EDUCATION OF THE RULERS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF *MANUSMRITI*

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Abstract: This paper discusses the education system of the Rulers prescribed by the Manu in his book Manusmriti. *According to Manu, the specific education system helps rulers perform duties, execute power, and enjoy their rights satisfactorily. A similar approach was adopted by the ancient Greek philosopher (s). The Greek philosopher Plato prescribed a specific education system for the rule for the betterment of society. Manu mentions that a Good ruler helps his/her subject to attend to their goal or* puruṣārtha. *This paper also discusses that, according to Manu, discharging his/her duties to the ruler not only helps his/her subject to attend to their goal but also discusses how the ruler gets his/her goal or* puruṣārtha *by discharging his/her duties. Lastly, the paper examines whether Manu's education system is applicable in a democratic setup at present. Then, the paper presents an alternative education model for the ruler.*

In this paper[1], the author of this paper would like to focus on the education system of a ruler designed by the great ancient Indian thinker Manu. Before entering into the discussion, the author would like to say something about Manu and mention our approach to him while discussing his work. In this regard, the author shall uphold the principle of "Justice." To the author, for doing justice to any thinker who is not present before us for defending his or her thesis, one must attempt to understand his or her position honestly and as much as possible, keeping in mind the socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political scenario at that time. Based on that, we must evaluate how advanced they have thought of their time. Then, we should try to discover any, maybe the least amount of relevancy of that thesis in the present time. Here, the author would like to mention that when one attempts to discover the relevancy of past work, the relevancy may be about the content of past works or the methodology they adopt to resolve or address a particular problem. For example, when Vātsyāyana says that the "*ānvīkṣikī vidyā"* is the light of all *vidyā*, then he does not claim that other systems accept the content of *ānvīkṣikī vidyā*. Instead, he intended that other systems adopt the methods developed by ānvīkṣikī vidyā. [2] However, one may argue that the author is promoting dogmatism in the name of the principle of justice; hence, the author says we should be careful while examining the theory or concept since proponents of those are not present to defend their positions. However, the author must say they are wrong about his intention since he is not doing so. The author is just suggesting that we must understand their views before rejecting those, and before throwing their works into the Western paper bucket, we should extract the essence of their works and utilize them in our present time as much as possible. The author shall call this process a "process of internalization." In internalizing any theory or concept, we can supplement, modify, and reject their views and methods. However, in this

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[1] This paper tries to understand an ancient text, Manusmriti, with a philosophical mind and discusses how Manu's concept of education has a global outlook. Every state has to follow his approach. That proves that Plato prescribed a similar education model for the Ruler in the Republic. Then, this paper discusses how we can formulate similar types of education models for the Ruler for the betterment of the present society.

[2] "*Pradīpaḥ sarvvavidyānāmupāyaḥ sarvvakarmmaṇāṁ. Āśrayaḥ sarvvadharmmāṇāṁ vidyoddeśe prakīrttitā.*" Vātsyāyana, 2011, *Nyāyasūtra,* (ed.) Phaṇibhuṣaṇa Tarkavāgīśa, Paścimbanga rājya pustak parṣat, Kolkata, *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya*1/1/1, p. 60.

process, our intention always shall be, without promoting dogmatism, to bring the benefits of their ideas to the betterment of the present society as much as possible.

Now, the author would like to enter into the main discussion. Every well-formed society requires a leader, or maybe we can call them a king or ruler; he or she is responsible for maintaining law and order, making policy decisions, providing justice to his or her subject if any injustice happens, and carrying out many other responsibilities. So, a ruler has many responsibilities for the betterment of society. To successfully execute all the responsibilities or duties assigned to the ruler, he or she must simultaneously have some extraordinary power and specific rights. From the discussion above, every ruler has some duties; to execute them, he or she has tremendous power and enjoys certain rights.

To successfully carry out all those duties, enjoy the right, and execute the power, every ruler requires specific education, which helps him understand everything correctly and do what is needed at an appropriate time. Hence, education is a necessary condition for becoming a good ruler. However, looking into literature, we can see at least some rulers who are not so-called educated in the institutional education system. Still, they are as good as we imagine. In reply, the author would like to say that by "education," one may consider only institutional education through which a ruler gets enough knowledge to rule a state correctly, and others may consider knowledge obtained from society and nature. So, a ruler may not be educated in the educational institute, but he or she may gain enough knowledge from another source to help rule a state successfully. However, this type of education is not practical in all circumstances. Hence, when philosophers discussed the knowledge of the ruler, they considered theoretical and practical knowledge necessary and effective in all circumstances. [3] In ancient India, Manu prescribes a specific education system that helps rulers perform duties, execute power, and enjoy their rights satisfactorily. Here, the author would like to mention that a similar approach was adopted by the ancient Greek philosopher (s). The Greek philosopher Plato prescribed a specific education system for the rule for the betterment of society. According to him, there will be no real happiness unless philosophers become rulers or rulers become philosophers. [4] By this assertion, Plato declares that the executive power of the ruler should be associated with specific knowledge (for him, that is, the knowledge that makes a man philosopher). Unless the ruler becomes the master of such knowledge, he or she cannot provide a perfect society to us. Now, let the author introduce the scheme of education for the ruler designed by the Manu in his *Manusmriti*.

In Indian society, the ultimate goal of a human being is to attain *mokṣa* or liberation. However, they do not ignore the other goals (*puruṣārtha*), such as bodily pleasure, wealth, and fortune. So, every activity leads us towards any of those goals. However, the desire for *puruṣārtha* and the ability to act to attain that *puruṣārthas* is not enough. There is another condition that is necessary for achieving the *puruṣārthas*; that is, appropriate circumstances or perfect society for performing those actions which lead us towards *puruṣārthas*. According to Manu, a ruler must maintain the equilibrium in society, which helps his or her subjects perform the appropriate action to attain their *puruṣārthas*.

[3] By theoretical and practical knowledge, the author means that he or she has theoretical knowledge and knows its practical implication; that is, he or she has practical experience. An ideal ruler should have both theoretical and practical knowledge.

[4] "……of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosopher, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands, while the many natures now content to follow either to the exclusion of the other are forcibly debarred from doing so. This is what I have hesitated to say so long, knowing what a paradox it would sound; for it is not easy to see that there is no other road to real happiness, either for the society or the individual." – Plato, 1987, *The Republic,* (ed.) Desmond Lee, Penguin Books, London, p. 203.

Otherwise, society moves toward a disorderly society. [5] Now, the question is, how does the king ensure his/her subjects attain their *puruṣārthas*? According to Manu, by using the *daṇḍanīti* [6] , the king can ensure that each and every person in his/her land discharges their duties. When everyone discharges their responsibilities, there will be an equilibrium in the society, and an equilibrium society is an ideal society that helps us perform the appropriate action to attain our *puruṣārthas*.[7] Here, the author would like to mention that Manu not only thinks about the *puruṣārths* of the subject of the ruler but also considers the *puruṣārthas* of the ruler. According to him, by maintaining the equilibrium in the society, the ruler is also able to attain his or her *puruṣārthas*, even the ultimate *puruṣārtha mokṣa*.

The question is, how does Manu conclude that by maintaining the equilibrium in society, the ruler will attain the highest and ultimate goal of his/her life? In reply to this, Manu argues that when equilibrium exists in society, it not only indicates that the subject of the ruler discharges his/her duties properly but also indicates that the ruler also discharges his/her duties as they should. According to Manu, when a ruler discharges his/her duties properly, his/her *trivarga* (*dharma, artha,* and *kāma*) increases. Now, the ruler can discharge his/her duties without any affection. [8] The practice of affection freely discharges his/her duties (*niṣkāma karma*) [9] and leads that person towards a state of steady mind (*sthitaprajña*). In the *Gitā*, Lord Krishna states that the person who is not disturbed in mind even amidst the threefold miseries (Ādhyātmika, Ādhibhutika, Ādhidaibika) or elated when there is happiness, and who is free from attachment fear, and anger, is called a state of steady mind.[10] Once a person attained a state of steady mind he/she can attend the liberation (*mokṣa*).[11] Similarly, by practicing their duties and affection freely, the subject of the ruler can attain the highest goal, liberation (*mokṣa*).

Therefore, a perfect and equilibrium society is good for the subject of the ruler and expected of a ruler. To maintain the equilibrium of the society, Manu suggested several types of education for the ruler.[12] However, the author would like to classify them into two major types: first, knowledge concerning the material world, and second, knowledge concerning the spiritual world. According to Manu, these types of education purify the ruler internally and externally. In the first types of expertise, the author would like to include the *daṇda* (it consists of the theory of punishment, politics, the science of war, self-control, etc.), logic, agriculture, economics, even some parts of the *Vedas*

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[5] "*Adyātkākaḥ puradāśaṁ śvāvalihyāddhavistathā." svāmyaṁ ca nasyātkasmiṁścitpravarte tādharottaram. 7/21.* Manu, *Manusmriti*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 764.

[6] By the "*daṇḍanīti*," Manu indicates the science of politics. The author shall discuss it at the appropriate time.

[7] "*satāmapi nityanaimittikasvadharmmānuṣthānmakaraṇeyāmyayātanābhayādeba.*" *Kullūkabhaṭṭa ṭīkā* on 7/15 sutra. Kullūkabhaṭṭa, *Kullūkabhaṭṭa ṭīkā* on *manusmṛti*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 762.

[8] The possibility of effectively practicing the duties depends on the education of the ruler. Later on, the author will discuss it.

[9] "*yogasthaḥ kuru karmmāni sangaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya. siddhyasiddhyoḥ smo bhūtvā samtvaṁ yoga ucyate. 2/48. The Gita with Śaṅkarbhāṣya* and *Gurāthadīpika* of Madhusudan Saraswati, 1986, ed. Nalinikanta Branma, Nababharat publishars, Kolkata, p. 245.

[10]"*Duḥkheṣvaanudvignamanaḥ sukheṣu vigatasprhaḥ.Vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ sthitadhīrmunirucyate.*" *2/56. The Gita with Śaṅkarbhāṣya* and *Gurāthadīpika* of Madhusudan Saraswati, 1986, ed. Nalinikanta Branma, Nababharat publishars, Kolkata, p. 256.

[11] "taṅ raja praṇayansamyak trivargeṇābhivarddhate. Kāmātmā viyamaḥ kṣudrodaṇdenaiva nihanyate." 7/27 Manu, *Manusmriti*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 767.

[12]"*traividyebhyastrayīṁ vidyāṁ daṇdanītiñca śāśvatīm. Ānvīkṣikīṁ cātmavidyāṁ vārttārambhāṁśca lokataḥ*." Manu, *Manusmriti*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 774.

(*Karmakāṇda* of *Vedas*), and some other. On the other side, the author would like to include the knowledge of self (*atman*) and the actual nature of the universe in the second type of knowledge.

According to Manu, a ruler should know the *daṇdanīti*. Now, the question is, what does Manu mean by the *daṇdanīti*? By the "*daṇdanīti*," generally, we denote the theory of punishment as mentioned by Medhātithi in his book *Manubhāṣya*,[13] and it should learn from *Arthaśāstra* written by the learned scholar(s).[14] Through this argument, the author believes he has emphasized not only the theory of punishment but also the judicial, administrative, and other issues related to state affairs. Kullūkabhaṭṭa, another commentator of *Manusaṁhita,* rightly points it out. According to him, the word '*daṇdanīti*' does not only mean the theory of punishment. Instead, it denotes the *arthaśāstra*.[15] Now, the question is what does Cānakya, a well-known author[16] of "Arthaśāstra," mean by the word "*Arthaśāstra*?" Cānakya himself gives us a clear definition of "*Arthaśāstra.*" According to him, both professions of the human being and the land where they live are considered "*artha*." The science discussing collecting, preserving, and extending them is considered "*Arthaśāstra*." [17] By this explanation, the author believes "*Arthaśāstra"* includes each aspect of state affairs. According to Manu, unless the king or ruler knows the *Arthaśāstra,* he cannot maintain equilibrium in the state.

To maintain the state's equilibrium, the ruler must know the fundamental nature of punishment. Without knowing it, he would be unable to punish anybody. After carefully examining all circumstances, counterfacts, age, sex, caste, etc., a ruler can give punishment to anyone. Here, the author must mention that Manu prescribes different amounts of punishment for the same type of crime based on the circumstances, counter facts, age, sex, caste, etc. One may argue that Manu is not impartial. However, if we analyze all circumstances, we will find that sometimes inequality is required for the betterment of society, and that does not consider injustice. For example, a ruler cannot give equal punishment to an adult person and an infant for stilling some fruits from the garden. Therefore, if we find such a case where, according to us, such discrimination occurred, then we have to consider that case exceptional and happened because of the betterment of society. For example, suppose a doctor committed a crime, and the punishment for such crime is capital punishment in general. However, considering his profession and the unavailability of such professional rulers, he may receive the highest financial or any other punishment instead of capital punishment. Nevertheless, those punishments are never determined by the ruler's interests and likes or dislikes since his/her actions are not directed out of his/her passion.

According to Manu, the ruler should know Politics. Based on this knowledge, he appointed ministers and ambassadors and made treaties with other states, which helped him rule the state properly. Here, the author would like to mention that the ruler should

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[13] *"daṇdanītiṅca daṇdaviṣayā nītiḥ daṇdodamanamityāhuḥ yena śāstravoprakṛtayoviṣayavasinaścānyāyakariṇodamyante sadṇda.*" Medhātithi, *Manubhāṣya*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis Press, Bombay, p. 773.

[14] "*tadvidbhyaścāṇākyādigranthavidbhyaḥ.*" Medhātithi, *Manubhāṣya*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 773.

[15] "*daṇdanītiñcarthaśāstrarūpām……..*" comentory of 7/43. Kullūkbhaṭṭa, *manvathamuktavalī*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis Press, Bombay, p. 774.

[16] Before Cānakya, there were scholars on this subject. Cānakya himself mentions their name, such as Nārada, Parāśara, Bṛhaspati, Piśuna, etc. Pṛthivyā lābhe pālane ca yāvantyrthaśāstrāni pūrvacāryaiḥ prastāpitāni prāyaśantāni saṁhṛtyaikamidamarthaśāstraṁ kṛtam. 1/1/1. Cānakya, *Arthaśāstra*, 2002, ed. Manabendu Bandyopadhyaya, Sanskrta Book Dipo, Kolkata, p. 45.

[17] "*Manuṣyāṇāṁ vṛttirathaḥ, manuṣyavatī bhumirityathaḥ; tasyāḥ pṛthivyāḥ lābhpālanopāyaḥ śāstramathaśāstramiti 15/1/1.*" Cānakya, *Arthaśāstra*, 2011, ed. Manabendu Bandyopadhyaya, Sanskrta Book Dipo, Kolkata, p. 662.

appoint seven or eight ministers to assist him in maintaining every state affair. However, he has adequate knowledge of every state affair since it is not feasible for a person to concentrate on each affair related to the state at a time. However, he should take all major decisions or policies for the state with the help of the ministers. According to Manu, the ruler should know Agricultural Science and Economics to make decisions about agriculture and economic policies. In the end, the ruler should know Logic. Hence, without knowing this, he would not be able to understand the inner meaning of different documents and also not be able to formulate politically correct arguments while dealing with other state officials during the treaties and any other official works. The author would like to say that these are the major branches that Manu includes in the ruler's education scheme. However, his actual intention was that the ruler should know each aspect of state affairs so that he could do whatever good for his subjects.

The author would enter into the second type of education for the ruler prescribed by Manu. Now, the question is why Manu considers these types of knowledge necessary for becoming a "true ruler." In the next part, the author will explain why Manu believes the king requires this expertise. According to Manu, a person who wants to become a ruler should know the three *Vedas* (*Ṛigvedas, Yajurvedas,* and *Sāmavedas*). [18] which means performing a sacrifice (*Yagādi*) for the betterment of self and the subject ruled by him. At the same time, he knows the actual nature of the self and the world and their relationship. This knowledge is considered the second type of knowledge. According to the author, this knowledge decontaminates the ruler's activities, and he performs all his duties for the sake of duty.

The question is, what is the nature of knowledge concerning the spiritual world, and how does it purify and control the behaviors of the ruler? To answer this question, the author would like to focus on the nature of *Ātmavidyā,* or knowledge concerning the spiritual world that has been practiced in ancient Indian society, which is associated with the teaching of self-control (*Vyāsana*). In ancient Indian culture, people believed either monism as *Advaitins* have been prescribed or pluralism as prescribed by *Sāṁkṣa*, *Nyāya*, and some others. Each of these theories originated based on the teachings of the *Vedas* and suggested that our ultimate goal is to attain *Makṣa* or liberation. To achieve that, we should know the fundamental nature of the *Ātmana* and the world. If the ruler knows the fundamental nature of *Ātmana* and the world, he could understand that the material world is nothing but the cause of his beginningless bondage. However, he can end this bondage by performing his duties without desire (*niṣkāma karma*). This stage is considered the stage of *vairāgya*. Therefore, whatever decision he makes, he should make for the betterment of society, and he will never become a dictator even though he enjoys extraordinary power.

One may ask that if a Ātmajñani can decide for the society without any desire for self, why should we search for a *Kṣatriya* for a good ruler? We can consider any *Ātmajñani* (without having other knowledge prescribed by Manu for the ruler's) *Ṛiṣi Brāhmin* as a ruler. To reply, we may say that one Ātmajñani may make decisions for society without any desire, but those decisions may cause many complications since he does not have adequate knowledge about state affairs. Therefore, we may conclude that according to Manu, a ruler should have specific knowledge concerning the material and spiritual worlds. He also has to keep himself updated through conversations with other knowledgeable people.[19]

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[18] "*Trayovedāṛgyajuḥsāmākhyāsteṣāṁsamāharaḥtrivedī……*" *manvathamuktavalī* of sutra 3/, Kullūkbhaṭṭa, *manvathamuktavalī*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 273.

[19] *Manusaṁhitā* – 7/37, Manu, *Manusmriti*, 1886, ed. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, Ganapti Krishanjis press, Bombay, p. 771.

However, the question is, does this scheme fit in modern society as prescribed by Manu? As the author mentioned in his discussion, studying ancient literature is to internalize the teachings as much as possible to better the present society. However, according to the author, Manu's scheme of education for rulers is not applicable in the present society because most states around the globe have adopted democracy. The purpose of democracy is to ensure the participation of its citizens in state affairs. So, no one can be considered a supreme ruler and responsible for everything in state affairs. Therefore, for now, we may consider that the education scheme for a ruler is not applicable since citizens of the state are not appropriately educated. However, it is a fact that we have a great urge for such a ruler who is adequately educated, has the efficiency to perform his or her duties for the sake of duty without any desire, and their actions are for the betterment of the society. Based on this expectation, our constitution mentioned "forms of oath or affirmations" in its third schedule. [20] According to the Indian Constitution, people's representatives should act according to the law without any fear or favor, affection, or ill will, and their activities should always be for the betterment of the people. Similar types of oath-taking ceremonies have been practiced in most countries. The author thinks maintaining these types of behavior is impossible without proper education about state affairs and the fundamental nature of self and the world. Proper education about state affairs helps them make the right decisions for the people. The knowledge about the real nature of self and the world (spiritual knowledge) helps them act according to the law without fear, favor, affection, or ill will.

Therefore, the author concludes that the mass implementation of the educational system scheme prescribed by Manu is essential for the present society. In the present democratic system, each state citizen can become the state's ruler. However, we may make some changes to the scheme. In the author's opinion, from childhood, we have to teach our children basic spiritual and moral teachings that help the students become *sthitaprañja*. Keeping in mind the secular structure of the society, it may be very individual to individuals but not distorted based on communal interest. We should include logic, economics, and state affairs in the academic curriculum from spiritual and moral education when they become mature enough to understand the subjects. After introducing logic, economics, and state affairs in their curriculum, students continue to learn and practice them throughout their lives. Otherwise, they are unable to act according to the Constitution. Here, the author would like to mention that his intention is not to exclude other sciences from the curriculum. Students can learn them according to their choice and interest, but spiritual and moral education, logic, economics, and state affairs should be mandatory for all. Otherwise, we cannot get such a (people) representative who is *sthitaprañja* and can maintain his/her oath according to the Constitution, and searching for a good ruler, as the author mentioned earlier, remains a dream to us. Not only that, if we ensure this type of education system, we shall get an ideal judicial, legislative, and administrative personnel with a steady mind (*sthitaprañja*) for the state.

[20] Third Schedule of Indian Constitution (As of 9th November 2015) [Articles 75(4), 99, 124(6), 148(2), 164(3), 188 and 219] Forms of Oaths or Affirmations. Published by GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT), PP. 288 – 290.

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