

Patriliney -

means sons could claim the resources (including the throne in the case of kings) of their fathers when the latter died.



There were variations in practice:

Sometimes there were no sons, then brother's kinsmen succeeded or in exceptional circumstances women exercised powers- Prabhavati Gupta

Even Followed by:

Ruling class
Wealthy people
Brahmans

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE MANY RULES AND VARIED PRACTICES

Rule of marriage:

Sons- important for the continuity of the patrilineage,

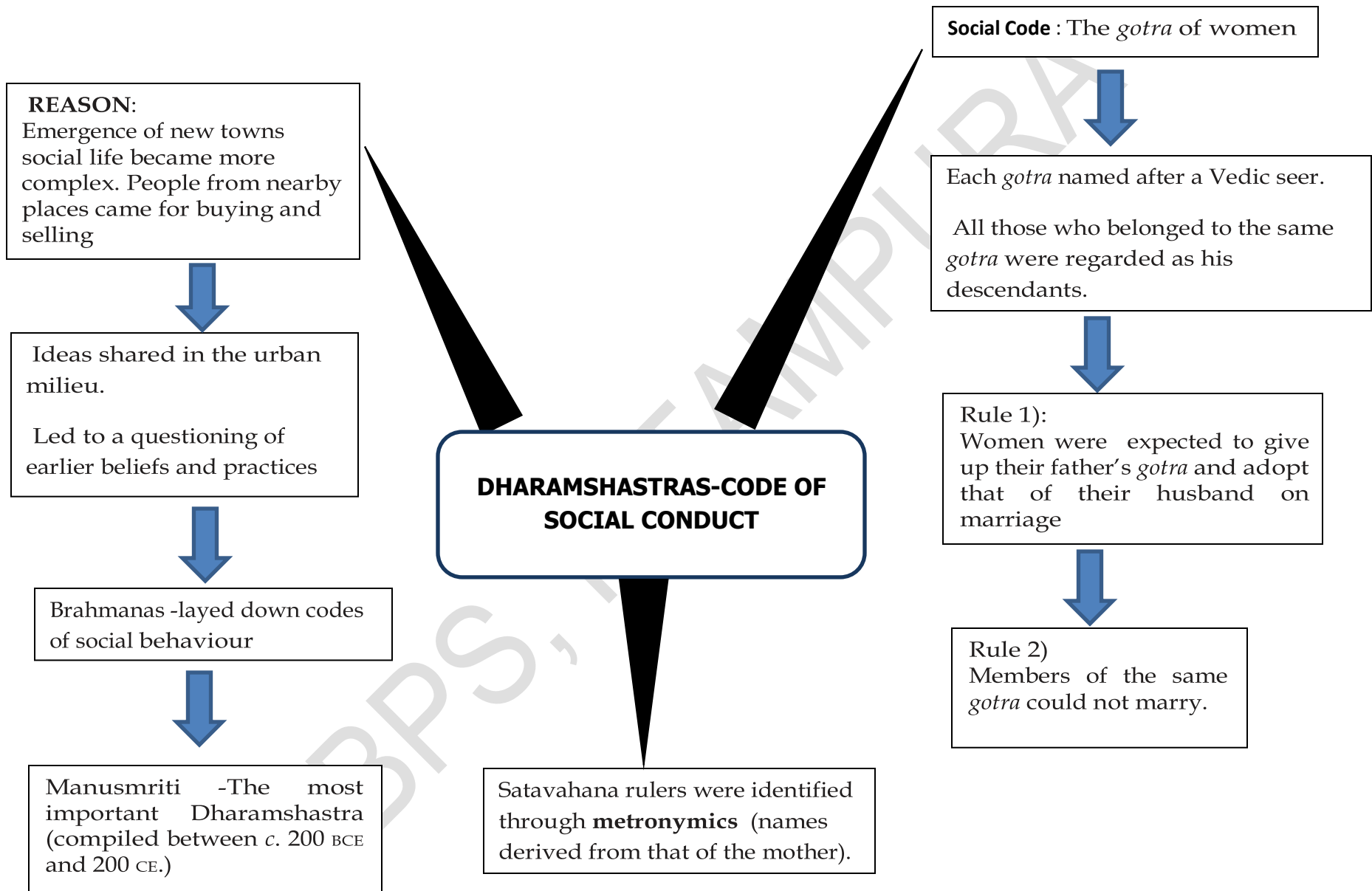
Daughters-They had no claims to the resources of the household, exogamy (literally, marrying outside) practiced



Marriage- regulated

women were married at the "right" time and to the "right" person.

The belief of *kanyadana* or the gift of a daughter in marriage was an important religious duty of the father.



CASTE: A set of hierarchically ordered social categories laid down in the Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras.

Brahmanas claimed that this order, in which they were ranked first, was **divinely ordained**.

Positions within the order were supposedly **determined by birth**.

Brahmanas evolved two or three **strategies** for **enforcing** these norms:

- *The *varna* order was of divine origin.
- * Second, they advised kings to ensure that these norms were followed within their kingdoms.
- * Third, they attempted to persuade people that their status was determined by birth.

The “right” occupation

Rules about the ideal “occupations” of the four categories or *varnas*.



Brahmanas: study and teach the Vedas, perform sacrifices and get sacrifices performed, and give and receive gifts.

Kshatriyas : engage in warfare, protect people and administer justice , study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed, and make gifts.

Vaishyas : The last three “occupations” were also assigned to the who were in addition expected to engage in agriculture, pastoralism and trade.

Shudras :only one occupation - that of serving the three “higher” *varnas*.

SOCIAL DIFFERENCES CASTE

Brahmanas considered some people as being outside the system, they also developed a sharper social divide by classifying certain social categories as “**untouchable**”.

Some activities were regarded as particularly “**polluting**”. These included handling corpses and dead animals.

Those who performed such tasks, designated as **chandalas**, were placed at the very bottom of the hierarchy.

Beyond the four *varnas*
Subordination and conflict

The *Manusmriti* laid down the “**duties**” of the *chandalas*:

- *They had to live outside the village,
- *Use discarded utensils, and wear clothes of the dead
- *And wear ornaments of iron.
- *They could not walk about in villages and cities at night.
- *They had to dispose of the bodies of those who had no relatives and serve as executioners
- * Sound a clapper in the streets so that people could avoid seeing them and were forced to live outside the city.

Gendered access to property

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graph TD; A[Gendered access to property] -- blue arrow --> B[According to Manusmriti:]; A -- black arrow --> C(Beyond Birth Resources and Status); C -- black arrow --> D[Varna and access to property];
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According to *Manusmriti*:

- * **Paternal estate** - divided **equally amongst sons** after the death of the parents, with a special share for the eldest.
- * **Women** could **not claim** a share of these resources.
- * **Women** were allowed to retain the gifts they received on the occasion of their marriage as *stridhana*.
- * This could be **inherited** by their **children**, without the husband having any claim on it.
- * At the same time, the *Manusmriti* warned **women against hoarding** family property, or even their own valuables, without the husband's permission.

Beyond Birth Resources and Status

Varna and access to property

- *According to the Brahmanical texts, another criterion (apart from gender) for regulating access to wealth was *varna*.
- *The only occupation" prescribed for **Shudras was servitude**,
- *While a variety of occupations were listed for men of the first three *varnas*.
- * The **wealthiest** men - the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas.

Historians consider **several elements** when they analyse texts :

*They **examine** whether texts were written in languages used by ordinary people e.g Pali,Prakrit etc **OR**

* **Languages** that were probably used by priests and elites.

* They also **consider the kinds of text** e.g mantras, learnt and chanted by ritual specialists, or stories that people could have read, or heard, and then retold

*Find out about the **author(s)** whose perspectives and ideas shaped the text

***The interests** of the intended audience

*The possible **date** of the composition or compilation and the **place** where they may have been composed.

The text is described as an itihasa within early Sanskrit tradition.

Language and content:

*The Sanskrit used – is simple

* Two broad heads -

1) Sections that contain stories- *narrative*

2) Sections that contain prescriptions about social norms - *didactic*.

* The didactic sections include stories, and the narrative often contains a social message.

Author(s) and dates:

Charioteer -bards known as

*sutas

*Brahmanas,wrote Itihaas-5thcentury

* The worship of Vishnu-between c. 200 BCE and 200 CE

*Large didactic sections resembling were added-between 200 and 400 CE

A Dynamic Text:

*Written in a **variety** of languages

*Several stories that originated in specific regions or circulated amongst certain people **found their way into the epic.**

*The **central story** of the epic was often retold in different ways.

*Episodes were depicted in **sculpture and painting.**

*Themes for a wide range of **performing arts** - plays, dance etc.

Handling Texts
Historians and the Mahabharata

After making **these assessments**
- The historians then draw on the content of texts to arrive at an understanding of their historical significance