



## Women in Vatsyayana's Kamasutra

*Christian Dior has rightly said, "After women, flowers are the most lovely thing God has given this World."<sup>(1)</sup> The quote amply suggests that women are the loveliest creation of God. Undoubtedly, women on the whole have been crossword quizzes for men right from the inception of the world. Many male writers and philosophers and scientists have written innumerable things about women and will keep writing because the entire lot of women have been a mystery for men, they are so even today and will remain such in future too. The present research paper intends to study the role and status of women in famous sage Vatsyayana's magnum opus "Kamasutra".*

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**V**atsyayana, earlier known as Vatsya, was an oldest Sanskrit scholar of India. Sanskrit being the oldest language of the world, his authority on feminine aestheticism has been unchallenged till date. He is supposed to be the first author of the world who has theorized sexuality through his famous work Kamasutra, which means Formulae of Sex. It was only after his that many authors from around the globe started writing about science and art of sexuality obtaining ideas from Kamasutra and, then assimilating their own ideas and experiences with them.

In his book Kamasutra Vatsyayana prescribes that humans should practice Dharma, Artha & Kama at different times in hundred years of their life. After learning knowledge in Childhood, they should attend to Artha (money) and Kama (sex) from youthfulness to middle age while in old age they should focus on Dharma (religion) which would ultimately lead them to Moksha (Salvation).

Since this paper focuses on depiction of women in Vatsyayana's Kamasutra, naturally, it would try to trace out different kinds of women and their behaviours towards men in matters of 'Kama'. But, first we must know what 'Kama' is all about. According to Vatsyayana Kama is the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling, assisted by mind together with the soul. The ingredients in this is a peculiar contact between the organ of sense and its object, and the consciousness of pleasure which arises from that contact is called Kama.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the definition given above the word 'Contact' actually refers to sexual intercourse between men and women which is usually the result of mutual attraction. So, it is evident that the 'Kama' or for that matter 'Contact' cannot be complete

without participation of woman with man. Vatsyayana has put women in different categories and, therefore, this paper delineates the four main categories of women the Hindus have described in different Sanskrit literature whom Vatsyayanas has taken up to describe in his Kamasutra. These four types of women are the Padmini, the Chitrini or Art woman, the Shankhini or Conch woman, and the Hastini or Elephant woman.

Extending the Hindu belief Vatsyayana, alongwith other Hindu scholars on the subject sexuality, believe that the Padmini or Lotus woman have wider popularity and acceptability because of their extraordinary sensuous qualities. In the preface of their book Burton and Arbuthnot excellently describe the Padmini woman in following words :

*"Her face is pleasing as the full-moon; her body, well-clothed with flesh, is soft as the Shiras or mustard flower, her skin is fine, tender and fair as the lotus, never dark coloured. Her eyes are bright and beautiful as the orbs of the fawn, well cut and with reddish corners. Her bosom is hard, full and high, she has a good neck; her nose is straight and lovely and three folds or wrinkles cross her middle about the umbilical region. Her yoni resembles the opening lotus bud and her love seed (Kama Salila) is perfumed like the lily that has newly burst. She walks with Swan like gait and her voice is low and musical as the note of the Kokila bird, she delights in white raiments, in fine jewels and in rich dresses. She eats little, sleeps lightly, and being as respectful and religious as she is clever and courteous, she is ever anxious to worship the gods, and to enjoy the conversation of Brahmins. Such, then, is the Padmini or Lotus Woman."<sup>(3)</sup>*

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Thus, this exquisite description of Padmini or Lotus woman makes us realize that this kind of woman are highly romantic in behavior and they give optimum satisfaction to man when it comes to 'Kama'. After Padmini comes the category of Chitrini or Art woman. Such kinds of women are usually picture perfect and bear artistic traits. That is why they are called Chitrini i.e. like Chitra (Picture), Vatsyayanas in his Kamasutra describes Chitrini woman in following words :

***“The Chitrini, or Art women, is of the middle size, neither short nor tall, with bee black hair, thin, round, shell-like neck, tender body; waist lean-girthed as the lion's; hard full breasts, well-turned thighs and heavily made hips. Her hair is thin about the yoni, the mons veneris being soft, raised and round. The Kama-salila (love seed) is hot and has a perfume of honey, producing from its abundance a sound during the venereal rite. Her eyes roll and her walk iscoquettish, like the swing of an elephant, whilst her voice is that of a peacock. She is fond of pleasure and variety; she delights in singing and in every kind of accomplishment, especially the art manual; her carnal desires, are not, high and she loves pets, parrots, mainas and other birds. Such is the Chitrini or Art woman.”***<sup>(4)</sup>

Thus, it appears from the above description that art-woman or Chitrini are different from Padmini. She is usually plump in appearance. Since she is the mistress of hard full bosom and heavy hips, she is quite catchy at a glance. Men tend to lean towards such women easily, but they are the men who love to fondle buttocks and smooch breasts. Copulation is secondary to such men. They prefer this kind of woman to perform fellation, message their cocks and suck the hardness of their phalluses. Art-women or Chitrinis too love these things.

Another category of women described by Vatsyayanas in Kamasutra is the Shankhini. He writes, “The Shankini or Conch-woman, is of billions temperament, her skin being always hot and tawny or dark yellow brown; her body is large or waist thick, and her breasts small, her head, hand and feet are thin and long, and she looks out of the corner of her eyes. Her yoni is ever moist with Kama Salila, which is distinctly salt, and the cleft is covered with thick hair. Her voice is hoarse and harsh, of the bass or contralto type; her gait is precipitate; she eats with moderation and she delights in clothes, flowers and ornaments of red-colour. She is subject to fit of amorous passion, which makes her head hot and her brain confused, and at the moment of enjoyment, she thrusts her nails into her husband's flesh. She is of choleric constitution, hard hearted, insolent and vicious; irascible, rude and ever addicted to finding fault. Such is the Shankhini or Conch Woman.”<sup>(5)</sup>

Therefore, it can be easily said that though the Shankhini Woman is not much attractive because of her features described above, yet she is extremely passionate and participative in copulation, specially because most of the time her yoni is moist and is always ready to receive the

masculine thrust. During coitus she becomes aggressive and sadistic so much so that she thrusts her nails in her husband's body.

And, the fourth kind of woman according to Vatsyayana is the Hastini. He further writes, “The Hastini or elephant woman is short in stature, she has a stout, course body and her skin, if fair, is of the dead white; her hair is tawny, her lips are large; her voice is harsh, chocked and throaty and her neck is bent. Her gait is slow, and she walks in a slouching manner; often the toes of one foot are crooked. Her kama-salila has the savour of the juice which flows in the spring from elephant's temples. She is tardy in the Art of Love, and can be satisfied only by prolonged congress, in fact, the longer the better, but it will never suffice her. She is gluttonous, shameless and irascible. Such is the Hastini or elephant woman.”<sup>(6)</sup>

Thus, the Hastini woman certainly bear elephantine characteristics. Since she is usually heavy bodied & bearing not so attractive feautres, she speaks horsely. But the smell of her Kama salila is so hypnotic that at nights her male counterpart automatically gets closer to her and tries to satisfy her orgasm. But, she can only be satisfied by extremely masculine man because she demands a lot of foreplay, loves prolonged cunnilingus and prefers highly prolonged coition. As she possess the Karini kind of Vagina which is twelve fingers in depth, a verile or lean man would not be a fit match. A tall and strong man possessing a horse like pudendum and expert in the art of copulation can only give her the kind of satisfaction she deserves.

Thus, these are the four categories of women whose characteristics have been delineated at length by Rishi Vatsyayana in his Kamasutra.

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