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## The significance of various Saṃskāras in human life

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### Abstract:

Now a day, various changes happen in various ways. We have lost our intimacy and illusion in the ancient rituals and the words of the Ṛṣis. But in spirit of the science and technological development, we could not reject some celebrations such as marriage, the first feeding with solid food etc. from domestic and social life completely. Celebration are different and language about them, we can never forget the Past-glory. We should never be completely indifferent of the native culture and the Past tradition of our ancestors. The impact of the Vedic Ḡṛhya Saṃskāras are still on us. Reformation of the Ṛgvedic Ḡṛhyasūtra influence the human life directly. The eternal value of life is established through reformation. This is why reformation less man performs his own role in a just way. The Vedic reformations are the procedure for life reformation. Reformation is the way for universal development of life which gives physical, mental and intellectual new awareness or purity. So the impact of the Ṛgvedic reformation is must for present life.

**Keyword:** Saṃskāras, the Ṛṣis, human life

### Introduction

The Veda is the reflection of culture and civilization. By exercising this we can know about the Indian people their rituals, science religion and philosophy, the morality and also about the social background. On the other hand from different sources of Vedas we get the idea about the Vedic age and their devotion of getting the omnipresent and also about some fictional stories that used in various culture. There are, four branches Kalpa i.e. associates with Śrautasūtra, Ḡṛhyasūtra, Dharmasūtra, Śulvasūtras. Among them the most valuable inscription about the evaluation is several types of Ḡṛhyasūtra. In those Ḡṛhyasūtra we can find different types of description about the culture and revolution of the then society. Those cultures are happened by and for the family members and that is why it is concerned with household-rites (Ḡṛhyakarma).

### Book Review

Many Scholars have tried to discuss upon Samskaras and analyzed from various aspects. So for social rites are concerned in 'Rgvediya Ḡṛhyasutras' by Amarkumar Cattopadhaya, 'Pracin Bharater Samskar Carca, by Amit Bhattacharya, Ḡṛhyasamgrahya by Satyabrata Samasrami etc. I have would like to determine my study on Samskaras in Rgvedic Ḡṛhyasutra which may give insight to modern society.

So for as study Samskaras in the Rgveda; It's significance in Contemporary society" is concerned we can across ample references which speak sufficiently about Samskara Karmas.

### Methodology

The study is a descriptive one various books will be thoroughly analyzed for data collection. In a nut cell, the study is conducted through content analysis.

### Discussion

Now we shall see the details of various types Saṃskāras. From sacrifice point of view various Smarta Saṃskāras can be widely divided into four categories. They are:

A. In Prāḡjanma Saṃskāra (pre-natal period) there are tree Saṃskāra. They are:

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- (i) Garbhādhāna (Pregnancy)
  - (ii) Pūṃsavana (Quickening a male child)
  - (iii) Simantonayana (Hair-parting)
- B. In Saisava Saṃskāra (Childhood ceremony), there are seven Saṃskāras. These are:
- (i) Jātakarma Saṃskāra (Birth ceremony)
  - (ii) Medhājanana Saṃskāra (Producing intellect)
  - (iii) Nāmakaraṇa Saṃskāra (Nama- given)
  - (iv) Niṣkramaṇa Saṃskāra (First outing)
  - (v) Annaprāsana Saṃskāra (First feeding)
  - (vi) Cūḍākaraṇa or Muṇḍana Saṃskāra (Tonsure)
  - (vii) Karṇabheda Saṃskāra (Boring the ears)
- C. In Saiksanika Saṃskāra or Educational ceremony, there are four Saṃskāra. These are:
- (i) Upanayana or Yajñapavita Saṃskāra (Initiation)
  - (ii) Vedārambha Saṃskāra (Beginning study of the Vedas)
  - (iii) Keśānta (First sacred shave)
  - (iv) Samāvartana (End of studentship)
- D. In Grhastha-pravesa Saṃskāra (Family entry Saṃskāra), there are two Saṃskāra. These are:
- (i) Vivāha Saṃskāra or Marriage Ceremony
  - (ii) Anteṣṭi or Funeral Ceremony.

#### Now we see the short elaboration of various Saṃskāras

The study of the Garbhādhāna Saṃskāra is very interesting from the cultural point of view. Here we do not find a primitive man expressing wonder at the prospects of a Child and only seeking the help of gods to secure it, nor is conception here a haphazard accident without any desire for progeny.

Every care by the expectant mother, so that the fetus should be healthy and strong in the womb and abortion may not take place. The hymn “Suparṇa etc.” or “of beautiful wings” expressed the wish that handsome child should be born.

The rules laid down for the health of the pregnant woman are based on the medical knowledge of the Hindus. Susrūta prescribes similar precautions. “From the time of pregnancy should be avoid coition, over-exertion, sleeping in the day, keeping awake in the night mounting a carriage, fear, sitting like a cock, purgative, phlebotomy and untimely postponement of natural flow of excretion, urine etc.” thus every possible care was taken to preserve the physical and mental health pregnant woman.

Medh-janana. Now the Jātakarma ceremonies proper commenced. The first ceremony was the Medhājanana or production of intelligence.

Āyusa. The next item of the Jātakarma ceremonies was the Āyusa or the rite for ensuring a long life for the child. Near the navel or the right ear of the babe the father murmured, “Agni is ling lived; through the trees he is long lived.

The father next performed another rite for the hardy martial and pure life of the child. He asked the babe “Be a stone be an axe, be an imperishable gold. Thou indeed art the self called son; thus life a hundred autumns.

The name for greeting was given last. The ceremonies terminated with feasting the Brāhmaṇas and respectfully dismissing the gods and the fathers to their respective places.

The significance of the whole ceremony lay in the physical necessity of the child and impressing on it the sublime grandeur of the universe. The saṃskāra implied that after a certain period of time the child must be taken outing the fresh air and from thence the practice should be continued. It also

emphasized on the budding mind of the child that this universe is a sublime creation of god and it should be respected duly.

The significance of the Annaprāsana Saṃskāra was this that children were weaned away from their mothers at proper time. They were not left at the caprice of their parents who often injure their children by over feeding them without taking into consideration their digestive capacity. The feeding ceremony also warned the mother that at a certain time she should stop suckling the child. The ignorant mother, out of love for her child, goes on suckling it upto a year or more. But she little realizes that there by she allows her own energy to be sapped away without doing real good to the child. A timely caution was given by the ceremony for the benefit of both the child and the mother.

The Cūḍākaraṇa a part of life. The most striking characteristics of the prayers cited in this ceremony is that they were meant for long life of the child.

For the preservation of the sacred literature of the various branches, it was necessary to take help from the whole society united through the observation of the Upanayana ceremony as a compulsory ritual for all, because literary and educational treasury was constantly developing.

Vidyārambha. When the mind of the child was prepared to receive education, the Vidyārambha Saṃskāra was performed to mark its beginning, and alphabets were taught. The Saṃskāra is variously named. It is called Vidyārambha, Akṣarārambha, Akṣarasvīkarana and Akṣaralekhana by different writers. As its very name suggests, it was more cultural than natural.

Kesānta. The Kesānta still signalized the natural change that took place in the life of the student. Even when the Saṃskāras became mere ceremonies bereft of their original purpose, the Kesānta did not suffer very much.

The Kesānta, as its very name suggest, was a Saṃskāra which consecrated the first shaving of the student’s beard. It was called Godāna also, because it was characterized by the gift of a cow to the teacher and gifts to the barber.

The Vivāha is the most important of all the Hindu Saṃskāra. The Gṛhyasūtras generally begin with it, because it is the origin and centre of all domestic sacrifices. They presuppose that every man, in his normal conditions is expected to marry and run a home. Even before them, in the Vedic period, to which only a few of the Saṃskāras can be traced back in their ceremonial form, the marriage ceremonies were developed and they have found literary expression in the Ṛgveda.

Antyeṣṭi Saṃskāra is the last Saṃskāra of the Hindu life. With which he closes the concluding chapter worldly career. Why living a Hindu consecrates his worldly life by performing various rites and ceremonies at the different stages of his progress. At his departure from this world, his survivors consecrate his death for his future felicity in the next world. This Saṃskāra being post-mortem is not less important because for a Hindu the value the next world is higher than that of the present one. Therefore the ritualist are very anxious to have the funerals performed with meticulous care.

#### Conclusion

The Saṃskāras are the expression of human beliefs, sentiments, aspirations, hopes and fears, and they catered for human needs. With changes in life they are bound to change. To-day the very conception of life has undergone change. By scientific discoveries many mysteries of life have been solved and man’s control over his environment has immensely increased. Many natural forces which were feared or

respected have become docile servants of man. Materials resources of life are getting multiplied. Many fields of life which were regarded sacred have now become secular. The art of race-culture and nation-building will always form an important part of human progress. The Saṁskāras will change their old garbs and will assume new shapes. The human behaviour changes through various Saṁskāras. Finally it leads to the ultimate-truth (Paramagati) of human life.

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