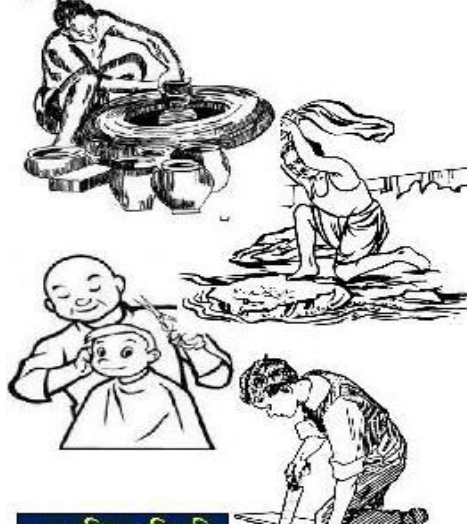


## A new research paper turns the general perception of Brahman and Shudra upside down

A new scholarly and practical interpretation of Bhagavadgita with a joint effort of a Sanskrit scholar and an accomplished US based scientist turns the entire premise of shudra as a servant class upside down. In fact, the article suggests that it is the natural duty of the other so called upper castes to serve the society, including shudra with distinctions of their required qualities and action.



The lead author of the recently published peer-reviewed article in Prachi Prajna journal, Dr. Aparna Dhir Khandelwal, said that this new simple revelation will have enormous impact on the modern society, not only in India but perhaps the entire world. It is because what is stated in dharma granthas applies to the humanity, not just Indians, although it will certainly begin from here.

What the researchers discovered is that there is a word '*shudrashyapi*' that has been either misinterpreted or ignored over the centuries, or at least has not been emphasized by Indian as well International scholars. Even Adi Shankaracharya misses the point, according to the publication entitled "**श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता में शूद्र की परिभाषा का यथोचित आधुनिक विश्लेषण**" (Appropriate analysis of the definition of shudra in Bhagavadgita). Few of such statements listed below –

1. Sri Adi Shankaracharya of Advaita Sampradaya – '*Industrious service to the other three classes for fair recompense is the duty of sudras the worker class. Only one service was ordained for sudras the worker class and that was to ungrudgingly serve the three upper social orders.*'
2. Sri Madhvacharya of Brahma Sampradaya – '*The duties of sudras is loyal service to the other three classes and receiving sustenance for their livelihood from them and is born of the nature of tama guna.*'
3. Sri Sridhara Swami of Rudra Sampradaya – '*The duty and occupation of the Sudra is service to the three stations.*'
4. Sri Ramanuja of Sri Sampradaya - '*The verse also speaks of the sudras in whom tamas predominates and rajas is secondary. Serving the vaisyas, ksatriyas and brahmanas (paricaryatmikam) is the activity of the sudra.*'
5. Founder of ISKON Acharya A.C. Bhaktivedant Swami Prabhupada – '*for the sūdras there is labor and service to others*'.

6. Former Vice President of India Dr. S. Radhakrishnan – ‘work of the character of service is the duty of a Sudra born of his nature.’
7. Sri Aurobindo - ‘All work of the character of service falls within the natural function of the Shudra.’



The senior author, Professor Bal Ram Singh, a practicing scientist in the United States, and an adjunct professor at JNU’s School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies, pointed out that India has had a tradition of fair and equitable system for not only humans but also animals, plants, and microorganisms. Its granthas are prepared by sages, who with detached observations were the scientists of highest order. Their words need to be carefully examined, which is what we in reading the verse 44 of Bhagvadgita’s chapter 18. It clearly says that like other three varnas, shudras are naturally inclined to provide the service of highest order. Actually, shudras could be the highest order, not the other way around.

The paper is likely to stir up much needed debate and discussion in the academic, spiritual, religious, social and political circles, perhaps sign of a welcome enlightening phase of the society.

[The present paper ‘श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता में शूद्र की परिभाषा का यथोचित आधुनिक विश्लेषण’ has published in ‘Prachi Prajna’ E- journal’s (ISSN 2348-8417) śāstramañjūṣā’s 11th Issue (December, 2020). View at -<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A4FMTQLgHnnSxNFnBckotTX23yxw6iYs/view>]