sexual organ was being limited to reproducing children's. this particular telling of the story concludes by comparing a woman's body to a soma sacrifice, where only the sexual and generative organs from the woman are mentioned. Whereas a man's body is a microcosm for the entire universe, the female body is reduced to a sexual and procreative body.<sup>42</sup> Not only female body but the male body has also described as the procreative body. For example in Chandogya Upanisad description of the sâman of Vâmadeva, explicitly male sexual actions are linked to different aspects of the chant: "Inviting a woman is the hi%okara (initial humming), expressing desire is the prastâva (prelude). Lying beside her is the udgÿtha, lying on top of her is the pratihâra (response). Climax is the nidhana (finale)" (2.13.1).<sup>43</sup>

### High scale misogyny

the highly misogynistic attitude of this text could also been seen through the lending verses. While reading to this one may conclude that the lives of women was-not-so good in terms of equal access to everything. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad the character of auspicious women is define by this: "Surely, a woman who has changed her clothes at the end of her menstrual period is the most auspicious of women.(BU 6.4.7.)" If women refuse from having sex the beating from stick while refusal to sex is also emphasized; in this the commandment is very similar to Quranic conjuncture.<sup>44</sup> To prove this point let us look the brihadaranyaka Upanisad 6.4.7 where it is clearly written that after the end of her menstrual period one should invite her for sex and if she refuse; firstly he should bribe her and if she don't agree on this then he should beat her through the stick. Let me quote the exact verse: "When she has changed her clothes at the end of her menstrual period, therefore, one should approach that splendid woman and invite her to have sex. Should she refuse to consent, he should bribe her. If she still refuses, he should beat her with a stick or with his fists and overpower her, saying: ""I take away the splendor from you with my virility and splendor."" And she is sure to become bereft of splendor. (BU 6.4.7)"<sup>45</sup> Roebuck sees this passage as an "apparent encouragement of domestic violence," yet points out that it is unclear "whether actual or symbolic violence is intended".<sup>46</sup> Despite the fact that this passage is embedded within ritual and perhaps should be taken metaphorically, the violent and aggressive portrayal of the brahmin man is consistent with the depiction of the confrontational masculinity of verbal debates.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Brian black :p. 157.

<sup>43</sup> Chandogya Upanisad 2.13.1-2 When he calls, it is the Him-interjection. When he asks, it is the Introduc- tory Praise. When he lies down with the woman, it is the High Chant. When he lies upon (prati) the woman, it is the Response (prati.hara). When he ejaculates, it is the Concluding Chant. When he withdraws, it is the Concluding Chant. This is the Vamadevya Saman woven upon sexual intercourse. Olivelle :p. 191.

<sup>44</sup> Quran 4:34, Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand.

<https://quran.com/4/34#>

<sup>45</sup>Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): p. 157.

<sup>46</sup> Valerie J. Roebuck, The Upanisads, second ed (2003):p. 410.

<sup>47</sup> Brian black: p. 158.

## The desire for son

in the Upanisads the birth of the son is being given very high regard. We encounter many instances where the means and method of getting son is being extensively told. I. E. in chandogya upanisaed 1.5.2 “I sang the praise of only the sun. Therefore, I have only you for a child. Turn to its rays, and you will have many children.” That is with respect to the divine sphere.”

In the sixth chapter of Brihadaranyaka Upanisad we encounter a number of mixtures with rice and milk that should be prepared by a man’s wife, for him and her to eat together (BU 6.4.15– 18). There are four sets of characteristics that are then described for potential offspring and a different mixture that should be made and eaten for each one. The first desired offspring is a son with a fair (βukla) complexion, who will learn one Veda; the second is a son with a brown (kapila) and yellow (pi%ogala) complexion, who will master two Vedas; and the third is a son with dark (βyāma) complexion and red eyes (lohitākfa), who will learn three Vedas. Surprisingly, the fourth offspring mentioned is a daughter (duhitā), who is described as learned (pa£ġitā). Although these instructions for how to secure a female child at first seem inconsistent with the male bias of this section, in fact learned women are necessary for these rituals to work.<sup>48</sup> Even when the baby was born the husband firstly take over him and tell three times “speech” into his year then give to her mother for breastfeeding.

## The Ksudra’s and the Varna class

The Upanisads also supports the same theory of Varna creation of the society which is prominent in the Rig-Veda but some different changes but the spirit and the purpose was same: to justify the division of the society into the Varna class. Let me quote the verse where the theory is promulgated: Brahadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.11 In the beginning this world was only brahman, only one. Because it was only one, brahman had not fully developed. It then created the ruling power, a form superior to and surpassing itself, that is, the ruling powers among the gods—Indra, Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrtyu, and Isana. Hence there is nothing higher than the ruling power. Accordingly, at a royal anointing a Brahmin pays homage to a Ksatriya by prostrating himself. He extends this honor only to the ruling power. Now, the priestly power (brahman) is the womb of the ruling power. Therefore, even if a king should rise to the summit of power, it is to the priestly power that he returns in the end as to his own womb. So, one who hurts the latter harms his own womb and becomes so much the worse for harming someone better than him. (the power structure is the managed by the above lines which we have already looked in the Kshatriya section) Brahman still did not become fully developed. So it created the Vaisya class, that is, the types of gods who are listed in groups—Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, All- gods, and Maruts. It still did not become fully developed. So it created the Sudra class, that is, Pusan. Now, Pusan is

<sup>48</sup>Ibid:p. 155.

this very earth, for it nourishes this whole world, it nourishes all that exists. It still did not become fully developed.<sup>4950</sup>

So its stated by the above quote that this varna construction has a direct sanction from the Brahmin the superior force who control the universe. Therefore, the class (Varna) system can never been challenged by anyone. Further in the Bhihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.14 it has stated that after creating all the Varna classes the Brahmin has created the law (Dharma) which needs to be followed.

Not only the class creation is justified but many instances it has been also highlighted that those who will do good deeds will be born in the upper Varna and those who will not will be born in the sudra or out-caste family. To justify this point it is evident to quote Chandogya Upanisad 5.10.7 "Now, people here whose behavior is pleasant can expect to enter a pleasant womb, like that of a woman of the Brahmin, the Ksatriya, or the Vaisya class. But people of foul behavior can expect to enter a foul womb, like that of a dog, a pig, or an outcaste woman. "Then there are those proceeding on neither of these two paths—they become the tiny creatures revolving here ceaselessly. 'Be born! Die!'—that is a third state."<sup>51</sup> Not only this threat is being produced on this but example were also been shown to the bad deeds; "A man who steals gold, drinks liquor, and kills a Brahmin; A man who fornicates with his teacher's wife— these four will fall. As also the fifth—he who consorts with them." the meaning of this threat could be understood in this way that those days the idea of curtailing sexual freedom and to established the moral rule they carried this threat. Even in the above quote it also seeks the possibility that the students some-times indulged with the teacher's wife in a relationship. And to stop these it has extencively written: "A man who fornicates with his teacher's wife." Will be born on the sudra or out-caste family.

much discriminatory attitude was presence there not only for women's but sudra community. for them education was unimaginable; there was clear-cut instruction that they should not avail the knowledge contained in the Upanisada. The same feeling inspires the warning repeated again and again in the Upanisads , not to impart a certain doctrine to unworthy students. the teacher shall not impart to anyone who is not his immediate pupil (antevdsin), who has not already lived for a year in his house, who does not himself intend to be a teacher." Chand. 3. 11. 5 :-" Therefore only to his eldest son shall the father as Brahman communicate it (this doctrine), but to no one else, whoever he may be." (Brih. 6. 3. 12 :--)"<sup>52</sup> This (the mixed drink, mantha, and its ritual) shall be communicated to no one, except the son or the pupil." Give this supreme secret) to none who is not tranquii, who is not a son or at least a pupil." But if a woman or a S'udra learns the Savitri formula, the Lakshmi formula, the Pralava, one and all go downwards after death. Therefore let these never be communicated to such! If anyone communicates these to them, they and the teacher alike go downwards after death."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): P. 49-50.

<sup>50</sup> For the full Sloka see Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10-1.4.14.

<sup>51</sup> Patrick Olivelle, The early Upanisads annotated text and translation, Oxford University Press (1998): p. 237.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid: p. 17.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid:p.21.

Thus in conclusion it can be said that the interpretation of Upanisad in a different point-of-view needs to be carry on. In this paper we look extensively How the attitudes of Upanisadic author's was their towards women's. how despite the competitive power struggle between Brahman's and Ksatriya class they still maintained their power and wealth. How because of the discriminatory attitude towards sudra class these knowledge have not transformed to them. even it has been emphasized that those who will do bad deeds will born in the sudra and out-caste family.

It is the correct time that we should critically look these religious texts in terms of gender and caste constructions. However, the research has started to be carry on in these field but only few works have originated to deal with these questions. Therefore, the possibilities are endless to be explore.

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