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THE MANUSMRITI AS A SOURCE OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND LEGAL CULTURE IN INDIA

Background. *The article examines the significance of the Manusmriti in the context of modern political and social discourse. The article rationale is underpinned by intense coexistence of traditional Hindu ideas about the social order and modern constitutional principles of equality, secularism and human rights.*

Methods. *The study is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical-legal, textual, comparative, and general scientific methods. This allows for a comprehensive analysis of the development of Indian legal thought within its historical, religious, and political contexts, taking into account both normative sources and political rhetoric.*

Results. *The study is novel in that it combines historical and legal analysis of the Manusmriti with the political philosophy of modern India, focusing on the narrative of authorities and its symbolic sources. It is the first systematic study in the Ukrainian scientific context on how the image of the ruler as a "servant of the Dharma" (and its transformation into a concept *pradhan sevak*) fits into the democratic discourse. The article also analyses the use of ancient Indian legal heritage in the political legitimation of modern decisions, while pointing out the critical narrative of caste and gender inequality that is formed in response.*

Conclusions. *The conclusions emphasize the dual status of the Manusmriti: on the one hand, as a source of historical legal tradition and, on the other – as a text that is criticized for gender and caste discrimination. The article proves that despite the official distancing from the ancient legal codes, the cultural influence of the Manusmriti continues to shape political rhetoric and social perceptions in India of the XXI century.*

Keywords: *Manusmriti, political philosophy, postcolonial practices, modern Indian political discourse.*

Background

In the modern political philosophy of India, the Manusmriti remains the subject of active discussions. Some political and cultural figures, especially from Hindu nationalist circles, refer to this text as a source of traditional values and social order. They believe that return to the principles set out in the Manusmriti can contribute to the revival of national identity and morality.

However, many modern thinkers and activists castigate the Manusmriti. The main comments relate to its support for a caste system that is considered discriminatory and unfair. Critics point out that the provisions of this text contradict the principles of equality and social justice, which are fundamental in modern democratic India.

It is worth noting that Indian political culture is characterized by the desire to combine traditional values with modern democratic principles. This is reflected in the awareness of the need for peaceful conflict resolution, high "social discipline" of citizens and the functioning of democratic institutions regardless of economic challenges.

The purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to determine the status of the Manusmriti in the Indian tradition and modern Indian political discourse, its influence on the legal regulations and social structure of India, as well as to identify the level of influence on modern political and philosophical discourse.

Methods

The methodological basis of the study is an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical and legal, textual and analytical methods. The article also uses general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, comparative method, and generalization principles based on specific material. This approach enables to consider the development of the legal idea in India in its historical, religious and political contexts with a focus on both normative sources and political rhetoric.

The source base of the study consists of both classical texts of ancient Indian law, as well as modern regulatory legal acts, official appeals, social and political essays. Classical sources include such texts as "The Laws of Manu" in translations and critical publications of G. Bühler and

P. Olivelle, as well as the major work of P.V. Kane "History of Dharmasastra", which allows better understanding the religious and legal tradition of India. The current regulatory framework is represented by the Constitution of India (2024) and the Hindu Succession Act amended in 2005, which illustrate the evolution of legal rules in the context of the democratic structure of the state. Political rhetoric and national ideology are analysed based on appeals and public speeches by key political figures, in particular Jawaharlal Nehru and Narendra Modi, presented both in official sources (the Prime Minister's Office) and in mass media materials (Nehru, 2024). Special attention is paid to modern scientific publications that represent a critical analysis of ancient texts in the light of human rights, in particular the article by Naseera and Kuruvilla (2022). The work of N. Sharma and coauthors "Ancient Indian political thought" published at the Tripura University is also important. Thus, the source base of the study is balanced, including both historical texts and modern documents, which allows us to comprehensively cover the problem under study.

Results

The Manusmriti, also known as Manawa Dharmasastra or the Laws of Manu, is one of the oldest texts related to social, judicial, and political life. Dating of the text has certain complications. Most often it is dated from the first century BC to the second century AD, although the text continued to change in subsequent centuries. Patrick Olivelle, a well-known Indologist who translated and commented on the Manusmriti in the book "Manu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Mānava-Dharmaśāstra", writes about this "instability" of the text. In this work, Olivelle analyses the structure and content of the text, discussing its historical context and impact on the legal traditions of India. "The manuscript tradition of the MDh divides the text into *adhyayas* (lessons or chapters). This appears to be an old division; it is followed by all the commentators. I believe, however, that this division is not original. It was probably imposed on the text when it was subjected to a revision that added several sections (see part III), most notably the table of contents given at the conclusion of the first chapter. 12 Although several of the chapters follow the natural

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sequence of topics, a close reading of the text shows that they are artificial divisions. ...More importantly, however, the division into chapters obscures the latent and deeper structure of the text, a structure that spans the entire corpus and must go back to the author himself" (Olivelle, 2005, p. 18).

Another Indologist, Pandurang Vaman Kane, who has studied ancient Indian religious and legal texts in detail, in particular the Manusmriti, argued that it is not a static document, but has undergone changes reflecting the social and political realities of different periods. In the above table of dating of the texts included in the Dharmasastra corpus and commentaries thereto, he indicates that the text was compiled approximately between 200 BC and 200 AD (Kane, 1941, p. xi). Kane's reasons for concluding that the document is dynamic and has been edited at different periods are as follows. He pays attention to versions and comments. The presence of several versions of the Manusmriti indicates its adaptation to changes in society. For example, medieval commentators such as Medhatithi and Kulluk Bhatt interpreted it differently, reflecting the facts of their time. Another reason is the impact of political changes. Kane noted that after the fall of the Mauryan Empire (321-185 BC) and the establishment of new dynasties, rulers began to use the Dharmasastra, i.e., the Manusmriti, to legitimize their power and strengthen social order. In addition to political changes on the part of the rulers, there were also evolutionary changes in social standards. Initially, the Manusmriti was not so much a law of the state as a religious and ethical instruction, recommendation. However, over time, these regulations have become more stringent, especially in relation to the Varna-caste system. Kane noted that caste restrictions increased with the development of Brahmanic dominance.

The issue of versions of the Manusmriti and differences between the text that we can read today and the original source remains open. But in the context of our study, it is important to determine how this text has affected current Indian legislation, so the issue of authenticity and changes may be the subject of further research.

The authority of the sage Manu is justified at the beginning of the text: "Its opening verses narrate how the great sages approached Manu, the descendant of self-existing Brahman, and asked him to explain the sacred law. Manu agrees to their request and gives to them an account of the creation as well as of his own origin from Brahman" (Bühler, 1886, S. xii). The figure of the teacher is often mythologized in the Indian tradition. This adds sacredness to the transmitted knowledge. For example, the famous Indian sage – founder of Advaita Vedanta Shankara is also described in its commentaries as a demigod or incarnation of a deity. Similarly, Manu is presented not as a historical figure, but as a holder of divine wisdom due to his proximity to Brahman.

The themes of the chapters in "The Laws of Manu" are of interest and can be the subject of research in philosophy, sociology, law, and political science. This is confirmed in the review of the Manusmriti structure itself. Twelve chapters are divided thematically. The first two chapters contain information about the creation of the world by Brahma (one of the three main gods of Hinduism. The Trimurti also included Shiva and Vishnu), the definition of varnas (Brahmanas, Kshatriya, Vaishyas, Sudras) and their duties and rights, and the definition of Dharma, which is important for Indian religious and philosophical discourse. Chapters 3-6 contain information about the duties of people at each of 4 asramas, and describe rituals, sacrificial offerings, and purification practices. "He should carry out the observance relating to the three Vedas at his teacher's house, an

observance lasting thirty-six years, or one-half or one-quarter of that time, or else until he has learnt them. After he has learnt in the proper order the three Vedas or two of them, or at least one, without violating his chastity, he should undertake the householder's order of life. 3When he has returned in accordance with the Law proper to him and received his vedic inheritance from his father, he should be honored at the outset with the gift of a cow, as he sits on a couch wearing a garland" (Olivelle 2005, p. 108).

On the other hand, chapters 7 and 8 are legal in nature. They contain a list of the duties of a king, punishments for crimes, rules of warfare, and justify the importance of the army. However, they are not devoid of religious and philosophical content. The power of the king is not just a legitimate and legal norm, but it is determined by the divine order of the world. "Because a king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created beings in lustre" (Bühler, 2023, p. 217). It can be said that the king is given to the people to save them. Therefore, he held a divine position, and people obeyed him because of his power. The king appeared in human form but had the qualities of the God. His goal is to promote social harmony, peace and well-being. To do this, he is endowed with certain qualities from the gods Indra, Vayu, Yama, Agni, etc.

Although the king gains his power in the divine manner, in real-world terms he must be guided by the Brahmanas: "Let the king, after rising early in the morning, worship Brahmanas who are well versed in the threefold sacred science and learned (in polity) and follow their advice. Let him daily worship aged Brahmanas who know the Veda and are pure; for he who always worships aged men, is honoured even by Rakshasas" (Bühler, 2023, p. 221). The rationale for this was the assumption that Brahmanas have knowledge, and knowledge should rule.

The prescribed structure of the state consists of villages, districts and provinces, which resembles our current administrative structure. Important are shlokas that mention local self-government: "Let him appoint a lord over (each) village, as well as lords of ten villages, lords of twenty, lords of a hundred, and lords of a thousand" (Bühler, 2023, p. 234). If we look at the system of public administration that was proposed and then implemented by the Indian National Congress, we will meet the principle of Swaraj (self-government) there.

Along with references to the importance of local authorities, the Manusmriti also highlights the importance of counsels or ministers: "Even an undertaking easy (in itself) is (sometimes) hard to be accomplished by a single man; how much (harder is it for a king), especially (if he has) no assistant, (to govern) a kingdom which yields great revenues" (Bühler, 2023, p. 224). Ruling without counsels is like driving a chariot without wheels. Counsels are the hands, eyes, and ears of the king. The ideal number of members of the council of ministers should be no more than seven or eight, who collectively and individually assist and advise the king on how to perform his daily duties.

At the same time, shlokas 58 and 59 of the chapter 7 indicate the importance of the position of one of the counsels, like a proto "prime minister": "But with the most distinguished among them all, a learned Brahmana, let the king deliberate on the most important affairs which relate to the six measures of royal policy. Let him, full of confidence, always entrust to that (official) all usiness; having taken his final resolution with him, let him afterwards begin to act" (Bühler, 2023, p. 225).

Counsels must have certain important qualities: have high learning abilities, be people from higher Varna by origin,

good warriors who are well versed in various methods of warfare and correctly understand the state structure. Appointment to a position can be inherited, but with prior consideration of skills and abilities. Certainly, such a respectable position should belong only to representatives of higher Varnas. No Sudra was allowed to become a counselor to the ruler.

The purpose of the study is to determine the status of the Manusmriti in Indian political and philosophical discourses. Thus, in the political field, the influence of the principles laid down in "The Laws of Manu" has not partially lost its relevance. Criticism mainly concerned the strictness of the Varna-caste system as well as the status and role of women in society. However, the vision of the country's leadership, the foundations of public administration and local self-government still influences India's political culture and legal system. In particular, it refers to the Dharma of the ruler (Dharmaraja) and the responsibility of the government.

The term Raja literally means "ruler". It was the name of both the title and the person who wore it. When reviewing the structure and themes of the text of the Manusmriti, we mentioned that the duties of the king and his ministerial counsels are described in chapters 7 and 8. It says that the ruler should take care of his lieges. "Let him strive to gain what he has not yet gained; what he has gained let him carefully preserve; let him augment what he preserves, and what he has augmented let him bestow on worthy men" (Bühler, 2023, p. 232). In the current political field of India, those holding senior positions, such as the president or prime minister, should act as "the first servant of the people". Without fail, this wording is not a direct legal rule. Rather, it is a political and ethical concept that comes from the Indian tradition of understanding Dharma and from the philosophy of the Indian cultural renaissance. "That king, indeed, is ever worthy of honour who ensures the safety (of his subjects)" (Bühler, 1886, pp. 303–314). These lines indicate the ruler's responsibility to the people. At the same time, there are lines that indicate the unworthiness of a ruler who acts only in his own interests: "A king who does not afford protection, (yet) takes his share in kind, his taxes, tolls and duties, daily presents and fines, will (after death) soon sink into hell" (Bühler, 2023, p. 307).

In the future, the ideas of "service" were developed by the leaders of the National Liberation Movement, as confirmed by Mahatma Gandhi's statement: "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others".

In his speeches, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, often referred to himself as "a public servant" and emphasized that the government should serve the people and not rule them arrogantly. "Today, I address you for the first time officially as the First Servant of the Indian people, pledged to their service and their betterment" (Nehru, 2024).

Nehru expressed this position repeatedly in his public speeches. "My allegiance is to the Indian people only and to no king or foreign government. I am a servant of the Indian people and I recognise no other master" (Sethi, 2023).

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly called himself "Pradhan Sevak" (the first servant). In his interview, Modi declared: "As I have said from the ramparts of Red Fort that I am not a prime minister, but a pradhan sewak of the 1.25 billion people of India, so I work non-stop to fulfill the aspirations of the poor and marginalised people of society" (I am Pradhan Sevak ..., 2016).

In his address to the nation dated May 26, 2015, a year after taking the office, Modi wrote: "One year ago, you had

entrusted me with the responsibility and honor of serving you as your Pradhan Sevak" (Modi, n.d.).

While such statements by Indian leaders may seem populist within the public field, indirectly but the Constitution of India lays down these principles of "service to the people" in Article 75 (3): "The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People" (The Constitution of India, 2024, p. 34). This means that the Prime Minister and his government are accountable to the people through the parliament, which is a key principle of service.

The Manusmriti also defines how ministers and public servants should act: "Let him appoint seven or eight ministers whose ancestors have been royal servants, who are versed in the sciences, heroes skilled in the use of weapons and descended from (noble) families and who have been tried" (Bühler, 2023, p. 224). The importance of counsels to the ruler has already been described above. Here we will only define that they must have a set of competencies corresponding to this position. In modern India, there are laws on the selection of civil servants through the UPSC (Union Public Service Commission).

The UPSC is a constitutional body established under Article 315 of the Constitution of India that selects candidates for civil (state) services at the national level: "Subject to the provisions of this article, there shall be a Public Service Commission for the Union and a Public Service Commission for each State" (The Constitution of India, 2024, p. 177). The main functions of the UPSC are conducting public service exams and advising the Government on appointments, transfers, promotions of civil servants, and reviewing disciplinary cases. Civil Services Examination (CSE) is the most famous exam. It is used to select IAS (Indian Administrative Service), IPS (Indian Police Service), IFS (Indian Foreign Service), IRS (Indian Revenue Service), etc. Officially, the purpose of such a body's work in government structures is to guarantee transparency of competitive selection for positions and counteract corruption. That is, the mentioned principles from the Manusmriti on the requirement of competence of the royal counsel echo the principles of the UPSC on the selection of the best ones through open competition.

Another thematic section in the Manusmriti is family law and the status of women. This issue is discussed in chapter 9 of the text. The emphasis on gender inequality in "The Laws of Manu" is criticized the most in the modern sociopolitical discourse. First, we will determine the role of women in family and social life according to the text of the "laws". This will help identify the causes and content of criticism within the framework of modern gender studies.

The woman was not recognized as an independent social and political unit: "Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families), and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control. Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence" (Bühler, 2023, pp. 327–328). Lack of independence deprives the right of legal capacity. The main task of a woman, which was inherent not only in India, but also in many other countries and not only in the period of antiquity or the Middle Ages, is to give birth to children. And children should be born in marriage. Belonging to a man in most cases was lifelong: "Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband... Once is the partition (of the inheritance) made, (once is) a maiden given in marriage, (and) once does (a man) say, "I will give"; each of those three (acts is done) once only" (Bühler, 2023, p. 335). At the same time,

in subsequent shlokas, the woman is often compared with the land or field, and the man with the seed or sower, to whom the results of the harvest will belong. The lower status of a woman is emphasized by her comparison with animals and the possibility of applying the same behavioural norms to them: "Know that such is the law concerning the offspring of cows, mares, slave-girls, female camels, she-goats, and ewes, as well as of females of birds and buffalo-cows" (Bühler, 2023, p. 224).

Accordingly, if a woman has not fulfilled her main family duty, this is the basis for divorce: "A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year, she whose children (all) die in the tenth, she who bears only daughters in the eleventh, but she who is quarrelsome without delay" (Bühler, 2023, p. 342).

The Manusmriti allowed marriages with underage girls upon consent of their parents: "A man, aged thirty years, shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him, or a man of twenty-four a girl eight years of age; if (the performance of) his duties would (otherwise) be impeded, (he must marry) sooner" (Bühler, 2023, p. 344).

Thus, the criticism of the status of women in Indian society according to the text under consideration can be summed up as the authors of the article "The Sexual Politics of the Manusmriti" N.M. Naseera and Moly Kuruvilla do. First, the portrayal of women as a source of sin and a moral threat to society. Secondly, the restriction of women's autonomy, in particular through the obligatory dependence on a man at all stages of life. And third, the infringement of women's sexual and reproductive rights, which are interpreted as controlled by men and the social order (Naseera, & Kuruvilla, 2022).

Chapter nine also describes the rules of inheritance. Certainly, the sons had the first right. In the absence of the latter, the daughter could receive the inheritance, if she passed it all on to her son.

Therefore, if we compare the defined position of women in society with modern Indian legislation, we will see liberalization and reduction of gender discrimination. Inheritance equality is defined under the Hindu Succession Act adopted in 1956, as amended in 2005 (The Hindu Succession ..., 2005).

Part of this chapter considers issues of legal proceedings and punishment depending on the type of crime and the legal status of the criminal and the victim. In this context, it is worth noting the importance of the court and the responsibility of the judge for a fair or unfair sentence (although this responsibility is only to the gods). And involving in the trial not only the king as the chief judge, but also the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and in special cases Vaishya who could also exercise justice. Witnesses also played an important role. However, such essential and fundamental things for nowadays legal field as the presumption of innocence, the need for a lawyer or equality before the courts, regardless of social status, were not defined by the Manusmriti.

The chapter nine of the Manusmriti demonstrates a model of social order in which power is concentrated in the hands of the king, and social roles are fixed by Varna and gender norms. In the philosophical and political dimensions, this is the embodiment of the model of a sacralised state, where law is identified with Dharma.

The chapters 10-12 of the Manusmriti relate to cosmic and moral order. This is the role of karma, its influence on the current and future life; the theme of reincarnation, related to the theme of karma, and living one life after another in the wheel of Samsara, while the Atman passes from one body to another in accordance with the merits and actions

performed. Moreover, the theme of achieving enlightenment – Moksha through knowledge, righteousness, and renunciation is being partially developed. This combination of ethics, metaphysics, and social order forms the idea of spiritual duty in Brahmanism and early Hinduism. At the same time, the arguments of correctness and truth of what is stated in the Manusmriti are justified by a connection with *struti* (knowledge from the Vedas): "All those traditions (*smriti*) and those despicable systems of philosophy, which are not based on the Veda, produce no reward after death; for they are declared to be found on Darkness. All those (doctrines), differing from the (Veda), which spring up and (soon) perish, are worthless and false, because they are of modern date" (Bühler, 2023, p. 505).

Thus, the Manusmriti is a treatise that combines law, ethical prescriptions, social hierarchy and cosmogonic ideas. Its themes expand from the creation of the world and Dharma to practical standards of conduct and spiritual liberation.

Discussion and conclusions

Although modern Indian law does not rely directly on the Manusmriti, some general principles, such as the importance of Dharma and karma, remain part of the cultural and moral worldview of Indian society. However, these concepts are integrated into modern law only to the extent that they are consistent with the democratic and secular values enshrined in the Constitution.

Nowadays the study of *the Manusmriti* has several important aspects that help to understand both historical and modern socio-legal realities.

The historical significance of this treatise lies in the fact that it formed the foundations of Indian legal culture. And understanding of legal traditions provides answers to two important questions that determine the status of the Manusmriti in Indian political tradition and modern discourse, i.e., how the legal system has been developing in India and what principles of traditional Hindu law still influence modern legislation.

Although the Constitution of India abolished discriminatory norms of *the Manusmriti*, some of its concepts are preserved in the form of customs or moral and ethical norms, i.e., marriage, inheritance and social structure. Understanding of this text allows analysing why certain social institutions, such as the caste system, continue to exist.

The treatise contains not only a list of laws or regulations, but also philosophical and moral guidelines on Dharma, duty, management ethics, family relations, and social order. Its study helps understand traditional ideas about human justice and responsibilities.

In modern political science and philosophical discourse, the Manusmriti does not lose its relevance. We have already mentioned the translations of the text by Bühler and Olivelle, supplemented with commentaries.

The direction that is of relevance nowadays in terms of analysing the influence of "The Laws of Manu" on politics is the search for ideas expressed there (i.e., about the image of the ruler, his responsibility to the people and the importance of counsels) in statements, public speeches or comments of representatives of state authorities of India as well as in regulatory documents.

However, there is a difference between the present status of state power and the image that is formed in the Manusmriti. Donald R. Davis Jr. explores traditional Hindu law and jurisprudence, focusing on key legal concepts such as sources of law and authority, laws regarding persons and things, procedure, punishment, and legal practice. He emphasizes the close relationship between law and religion, considering family and everyday relationships as the main

social areas of law. Davis argues that law can be understood as the theology of everyday life, combining an analysis of Sanskrit legal texts with a discussion of Hindu theology and ethics: "...my earlier thesis about the pivotal, indeed definitional, role of dharma in the Sanskrit legal texts within Hinduism" (Davis, 2010).

Another area for research is critical comprehension. Some of its provisions, such as caste discrimination or gender inequality, have been heavily criticized. For example, the text has been the subject of critical debate within the framework of feminist and gender studies (Naseera, & Kuruvilla, 2022). Therefore, reference to the treatise allows determining which traditional concepts need to be adapted or reformed in the modern world.

The Manusmriti has not remained a document in the history of India, which is simply evidence of the state of ancient political thought. Richard W. Lariviere argues that British colonial administrations used these laws to codify Hindu law, and this influenced India's modern legal system (Lariviere, 1989). At the same time, social discrimination enshrined in the treatise became one of the grounds for justifying colonial power: "Manusmriti has been used by British colonists, politicians and sociologists to denigrate those of the Hindu faith" (Sharma et al., 2015, p. 75).

Thus, in modern Indian political discourse, the Manusmriti is criticized for legitimizing the caste and gender hierarchy; at the same time, it is used by conservative forces to appeal to the "ancient order"; it contrasts with the constitutional principles of equality, secularism and democracy, but retains rhetorical influence, in particular in the view of the leader as a "servant of the Dharma" (analogy – "the first servant" or *pradhan sevak*).

Studying the Manusmriti is relevant for historians, lawyers, philosophers, sociologists and anyone interested in the development of legal and moral systems. This is not only a text of the past, but also a source of understanding modern social processes and challenges.

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"МАНУ-СМРИТІ" ЯК ДЖЕРЕЛО ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ФІЛОСОФІЇ ТА ПРАВОВОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ ІНДІЇ

Вступ. Досліджено значення *Ману-с্মриті* в контексті сучасного політичного та соціального дискурсу. Актуальність теми зумовлена напруженим співіснуванням традиційних індуїстських уявлень про соціальний порядок та сучасних конституційних принципів рівності, світськості й прав людини.

Методи. Грунтовано на міждисциплінарному підході з поєднанням історико-правового, текстуального, компаративного та загальнонаукових методів. Це дозволяє комплексно аналізувати розвиток правової думки Індії в історичному, релігійному та політичному контекстах, урахувавши як нормативні джерела, так і політичну риторичку.

Результати. Поєднано історико-правовий аналіз "*Ману-с্মриті*" з політичною філософією сучасної Індії з акцентом на риторичку влади та її символічні джерела. Уперше в українському науковому контексті системно досліджено, як образ правителя як "служителя дгарми" (ї його трансформація у концепт *pradhan sevak*) вписується у демократичний дискурс. Також проаналізовано використання давньоіндійського правового спадку в політичній легітимізації сучасних рішень, одночасно вказуючи на критичний наратив щодо кастової й гендерної нерівності, який формується у відповідь.

Висновки. Підкреслено подвійний статус "*Ману-с্মриті*", з одного боку, як джерела історичної правової традиції, з іншого – як тексту, що зазнає критики за гендерну та кастову дискримінацію. Доведено, що, попри офіційне дистанціювання від стародавніх правових кодексів, культурний вплив *Ману-с্মриті* продовжує формувати політичну риторичку та соціальні уявлення в Індії XXI століття.

Ключові слова: *Ману-с্মриті*, політична філософія, постколоніальні практики, модерний індійський політичний дискурс.

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