

Hinduism women go through; childhood, marriage, and

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Hinduism is one of the oldest and most rapidly growing religion in today's society. It's estimated that over 1.5 billion individuals world-wide are a part of the Hindu religion. It is practiced in countries such as India, Nepal, and Indonesia.

Like many other religions, there are rules, rituals, and regulation you must follow. However, these rules are extremely different when it comes to women in the Hindu culture. From the very beginning, rules were laid out for women in a book called "The Laws of Manu". The book was written around 200 C. E and was a way to strip women from their independence. It states how women are supposed to act and be treated by their fathers, husbands, brothers, brother-in-laws, and sons. The Laws of Manu states that women must be honored and respected by their male relatives.

It also states that women should never be independent. Can you imagine what it is like being a woman who has no independence whatsoever? There are three stages that all Hindu women go through; childhood, marriage, and motherhood. When growing up girls are required to be respectful and obedient at all times. Responsibility such as house work and cooking falls on them so unfortunately girls typically do not receive an education.

In fact, research on education in 2008 showed that 62% of girls do not received the education they so desperately need. A girl is to have close supervision by her father. Many people believe that girls are to be protected by their father until she is married. When growing up in countries such as India, Hindu girls have to be extremely more careful than boys for several reasons. For starters, because there isn't enough girls due to child abortion

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many girls are kidnapped and are sold to men as child brides. This can cause stress on not only the child but her parents. Secondly, many girls are subjected to rape.

Rapes in India go unreported due to the lack of urgency for women and because many women are too scared that they will get beaten, raped again, or even killed. To avoid situations such as these Hindu girls are taught to respect themselves by how they dress, act, and associate with the opposite sex. During a Hindu girls teen years two important aspects occurs in her life. For starters, the beginning of her menstrual cycle. Girls are to participate in what is called a " Ritu Kala Samsar Ceremony" This is an Indian Hindu ceremony that is performed when the girl first wear a sari and gets her first menstrual cycle. A sari is a dress that is typically worn when girls hit puberty or gets married. This ceremony symbolizes the young women as now both physically and spiritually mature.

The second important aspect is her virginity. Virginity, is something that is priceless and should be valued. Many Hindu women refer to virginity as " Kanya ". Women must stay a virgin until marriage because this is something that comes with extreme consequences.

In many countries such as India if a women is not a virgin she can be killed. They also believe sex before marriage results in bad karma. Marriage is the most important occasion in the Hindu religion and culture. It symbolizes the union between a man and a women for eternity. It also symbolize four things that they can pursue together, duty (darma), possessions (artha), physical desires (kama) and spiritual release (moksha). Many women are married

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young due to arranged marriages. An arranged marriage is a marriage that is planned by the bride or grooms family.

The individual who is getting married typically have little or no say about the marriage. As a women, this can be frustration because many women do not meet their husbands until the day of the ceremony. Without being able to meet her husband, the bride doesn't know what kind of man he will be like. On the day of the ceremony, a ritual called mangalfera is performed.

Mangalfera is when both bride and groom march around the fire four times, this symbolizes the four ashrams of life. In this religion, fire is regarded to be a sustainer of life. Another ritual performed is called saptapadi. Saptapadi is when the bride and groom repeat seven vows sealing their marriage. Once a bride is married off she is to immediately leave her family and begin wifely duties.

Many Hindu wives get instructions from a book called " Stri Dharma". In the book it states that a wife should regard her husband as a God. The term God means an adored, admired, or influential individual. The book also talks about how a wife should serve, follow, and pray for her husbands well being. According to the book, the wife shares the same karma and destiny as her husband.

Since women are instructed to never been independent the husband must provide for his wife. This includes needs such as housing, clothing, food, and protection. As you can see a woman's role in the Hindu culture is to be a great wife. However, another important role a Hindu women plays , is the

role of being a mother. Motherhood is a beautiful and exciting time for any women. However, in the Indian Hindu culture it can also be a scary time. This is because years ago many women were subjected to abortions if the baby was a girl.

If a woman got pregnant but already had a girl she was typically made to abort her baby. According to a study conducted in India, it is believe that over 8 million unborn baby girls were aborted during the past ten years. If the mother choose to go through with her pregnancy there are many ceremony's that occur. For starters, when baby is born honey is poured on his or her mouth and ears.

Honey in Hindu represents sweetness. Many Hindu believers partake in this ritual because they believe it will ensure that the baby will speak and hear only sweet things. Secondly , the name of the baby also known as " namkaran". During the naming ceremony a fire is started and the child's name is picked according to his moon sign. Lastly, the rice ceremony which symbolizes the introduction between a baby and solid foods. The baby's first solid food is feed by the elders in the family, typically the child's grandfather.