

## Family life as seen in Saint literature

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Sant Sahitya is the cultural glory of Maharashtra. The period of Mahanubhav to Ramdas is about four and a half hundred years. (1) Spirituality is the core of saintly literature. While imparting knowledge of spirituality to the society, the saints added it by adding parables and illustrations from daily life. As difficult subjects like spirituality were told through parables in life, it became easier for all the common people to understand, and since it was related to our own lives, people became close and affectionate about it. (2) The saints have mentioned in their literature the examples of society and family. Based on the historical and literary evidence in it, I have done a research paper titled 'Family Life as seen in Saint Literature'.

### Joint Family System

In the age of saint literature there were family practices together. (3) All power was in the hands of the doer of the house. The power in the house was in the hands of the eldest and most capable woman in the house. The in-laws were strict. The idea of being separated by daughter in law was not acceptable. Separation was not socially acceptable. A woman who separates her husband from her parents and all her family members is called "Awadsa" in the Sant Sahitya.

Saint Ramdas protested against such things

**"Strikarane Bighadali |Sarvahi Jivlaga |**

Dasbodha is done from such an ovi. Also, Saint Eknath seems to have protested against such a woman as follows

**Stri Swabhav dush tadbhut | Je Navmasi vahe Udrat|**

**Je sosi sada Narakmut | Tya mate sisut parkha kari | (4)**

The youngest children in the family A family where women, children and the elderly were respected and respected was considered cultured. Mention of children's upbringing, dress, education, children's games are mentioned in the saint literature. The saints have shown similarity with the mother and her child while expressing the passion of love between God and the devotee, the mother and the disciple. Explaining the interrelationship between Guru-Shishya, Bhakta-Parmeshwar, all the saints like Dnyandev, Namdev, Janabai, Tukaram, Ramdas have portrayed the heart-to-heart relationship between mother and child on the basis of parables, illustrations and metaphors. Mention of mother and child in Sant Sahitya is as follows –

The mother understands the hunger of the infant .

**Je apatya thanahuni nighe |Tayachi bhuk te mayesichi nije | (5)**

While breastfeeding a sleeping baby Leaf thick breasts.

**Panha datli stani |nidrit balate janani |**

**Paji datuni Uthvuni | (6)**

The baby is the lifeblood of the mother, even if she is at work, her whole attention is on the baby.

**Mata guntli Kamasi | Chitt Tiche Balapashi|. (7)**

Nowadays, lullabies are obsolete. Nowadays, a mother who sings lullabies to her baby will be seen in village life. Palkhi needles of Samadhi. Sing the roar of Anuhat.

**SamadhichePalakhi Suye | AnuhtachaHallaru Gaye |**

**Yapari Janardan Nijmaye | (8)**

Such mentions have come in the literature of saints. Saints and their relationship with God or disciple and guru is like mother and child, mother's constant focus is on the baby, just as she protects the baby, God also protects the devotees or guru disciple. An attempt is made to explain the relationship between God and the devotee by giving such metaphors. (9)

### **Drug information**

In the past, housewives knew a lot about medicine. Grandma's wallet is famous before and even today. Many medicinal remedies are found in Sant literature.

### **Upbringing**

Because of the influence of parents on their children, they had to behave very well. She used to punish him for his misbehavior by thinking of the child's future, but it is her love that is mentioned in the Ramayana. (10) Boys and girls were well cared for. The Goddess of Knowledge has mentioned that the mother is happy if the baby is dressed in various beautiful clothes like hair, bracelets, earrings and various beautiful clothes like angad, topade. You get information about various games like dolls for girls, choolbolakya and wooden horse, vitidandu, ball ball for boys. Chakradhar said that Baladhanais loved to play kavadya. Gurukul system was in vogue at that time considering the education of children. At the age of eight, I realized that I had to go to various Gurugrihas and learn. There is no such method of educating girls. Mention of girls' education is exceptional. There is not much interest in girls' education. Giridhara refers to Venabai learning to read and write while sitting with Venagai Sadguri.

### **Husband-wife relationship**

The reference in the saint's literature is that the happiness of the family depends on the comfort of the husband and wife. There are different references to a girl's marriage. Child marriages were taking place. Eknathi Bhagwat mentions that the marriage age of the girl should be 8 years.

**Suvarna Stri Karavi Aapan |Ashtvarsha Jan Nemast| (11)**

There is also a reference to getting married before menstruation.

Kanya Sanved Savarn | Ji Si Nahi rajodarshan |

Tehi Pityapasun Yachun Karave Lagnvidhanokt | (12)

Venabai's marriage took place in the eighth year. But a different context is found in Dnyaneshwari. He has given the vision that the girl should get married when she is young, but looking at other references in his literature, it seems that the marriage takes place only at the age of eight to nine years. Marriages were solemnized on the basis of caste and tribe. In-laws did not get married. The tribe is related to the blood group. I think there should be a classical approach behind it. Interracial marriage was not socially acceptable. The elders used to get married after seeing Kulshil. The word "hunda" is nowhere to be found in Santa literature, but in a different way, information about the exchange between the bride and groom at the time of marriage is given. Dnyaneshwari and Eknathi Bhagwat mention how the people of the bridegroom harass the congregations of the bride.

Nagaviti aghave Aheravari. (13) or

Vyahi Rusliya paya Padati |

Getting married at a young age made it easier for a woman to get married, but it was a turning point in her life. Her whole life was built at home. She had no life other than a mother and a child. The wife obeyed her husband. Serving everyone in the house was the woman's religion. Her primary duty was to serve her in-laws and her husband. The relationship between husband and wife was a social indication that it should be of a unique nature or oneness. There are many traces of it in the scriptures. In 'Amritanubhav' Shivashaktisamaveshan', the God of Knowledge, while describing the nature man, has expressed the unity between husband and wife with subtlety and complete beauty. Recognizing the importance of Grihasthashrama, all the saints seem to have advanced the uniqueness between husband and wife. Unity between husband and wife is the backbone of world happiness.

### **Family grief**

Ancient, medieval, and even today, women's suffering is reflected in this literature. The stress on men also seems to be expressed in the literature. Namdeo has expressed his father's grief as a rude son. Although it is a patriarchal society, it is customary to obey men, but rarely does a father-son who opposes his father and has an ideological tone appear in the literature. The ideological discrepancy between Haripandit and Sant Eknath is well known (14). The disabled, the elderly, the lonely man see the generosity of accommodating them in the family along with the mental support. There were easily fifteen or sixteen people in a single family. Since the word 'contraception' did not even exist, there was a huge influx of girls, boys, their wives, grandchildren, Javanese, Nanandas and mothers-in-law. It is mentioned in Sant Sahitya that there are twenty-two people in the family of Saint Namdeo, including Janabai. Being a family together makes a woman mute, it is important to study. The traces of in-laws are clearly felt in the holy literature. This is how the father-in-law kills Dwad Bai Konduni. This song is a witness of a woman's silent sorrow. The childless woman suffered terribly. She was brought up on her own, she had no social prestige. A childless woman was inauspicious and forbidden to do good deeds, to wave, to be happy. Childlessness is not only a woman's fault, it can also be a man's fault. There are some things to think about in the family system. Being a child marriage system, if a woman became a widow, she would be punished for living a life of shame and disgust. The man, however, used to get married on the 11th day after the death of his wife. This was a

very big contradiction. If the economic situation was better, the men would remarry, keeping them safe. The condition of the widows in the family was very miserable, it was sad to see their condition. The mentality of the society was that a woman should go for sati after the death of her husband. The widows were forced to go to Sati by their brothers, sons and fathers regardless of their age. After the death of Ramdevrao Yadav, his wife Kamaisa was forced to go for sati by her father and brother-in-law Singhna. There are also references to women committing sati voluntarily rather than living the horrible life of a widow. Later, the social reformers forced the law to stop this evil practice. Widows have been subject to strict restrictions since the second century CE In Manusmriti, Manu seems to have expressed the idea that a woman gets married only once. The widow had to live a hard and hard life by shaving her hair and fasting. Some widows seem to have followed the path of saintly service. The Mahanubhav sect in particular seems to have a somewhat liberal attitude towards widows. Widows like Mahdaisa, Umaisa, Ausa, Baisa, Nagambika seem to have rewarded sectarian philosophy by becoming disciples of Chakradhar Swami. (15)

### **A different picture**

In the holy literature, woman always seems to have a secondary place in the family, but in some places, the place of woman also looks good. In the family, woman had the status of a man. In a normal family, the woman was a slave, but if the husband was sensible, her life would be better, her sorrows would be lightened in the company of her husband. Although women were not educated, they had innate wisdom. Eknath has mentioned in her Sunderkanda of Bhavartha Ramayana that she used to keep her husband's mind, Patil used to give proper advice and open her ears to her husband at the right time. The elderly were respected in the family. Saint literature mentions that parents, grandparents, in-laws are being given due respect. The saints considered Vitthala, their supreme deity, as their 'father'. The saints seem to have emphasized on the unity of husband and wife in the literature of the saints in order to make the Grihasthashram happy. . Even so, we will see how a woman's place in the family is real.

### **The Status of woman's in the family**

In the saintly literature, one of the values of a woman seems to have been defined as dignity. Chastity was considered superior to God. Husband's happiness did not have its own existence. In Gurucharitra, the wife who is hungry because her husband does not get food due to illness, meets us in literature. A woman may be beautiful, but if she is not virtuous, then what is her beauty mentioned in Dnyaneshwari, so much so that this virtue had a reputation.

Sinhache te Nakha | Pativratchya Stan |

Vechaliya prana | Haata na ye. (15)

If you look at the concept of widowhood, she does not seem to be considered as an independent person. In some places, women were subjected to extremist and unrealistic restrictions. The idea that a husband should not dress up when he goes to the village, should take a pilgrimage at the feet of his husband, a woman should not talk to strangers, should not smile, should not talk much, should not behave in a playful manner is ridiculous. These issues are at the root of femininity. The denial of the existence of a woman in the family is certainly a matter of concern. The built-in qualities of women do not seem to be considered in a family together. Arts such as singing and dancing were forbidden

for women. Therefore, it was impossible for women to cultivate these arts. There was a narrow view in the family and society that the husband should be the guru, not another guru, so that the woman does not want to go into spirituality.

## Evaluation

In the family system, religion, money, work and salvation are free for a man, but the only field of work for a woman is home and husband's service. The extremist ideas of widowhood have not kept a woman out of the home for centuries. The wings of her dominance were cut off by these extremist ideas. The threshold of the house became the limit of her work. This led to her social and cultural enslavement. She was denied the right to education, not only immovable or movable or ancestral income, but also had no right to the family. In the spiritual life, the saints provided the woman with a way of self-development of knowledge. Therefore, saintly women like Mukta, Janabai, Bahinabai, Venabai, Kanhopatra were created but their progress was also limited. The saints described the beauty of a woman as a gateway to temptation and somewhat in the context of a conservative woman saying that a woman in the spiritual path is a stone. Of course, this utterance of the saints was somewhat symbolic, but the meaning of it was not noticed by the common man. Although the form of a woman's mother or widowhood is gloriously mentioned in the Santvangma, there is no mention of the many good guns in her place. There is no denying the fact that there is no mention of woman's upright nature, forgiving attitude, service, tolerance, affection, perseverance and even a subtle mention of nurture in the social context. Later in the nineteenth century, social reformers paved the way for a woman's self-development by considering her independent personality. Therefore, it is certain that today women are spreading their wings in various fields of life.

## Foot Notes

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