In every country the press is the guardian of the liberties of its people as well as the most effective instrument for extending the bonds of human freedom and progress.\(^1\) It plays an effective role in moulding and educating public opinion. It proves itself as an exdona in the socio-political consciousness. The press, particularly the vernacular one, highlights the inherent social evils of the society. This press also exposes the wrong and unjust policies of the administrative system which, by and large, serves as the principal source of inspiration both for the social reformers and the political leaders of the day.

The print media, especially, vernacular magazines, journals and newspapers in the various provinces of British India played a major role in awakening society as well as educating people about their rights and duties. This media was instrumental in bringing about radical changes in different systems of society steeped in ignorance and poverty. The socio-economic and political issues were highlighted by the press which also tried to inform people about the developments in industry, education, science, technology, agriculture, art, entertainment and other fields.

The advent of Britishers in India led to various changes in the society. These foreign rulers introduced new ideas about women's roles and capabilities and these ideas were adopted by the enlightened Indians. The nineteenth century social reformers treated women as objects for reform or uplift. But in the early twentieth century, there was a qualitative change in the approach of these reformers. Now they used 'Media' for projecting the persistent social blindness and nature of women's oppression.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to trace out the role of vernacular press which helped in the gender consciousness and activism among women in the colonial Punjab and made them aware about discrimination, social tyranny, oppression, economic dependence and low status owing to their biological identity. The vernacular press of the Punjab was the first public self-expression of women's ideas and opinions, and a rich medium through which conflicts and ambiguities about the role of women in the society and nation were traced out. The articles were primarily written by the educated urban middle class and elite women and the issues discussed crossed class and caste boundaries.

Some articles provided a schematic overview of social, political and economic developments or took up one particular issue, for example, women's education, social reforms or the role of mothers in

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domestic reforms. The style of writing varied from gentle urging to emphatic exhortation and was not specific to any period. All the issues of all ages were discussed. Contemporary issues of education, social evils, national struggle were compared to the ancient period and people were encouraged to look at their past and were asked to apply good things of that period to the present. In particular, a concerted effort was made to motivate and encourage women who were having a segregated existence. Examples of wives of Sikh gurus, goddesses and pious women were given, and women were asked through this media to come out of the rigid shackles of the society.

From 1901-47, in Punjab most of the print media was in the form of weeklies, journals, magazines or fortnightlies. Every newspaper or magazine was published with a particular aim and agenda. Some were having political agenda, some revolved around social evils and some had economic or cultural agendas.

In this chapter, a critical analysis of nine journals and newspapers of Punjab has been made to depict how they created awareness about issues pertaining to women. Various journals and newspapers were published in Punjab like *Azad Bhain* (Rawalpindi), *Istri* (Amritsar), *Istri Rattan* (Layalpur), *Istri Samachar* (Quetta), *Istri Satsang* (Amitsar), *Istri Sudhar* (Amritsar), *Phuleran* (Amritsar), *Punjabi Bhain* (Ferozepur), *Sughar Saheli* (Amritsar), *Huq* (Lahore), *Huq Bulletein* (Lahore), *The Punjab* (Amritsar) and many more. All of them
in one or the other way played a pivotal role in recasting and redefining the image of women in Punjab. Most of these were edited by the male members but sometimes they had co-opted their wives as editors like of 'Punjabi Bhain', 'Sharif Biwi' (Lahore), 'Panchal Pandita' (Jalandhar) and others. A few of them were also the representatives of different educational institutions like 'Punjabi Bhain' which was started by Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Ferozepur.

Out of the numerous women’s journals published during the period under reference, nine attracted special notice: Azad Bhain, Istri, Istri Rattan, Istri Samachar, Istri Satsang, Istri Sudhar, Phuleran, Punjabi Bhain and Sughar Saheli. Five of them were published from Amritsar, one from Rawalpindi, one from Quetta, one from Layalpur and one from Ferozepur. Almost all of them tended to reinforce the traditional roles of mother, sister and daughter. Qualities of a modern daughter-in-law and her code of conduct were frequently discussed by their contributors. They chose to dilute social obsession with women’s domestic role and projected the urgency of utilizing their potentialities for social and national work.

All these magazines and newspapers were extremely critical of the prevalent evils, social customs of child marriage, inhuman treatment of widows, female illiteracy, purdah system and sati pratha. They linked social reform with its comprehensive agenda of revolution.⁴

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⁴ Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History*, p. 106.
The aims of all these journals were influenced by the editor's perception of the urgent problems of Indian society and politics. *Azad Bhain*, which means 'free sister' was published as early as 1923 and was one of the most important journals dealing with women's problems. It was a monthly journal and was published in Punjabi from Rawalpindi. It was launched with a view to present not only women's perception of existing social mores, problems and current national issues but also the common man's opinions and aspirations. 'In various articles the position of women was discussed and comparison was done of ancient period women and women in British period'.

The crusade was launched for changing of social attitude towards women. It was divided into various sections like news section, entertainment section in which stories were published of great men and women who were working for the emancipation of women.

*Istri* meaning 'woman' was a monthly magazine published from Amritsar. It was published from 1932 onwards. 'Sardarni Bhagwan Kaur was the editor of the magazine with Sardarni Raghbir Kaur, Bibi Rattan Kaur and Bibi Inder Kaur as the co-editors'. As the name suggests this magazine was mainly for the females and all the topics pertaining to women and their condition were published. It's annual Indian subscription was rupees four, with a foreign subscription being

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6 *Istri*, Amritsar, April, 1932, p. 28.
rupees six. This was expensive for that period. Regular appeals were made in the magazine to different educational institutions to buy this and to include in the syllabus of the students. Even traders and merchants were asked to advertise their business through the paid advertisements of the magazine. This was one of the best source of income to the magazine.

The aims of Istri were influenced by the editor’s perception of the urgent problems of the Punjabi society and the belief that contemporary magazines which were published for women, though making an admirable contribution, were not fully alive to the concerns and social agony of women in the Punjab. Hence, the editor undertook to sculpt a new model for Punjabi women: self-reliant, confident and capable of securing her rights and her independent economic and social status.\textsuperscript{7} This journal’s main aim was to make people aware about the kind of education imparted to girls should be more related to the domestic work in Punjabi medium. This journal was basically education oriented. Articles were published about the different schools and female education.

\textit{Istri Rattan} meaning ‘Jewel Woman’ was first published on 1 October, 1925 from Layalpur. It was a monthly magazine with illustrations. It’s annual and six monthly subscription was rupees four

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, March, 1932, pp. 50-51.
and two respectively.\textsuperscript{8} For increasing its readership, people were encouraged to make more and more subscribers and one year free subscription was given to the person who used to make ten new members.

This monthly magazine was published in Punjabi and was political, social as well as an educational journal. \textit{Istri Rattan} was pro-British and welcomed all the new British policies with open arms. Female education started by the Britishers made Punjabi girls more aware about their society and politics. \textit{Istri Rattan} also tried to have debate about the medium of education for girls.\textsuperscript{9} All the political events were regularly published with illustrations. The main aim of this magazine was to make people aware about the new British policies.

\textit{Istri Samachar} was a monthly journal in Punjabi published from Quetta. The name of the journal meant ‘Women News’, it was published from 1909 onwards. It’s main aim was to cultivate the minds of women and to make them conscious of various social evils which were creeping into the society. ‘Purdah system was prevalent in the society and reference in this journal was given about the establishment of Purdah College in Patna’.\textsuperscript{10} It presented various examples of widow remarriage, intercaste marriage and even the

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\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Istri Rattan}, Layalpur, October, 1925, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Istri Samachar}, Quetta, 24 August, 1909, p. 4.
\end{flushleft}
appointment of Christian teachers in schools for teaching girls. *Istri Samachar* even published advertisements for the requirement of female teachers.\(^{11}\) Comparison of development of education, especially for female was done with different states. Punjabi women were made to think about how to progress and how to help their husbands.

*Istri Satsang* meaning ‘Woman Congregation’ was a fortnightly newspaper. It was published from Amritsar and was in Punjabi language. The year of publication was most probably in the first decade of 1900s, may be from 1905. ‘This newspaper gave importance to highlighting the political, social and the cultural events. It was repelete with various articles and multifarious news items. This newspaper’s political agenda was to liberate women from the orthodox and obnoxious evils of the society’.\(^{12}\) To bring the fruits of civilization such as female education, liberal thought, equality, fraternity and the concept of ‘new woman – equal to man in every way of life’ was the lofty aim of the *Istri Satsang*. It tried to touch each and every evil of society and gave various solutions to overcome them like Sati system, purdah system, condition of widows, female illiteracy, child marriage and superstition.\(^{13}\) Regular articles were published about the legacy of Sikh Gurus as great reformers and during the British period, British policies were welcomed and used to appeal to people to adopt these progressive policies.\(^{14}\)

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12 *Istri Satsang*, Amritsar, 10 August, 1909, pp. 4-8.
Istri Sudhar (meaning women reform) was started in 1925 from Amritsar. Bibi Kartar Kaur was the editor of the magazine. It was started as a Punjabi weekly magazine but after one year in 1926 it turned into a monthly magazine. When started, its annual and six monthly subscription was rupees three and two respectively.¹⁵ But in 1926 the subscriptions were raised to rupees five and three which was reasonable at that time as compared to other journals. This list also mentioned the names of the persons of Burma which shows that the readership of this magazine was not limited to only Punjab but also outside Punjab.¹⁶ It’s main aim was to make people aware about the women reforms undertaken in different parts of India. It proposed to accelerate the pace of the then ongoing socio-cultural and political changes in India and manifold developments in the world. It mentioned of establishment of Istri Tract Society¹⁷ in Amritsar in 1927 and its aims were widely discussed. Istri Sudhar gave reference to various foreign women who came to Punjab and embraced Sikhism and started working for women emancipation.¹⁸ It served as a forum for creative dialogue and exchange and circulation of ideas and proposed to enable its readers, especially women, to understand and identify the roots of social problems and participate in the process of social change and also to harness the heat of ideological friction for recreating or inventing tradition.

¹⁵ Istri Sudhar, Amritsar, August, 1926, pp. 1-3.
¹⁷ Ibid, March, 1927, p. 3.
¹⁸ Ibid, January, 1926, p. 3.
Phuleran was published from 1926 onwards from Amritsar in Punjabi. Its annual subscription was rupee two which was cheap during that period, so it was very easily available for the people at the low prices. This magazine followed the policy of generating discussion and debate between the upholders of two points of views on every social, political and cultural issue. By this readers got more benefit intellectually as the different points of view on the various issues and problems were discussed. The main aim of Phuleran was to make readers aware about all the women conferences held in India like All India Women Conference (AIWC), Women's India Association (WIA) and Vidwa Vyah Sahayak Sabha, Lahore.\textsuperscript{19} Articles of foreign ladies were regularly published.\textsuperscript{20} Editorials regarding women representation were also discussed. Articles in Phuleran were regularly published for generating awareness among the women and also appealed women to help men in religious and political affairs and asked women to send articles and poems for publication.

Punjabi Bhain (meaning Punjabi Sister) was a monthly journal in Punjabi, published from Ferozepur. It represented an educational institution ‘The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya’. The school was started in 1882 and this journal’s first issue came in May, 1907. Bhai Takhat Singh was the editor of this magazine. 'From 1907 to 1920 it was regularly published but from 1920-30 its publication was stopped due

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
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\item Phuleran, Amritsar, June-July, 1926, pp. 30-32.
\item Ibid, October-November, 1926, pp. 130-133.
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to the financial crisis. From the mid of 1930 it was again started and
was then published regularly.\footnote{21} Its annual subscription was rupees
two which was very reasonable according to that time. This magazine
even had foreign subscribers and correspondence, and received
occasional letters to the editor from European women and women of
other countries.\footnote{22} There is a possibility that Punjabis residing in
European countries were subscribing to this magazine too. In the
beginning it was primarily an educational journal directing its
discourses towards women and encouraging parents to teach their
daughters. But later it modified its agenda and started discussing all
the social evils and political affairs. With its successful career of one
decade it had won the admiration and approval of a number of
contemporary newspapers and magazines such as \textit{Partap, Khalsa
Advocate} and others. It was meant to cultivate the minds of women
with two major goals in view—one was to raise them to a level where
they could be suitable companions for their husbands. And, the
second was to prepare them mentally to play their dual role as active
crusaders for social reform and fighters in the nationalist struggle for
independence. All the major developments in any part of India were
discussed regularly. It threw light on many topics like agriculture,
health, education, industry, economics, socio-political issues,
literature, law and other areas of human life.

\footnotetext{21}{Punjabi Bhain, Ferozepur, February, 1932, pp. 22-23.}
\footnotetext{22}{Ibid, May, 1914, pp. 32-34.}
*Sughar Saheli* meaning ‘accomplished friend’ was a monthly magazine. Its annual subscription was rupees two and was published from Amritsar in gurmukhi script. It’s agenda revolved around the women in society and politics. Female pioneers in girl education were regularly discussed and women’s participation in Sikh Ladies Conference of Punjab was regularly looked upon. Women and right to vote was debated in the columns of the magazine. British government policy of distributing scholarships to girls was also published. Even political parties which were taking women issues were praised by *Sughar Saheli*. This magazine wanted overall development of women in the society.

All these magazines and newspapers had non-commercial character – ran on no profit no loss basis, frequently issued appeals to the public, through its own columns and other nationalist vernacular newspapers, for adding to the number of subscribers to these journals and newspapers. In spite of the price-hike of stationery and printing, editors determined to continue the publication like of *Punjabi Bhain*, *Istri Satsang* and *Phuleran*. But all these nine magazines and newspapers were remarkable and they managed to publish almost all their issues except during financial crisis when publication was stopped for a while.

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23 *Sughar Saheli*, Amritsar, October, 1917, p. 4.
The major issues and themes such as female education, purdah system, widow remarriage, sati system, child marriage and women trafficking, which sparked off debates and discussions among the readers and contributors which had been taken on its agenda by the Indian Women’s Movement in due course, are discussed below.

“Educate a girl, and you educate an entire family”; this became the slogan of Indian liberals during early twentieth century. The girl once educated was likely not only to see to the education of her whole family, but was to put a new life into her community as well was the thinking of reformers.25 So the reformers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Punjab expounded on their ideals of education through the various mediums at their disposal: tracts, magazines and newspapers were especially utilized to spread their objectives.26

Vernacular Press was utilized to launch a fierce campaign for creating awareness among men and women about the need of female education. In the April issue of Istri in 1932, an article of Inder Singh Ji Dilbag was published ‘Istri Vidya Par Vichar’. This article tried to mobilize people about female education and suggestions were given as what kind of education for women was needed - domestic, art and craft and religious.27 Thus at that time a limited type of education was recommended for the girls. The main motive behind the

27 Istri, Amritsar, April, 1932, p. 8.
education was to make them ideal wife, daughter and mother. People were not bothered of providing professional education for them in the early decades of 1900s.

Questions were raised in the columns of *Istri Satsang* like 'Ki Istriyan Nu Bhi Vidya Di Lor hai?' Comparison was made with the European ladies and their contribution in the field of education was discussed. In an article 'Vidya' of *Istri Satsang* an example of British women was cited to prove that due to the education they were working in homes as well as in offices.\(^28\) Similarly education would enable Punjabi women to play an active and valuable role in the public life. Karamjit Kaur Layalpur wrote an article ‘Istri Vidya’ in *Istri Rattan* highlighting the reasons for mobilizing public opinion in the favour of opening schools and colleges and vocational courses for women.\(^29\) There was a popularized Victorian notion of woman as helpmate to man which became increasingly central point in the discussion of women and education in these magazines.\(^30\) Now the western educated young men wanted drawing room companions and not tradition-bound, illiterate wives.

The social agony of illiterate women, who suffered daily insults and humiliations as wives at the hands of their educated husbands and in laws family owing to their genuine problems of communication


\(^{29}\) *Istri Ratan*, Jan. 1926, p. 27.

coupled with their ignorance, was widely discussed. The following extract from the article *Avidya De Dukhre* in *Istri Satsang*; issue illustrates the point:

The vernacular press turned to ‘Adi Granth’ and the teaching of Sikh Gurus to substantiate their cause for the female equality and develop an urge for their education. The Gurus wives, Bibi Bhani, Mata Gangaji and Mata Gujriji were treated as role models. Gurmukh Singh Shamsher’s article ‘Istri : So Kyun Manda Aakhiye Jit Jame Raajan’ explained his point of view very clearly. He wanted equal opportunities for women in the field of education as various Sikh ladies studied and became role models. A ceaseless campaign was started for female education and examples of various women working for this cause were regularly discussed in *Sughar Saheli*.

Srimati Sant Kaur of Patiala state was working for the women and she used to give

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financial help to the various schools and colleges and even donated rupees five hundred at Taran Taran in the Sikh Educational Conference. She condemned various social evils.\textsuperscript{33}

Another important point of discussion in print media was the nature and content of education for girls. Giani Balwant Singh Chatrath’s article ‘Sanu Keho Jahi Vidya Di Lor Hai’ (What kind of female education is needed?) in \textit{Istri Sudhar} discussed this issue. Different subjects for girls like religious education, relating to hygiene, domestic work, embroidery and even practical science subjects were suggested for the girls.\textsuperscript{34} Care was to be taken in selecting books for the young girls and their education was to be deeply religious and moral. \textit{Istri Rattan} recommended a kind of education which could make the girl a simple, modest, religious, and a perfect home maker and that education which could enable her to acquire skills in the needle-work, cooking and in any of the domestic arts.\textsuperscript{35}

Thus, at that time initially in 1900s all the articles regarding the education published mainly wanted woman to become an ideal person. The syllabus prescribed was only domestic in nature as women were not allowed to go out of their homes to earn money. But in the third decade of 1900s, the syllabus for girls began to change and reformers and the government started introducing professional courses for the girls.

\textsuperscript{33} Sughar Saheli, Amritsar, Aug, 1917, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{34} Istri Sudhar, Amritsar, Jan., 1926, pp. 3-5.
\textsuperscript{35} Istri Rattan, Dec., 1915, pp. 28-30.
Stress was also laid on the need of training women for employment in the various professions such as teaching, medicine, social work, but without any compromise regarding the ultimate role of woman as an ideal house wife. In practice, the teaching of domestic arts continued to remain a major subject in the premier institutions in Punjab: Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (Jalandhar), Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (Ferozepur). The editorial commentaries of various magazines and newspapers informed their readers regularly about the establishment of new educational institutions with boarding facilities for girls and the expansion of existing schools and colleges. June issue of 1932 of Punjabi Bhain mentioned the opening of new colleges and schools. During the early 1930s, two new high schools for girls were opened in Ambala and Moga. In Lahore ‘Kinniard College’ was opened by the Christian missionaries and ‘Lahore College’ was opened by Sir Ganga Ram. ‘Lady Hardinge College, Delhi’ was established with the help of Lady Hardinge and was affiliated to the Panjab University. Some Christian missionaries also opened Medical School in Ludhiana for the girls.

Some magazines also mentioned that girls were also interested in professional education in Punjab like medical, teaching and other professions. Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Ferozepur was ahead in girls

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37 Punjabi Bhain, June, 1932, p. 3-5.
who were opting for the medical profession. Bibi Gurdial Kaur, Tejwant Kaur and Jagjeet Kaur passed F.S.C. Medical exam.\textsuperscript{38} Sharan Kaur of Lahore of this Ferozepur school did her MBBS from Medical College, Ludhiana. Raminder Kaur daughter of Sodhi Diwan Singh Magistrate, Fazilka did her medical education from Agra College of Medicine.\textsuperscript{39} Narajan Singh's daughter Davinder Kaur of Raees Kotli (Gujranwala) did her graduation from Indraprasta College, Delhi in 1932.\textsuperscript{40} Dr. Hardit Kaur was also the student of Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya, Ferozepur. Even girls were having option of profession of teachers as in each and every school women teachers were required. Various colleges and schools in Punjab were running Teacher Training classes. Ferozepur Vidyalaya started their first teacher training class in 1914 and girls were invited to join these classes and scholarships were fixed according to their qualification. Girls who passed their primary education, were to be given scholarship of rupees eight per month for one year and who were middle passed were given rupees ten per month for a year. And after completion of the course, they also had the facility to join the same school as a teacher. They were also provided certificates from Punjab Government Department of Education.\textsuperscript{41} Harnam Kaur Nabha,

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, July, 1932, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, Nov., 1932, p. 3-5.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, March, 1914, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, p.3.
daughter-in-law of Kahan Singh Nabha did her teacher training course from the Ferozepur Vidyalya and taught in the same school till December, 1935. Harnam Kaur's sister, Amar Kaur also followed the footsteps of her elder sister.42

When the girls got exposure, then they started writing poems. Sarojini Naidu was their inspiration and almost every day their poems were published in the vernacular press. Harnam Kaur and Amar Kaur both the sisters were praised in the columns of Punjabi Bhain.

Girl students of various schools also wrote about various social evils in the form of poems.

43 Ibid, September, 1933 (poem written by Beant Kaur Kani), p. 27.
(The position of an uneducated women is very bad and an appeal is made by the girl students to educate their sisters).⁴⁴

Harnam Kaur Nabha’s poems were regularly published like ‘नरी मात्र रहिए’ (Nargis Da vichora), ‘नरी’ (Nari), ‘बेहतरीन फूल लूटी फूलं’ (Punjabi Bhain Layi Bhainan Di Sikh), ‘मेरे लिए डिम्बल खल डे रहें ढूंढ़’ (Mere Vidyak Ghar De Naven Phul), ‘मेरी धूली, धूली महीना’ (Meriyan Puraniyan Sakhiyan) and many more.⁴⁵

Many Punjabi women like Harnam Kaur, Amar Kaur, Dr. Hardit Kaur, Raminder and others used to write poems, articles, essays in the different journals of this period.

Various newspapers made people especially women aware about the different kind of professional education they could opt for, so that they could earn their living and could also help in the development of the nation. Article ‘तिल्ले टिम्बली फूली बेख’ (Hind Istri Layi Kum) in the March issue of 1931 of Punjabi Bhain, explained different professions for ladies like religious teacher, editor of newspapers, school teachers, doctors, art and craft teacher, lawyer, tailor, goldsmith, cloth dyer, cloth maker, chef and many more.⁴⁶

The vernacular media through their editorial commentaries informed their readers about all the meetings of ‘Sikh educational conference’⁴⁷, ‘Punjab Women Education Conference’⁴⁸, ‘All India

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⁴⁵ *Punjabi Bhain*, December, 1930, p. 11, 12, 17.
Women Conference’ (AIWC). All the resolutions passed and annual reports of different educational institutions also received a special notice in the columns of the Punjabi magazines.

All these journals tried their level best to take each and every issue relating to the women education. From primary to higher education, the girls were made aware about all the institutions. Poems and articles were published to make parents aware to send their girls to schools.

The second important theme of the vernacular press was the condition of widows and widow remarriage. The print media expressed the views about the bad condition of widows and some of the journals even tried to launch a fierce campaign for creating awareness among people for improving the condition of widows. *Istri Satsang* was the pioneer in this context.

*Istri Satsang* gave examples of the foreign ladies who were working for the emancipation of widows. Nihal Singh Chawalanwala of Chawalmandi, Amritsar in his article ‘मैं के रे छुटे रीतें’ (Sache Te Jothe Rehne) gave example of Karniliya of Rome. She was a widow having two children. Her husband died and after his death, she started studying for some time and later earned money for her kids. People in Punjab were asked to educate their girls so that they could

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49 *Istri Sudhar*, July, 1927, p. 28.
50 *Istri Satsang*, 25 March, 1931, p. 16.
make use of their education when needed.\textsuperscript{51} One separate column was published for widows named ‘रांडियान अर्थात विदवा इतिहास’ (Randiyan Arthaat Vidwa Istriyan De Dukhre) in which contribution of Sikh Gurus in improving the widow’s conditions was mentioned. Guru Amardas propagated widow remarriage long before the advent of Britishers. He was against the Sati system by which widow was asked to burn herself on the pyre of her dead husband.\textsuperscript{52} From the ancient period, women of our nation were taught that they were not entitled to the right of inheritance if they were born as a female and it was her lifetime duty to serve her relatives and family without any complaint. They were not educated as orthodox people believed if women were not aware then they could easily believe in superstitious sayings of elders. In the name of religion women wee forced to continue widowhood.\textsuperscript{53} This was one of the reason for an increasing number of widows in Punjab and other states. There were two more causes which led to a large number of widows – the child marriage and prohibition of widow marriage in higher castes.\textsuperscript{54} The widows were illtreated at their in-laws place and sometimes were called as ‘दायन’ (Dayan or witch). Male members of the family even sexually harassed these women which made them either to commit suicide or to elope with some one.\textsuperscript{55} The widows had two alternatives after the death of her

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 10 Aug., 1909, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 25 July, 1909, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 25 Jan., 1909, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, 25 Feb., 1909, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{55} The Punjab, Amritsar 1 May, 1906, p. 3-6.
husband either to become Sati or to live in extreme worst conditions surrounded by inhuman environment. If she accepted ‘Sati’ then before performing that ritual, she was given ‘Kesar’ (saffron) in powdered form. By doing this the victim was intoxicated and in that condition she easily sat on the dead husband’s pyre.56

This system of Sati was much prevalent in the rural areas where people were less educated and aware. Old people of the village used to regard this deed of a lady as pious work in their life and these were worshipped as goddesses. Their temples were built. Live example of these type of temples can still be seen at village Mandaur, in present Fatehgarh Sahib district of modern Punjab. Here villagers go to this ‘Sati Mata Temple’ and the woman who became a Sati is worshipped till today.

Regular articles, essays were also written in Istri Satsang regarding the psychology of widows. Writer Jan Kama’s essay in Madras English newspaper was published in Istri Satsang. Jankama cited an example of a widow whose father was well educated but he didn’t educate his daughter. She was married at the age of ten years and after two years of her marriage her husband died. She thought now there was no happiness for her in the world, she dreamt of her husband during night. She was not allowed to attend parties, feasts and coloured clothes were banned for her. Whenever she saw her

56 Istri Satsang, 20 June, 1909, p. 5.
sisters and sister-in-laws talking to their husbands, she felt very alone. Then she used to ask questions to herself that why widow remarriage was not allowed?57

Mahatma Gandhi’s article ‘हियाल हो ट्रस्टमा’ (Vidwa Di Durdasha) in Azad Bhain highlighted the recommendation for saving the women from this evil. The social agony of widows was depicted and Gandhi regarded them as the most pious creatures in the world. He explained that Hindu religion praised ‘patience’ and widow was the person who was suffering all the sorrows of life with full patience. Religious leaders were against widows and put restrictions on them. The widow’s sorrow was regarded as her happiness and a way to heaven. A girl of ten years age who did not even know the meaning of marriage, how could she know about the pious living of a widow? He gave various recommendation to save widows - firstly, asked people not to marry a girl before she attained fifteen years of age. Secondly, the girls who were married before the above mentioned age and became widows, must be remarried. Thirdly, if a girl of fifteen became a widow, her parents should marry her within one year. Fourthly, each and every member of the family should respect the widows. Her in-laws should even try to educate her. Lastly, he suggested to the parents not to worry about the society and marry their young widowed daughters. They were not to be afraid of their excommunication and if

done so, then they could regularly request their friends and relatives to accept them for the noble cause. Gandhi was even against the popular practice of widower’s remarriage because it was responsible for adding to the number of child widows and thus posing a grave social problem. According to Gandhi, widwa or widow was that lady whose husband was dead and the lady who married at the right age with her or family’s consent and the lady who knew husband-wife relations. A widow was not a young girl who didn't know about all these things. So widow remarriage was the best option for their emancipation.58

*The Punjab*, monthly journal favoured widower’s remarriage but only with widows. This practice could easily decrease the number of child marriages. This journal became the forum for a creative dialogue between the supporters and opponents of widow and widower’s re-marriage. It played a role of saviour against the organized social oppression including the galore of widower’s remarriages with the young girls. ‘विवाह विवाह’ (Vidwa Vivah) in November issue of ‘The Punjab’ in 1905 presented a comparative view of the privileged position of a widower and the abject status of a widow. Widower remarriage was liked by the contributors of this journal.59 This journal was also giving alternative for widows other than Sati. It was against the concept of ‘Chadar Andezi’ in which a

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59 The Punjab, May, 1906, p. 3-5.
brother of the deceased husband used to marry the widow. This practice was leading to polygamy (meaning man having more than one wife). So the best alternative suggested was the marriage of a widow with a widower without any caste bar. This kind of marriage was regarded as ideal by the editor of this journal and an appeal was also made by the editor to the religious leaders to make this marriage as a rule in their rule books.

In the editorial ‘क्षिप्त अव ढूंढ़न दी रक्षा’ (Vidwa Ar Una Di Dasha) urged the people for widow remarriage. A comparison was made to the reformers in Bengal who were working for widows. The example of editor ‘Babu Shankar Lal’ of 'Abla Hit Kari' was given who announced prize of one thousand rupees for that person who could prove that in the Hindu Shastras widow remarriage was not allowed. Bijnaur's Vidwa Viyah Society sent four scholars to meet brahmins of Kashi, Parag, Kanpur and Lucknow and discuss the issue of widow remarriage. On the same pattern the people of Punjab were asked to prove from their holy books which banned widow remarriage.60

_Istri Sudhar_ magazine informed its readers about the establishment of new institutions working for women especially widow emancipation, and also issued appeals for the donations to support them. Sir Ganga Ram established a trust to which he donated a property of twenty one lakh rupee's. By the income of this property, six institutions worked which are as follows:

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60 Ibid, 1 Nov. 1905, pp. 15-17.
First, Vidwa Viwah Sahayak Sabha; second, Sir Ganga Ram Free hospital; third, Hindu Students Career Society; fourth, Sir Ganga Ram Business Bureau and Library; fifth, Mechanical Art and Craft School (for girls); sixth, Hindu Orphanage.61 In 1915, Vidwa Viwah Sahayak Sabha was established in Lahore and from 1915 to 1925, this Sabha arranged six thousand three hundred and thirty four widow remarriages. This Sabha recorded rupees ninety five thousand six hundred and thirty nine expenditure from 1915-25 with an average expenditure on one wedding of rupees fifteen. For the propagation of widow remarriage this Sabha was publishing three newspapers and even published books in Urdu, Gurmukhi, Hindi and English. The patron of this Sabha ‘Sir Ganga Ram’ never interfered in the castes of girls and they were married according to the tradition of their religion and castes. This Sabha managed to publish their monthly reports of remarriages according to castes.62 The above mentioned point is illustrated in this follow extract:

61 Istri Sudhar, Jan. 1926, p. 55-56.
Lahore Vidwan Vivah Sahayak Sabha organized two hundred and two widow remarriages in the month of October, 1926. Castewise classification was published - Brahmans- four hundred and forty three, Khatri- three hundred and fifteen, Aroras- four hundred and twenty nine, Aggarwals- eighty seven, Kayasthas- eighty seven, Rajputs- two hundred and seventeen, Sikhs- one hundred and ninety nine and others three hundred and ninety eight).  

In later issues of Phuleran, widow remarriages were mentioned province wise, for example in December, 1926, widows who got married in Punjab and North Western Frontier province were one thousand and nine hundred thirty two, in Sindh- two hundred and thirty, Delhi- eighty one, Central provinces- six hundred and eighty two, Bengal- one hundred and forty five, Madras- nine, Bombay- six.

Punjabi Bhain magazine of Ferozepur also mentioned various widow associations working outside the Punjab. Widow Ashram in Poona was also working on the same guidelines of Lahore Sabha for widows.

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64 Ibid, Jan., 1927, p. 264.
65 Punjabi Bhain, 1 Aug. 1907, p. 22.
Various conferences were also held which were working for widow reforms like Ganga Ram organised Vidwa Conference in September, 1926. This conference was held at Lahore under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai. All the resolutions passed in this conference were published in *Phuleran*. First, resolution was passed for the marriage of child widows who had never lived with their husband. Second, this conference praised the working of Sir Ganga Ram’s Vidwa Vivah Sahayak Sabha. Third, it fixed marriageable age for girls and boys as sixteen and twenty five respectively. Forth, it appealed to the different castes to make rules for their castes not to allow widower’s marriage to unmarried young girls and widow’s marriage to bachelors. Fifth and last, it was against the marriage of girls for the sake of money. People were asked to follow these resolutions for making society free of all type of social evils.  

*Punjabi Bhain* in 1909 highlighted the opening of widow homes in Punjab. The debate on widow homes figured frequently in the columns of this journal. The different point of views were discussed regarding widow remarriage and widow homes. In article ‘विवाह का विवरण : भली बालिका लेकिन न हुई शादी’ (Vidwa Virlap : Manyog Veeran De Ulte Prishram) discussed pros and cons of widow homes. Women supporters wanted widow remarriage instead of widow homes. In these ashrams some times they remained as the unpaid maid of all

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the work. Even in some cases they were an easy sexual prey to male members in the ahśrams.\footnote{67} Thus, contributors in \textit{Punjabi Bhain} were against widow homes.

\textit{Istri Satsang} also propagated against the widow homes. It encouraged widow remarriages and for this various matrimonial advertisements were published under the heading of ‘\textit{धुंधला लक्षी दिपह्रा रिम्ज़ीहरू सी लें}’ (Purshan Layi Vidwa istriyan di lor). This is illustrated in the following extracts:

(1) सिंध धुंधला (ताल लिपीहरू) भोजन थेरंट भमरत उठवण 60 तुथे भगीर हे लामो दिपह्रा, छदी पैरी ताल वेदे बैटी धुंधल करे ती लें।

(2) दिव सिंध भोजन धुंधला दिवेई धुंधल 35 मल भुगवल भमरत 125 तुथे भवन लक्षी दिव दिपह्रा रिम्ज़ीहरू 19-20 मल दी लें।\footnote{68}

Various examples of widow remarriages were also cited in the newspapers and journals. In the issue of 10 January, 1909 of \textit{Istri Satsang}, the marriage of a widow girl of thirteen years age of Arora family of Amritsar was mentioned.\footnote{69} Another example was given of a Khatri widow girl of sixteen years age of Lahore who was married to a Arora caste man of thirty years age.\footnote{70} Another widow marriage was performed with great zeal on 21 February, 1934 at Lahore of Lala Dharam Chand and Shrimati Rameshwari Devi of Lahore. This
marriage was even attended by Shrimati Lekhwati Jain (first woman member of Legislative Council Punjab) and other prominent personalities of Lahore.\textsuperscript{71}

Thus, it can be seen that widow marriages were prevalent at that time but mostly in the cities. In the rural areas, these marriages were less in number as in cities. The only probable reason could be the lack of awareness in the villagers or presence of orthodox people there.

The vernacular press tried to discuss each and every issue related to the widows. Readers were also informed about the new developments for the emancipation of widows in other provinces of India and new policies adopted by the British government were published in the columns of this print media.

The vernacular press launched a vigorous campaign against purdah. Azad Bhain’s article ‘लज्जा’ (Lajja) of Pushap Pankhari, Rawalpindi tried to demonstrate the ability to understand the complex issue of purdah in the context with the larger issue of systematic and organized social oppression of women. ‘Pushap Pankhari’ pointed that ‘shyness’ was the most important characteristic of women but extreme shyness in the form of purdah became a hindrance in the way of the development of women as well as of society. It also explained why purdah was needed to save women from the evil eyes of men.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{71} The Tribune, Lahore, 23 Feb., 1934, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{72} Azad Bhain, Rawalpindi, May, 1924.
Purdah system in India was started when the Muslims started invading the Indian territories. The Mohammedan invaders were short of women and were eager to obtain them from among the conquered Hindu races. So people in order to save their women started keeping their women in Zennana - secluded quarters and when these women were to leave their secluded quarters, they went closely veiled so that no rowing Mohammedan eye could possibly catch a glimpse of them.\(^\text{73}\)

So purdah under Muslim influence, became a protective measure in Indian society. And with the passage of time women themselves came to regard it with jealous pride to such an inordinate extent that it grew to be an envied boast for a woman to be able to assert that not even the eye of the sun had ever beheld her face. Women themselves were quite content to be shut away in crowded, airless and isolated rooms at the back of the houses, or screened in by shuttered and trellised device through which only faint glimpses could be obtained of the life outside.\(^\text{74}\)

Women in purdah were deprived of education, real knowledge, wealth and personal freedom. Begum Sahiba Hasrat Mohini in her article ‘Purdah’ in March 1920 issue of *Punjabi Bhain* criticized purdah as the major obstacle in the way of girls education. She went

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a step further when she linked it with the women’s right to good personal health like every other human being. She, being a Muslim woman, discarded purdah and appealed the people to abolish this custom. This tradition of purdah was started by the Muslims and at that time Muslims too were the first to oppose this custom.\textsuperscript{75}

Examples were given of women of India who had honoured tradition and never followed veil. Sita, Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Savitri were the well known names in our history. Ahaliya Bai, Tara Bai, Noor Jahan, Raziya Sultana were all the names in our history who never veiled from anyone.\textsuperscript{76}

The custom of purdah was not so much prevalent in Punjab. It affected, in the first instance, those people whose livelihood and official position depended directly on the Muslim conquerors. It also affected the high caste people who had imitated the rulers. High caste women were caught in this vicious circle of purdah.\textsuperscript{77} As soon as a man in Punjab became affluent enough to be able to afford a servant’s wages, that servant ran errands and made all purchases in the bazaar, that enabled the wife to slip into purdah, which she did with alacrity, as it conferred upon her an incontrovertible mark of ascent in the social scale.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{75} Punjabi Bhain, March, 1920, p.8.
\textsuperscript{77} S. Das, Purdah: The Status of Indian Women, p. 84.
Rajinder Kaur ‘Kamli’ Gujranwala in her article ‘धर्मक च पूर्वे दिवाई नाट्री’ (Purdah Te Istri Jaati) explained prevalence of purdah system among the upper castes of Punjab only. Whenever someone got a good job or became financially sound, he made the female members of the family wear purdah. She discussed that the Sikh religion was against purdah, so women must avoid the evil custom. She urged her sisters to get education.79

This purdah system was limited to the upper caste society. It never extended to the low-caste group as economic necessity protected them. The need of earning their living through bodily toil effectively preluded all possibilities of seclusion. Only among high castes, purdah was universal. High caste men and women thought that freedom of movement outside the house would lower their standing and place them on a common level with low castes, so women stayed in the ‘Zenanas’.80

_Istri Samachar_ mentioned drawbacks of purdah and zenana in its issues. Purdah abolished all the possibilities of the high caste women participation in social life of the community. Visits, feasts, discussions, musical parties, all these took place in men’s quarters and not in zenanas. Women were shut away from the sun, air and exercise, fell victims of various diseases and infections which used to make their life hell.81

80 _Azad Bhain_, May, 1924, p. 15.
Even it was not possible to make arrangements for education of girls in the zenana as majority of them were either not aware or did not want their girls to study and avoided a private lady or male tutor.\textsuperscript{82}

But in some parts of Punjab, missionary ladies and women teachers (who were product of various girls schools of Punjab like Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya and others) tried to educate women against purdah at their places. Even various Sikh Educational Conferences and especially, Women Educational Conference held in April, 1913 in Punjab passed the resolution to make arrangements for teaching women in Zenana. Male and female reformers all were working for the women emancipation and wanted a purdah free society.\textsuperscript{83}

All these magazines and newspapers even urged men to change their rigid attitudes and orthodox views in keeping with the progressive trends of the world. While emphasizing the vital need for uprooting the pernicious social customs particularly purdah, they also pointed out that women possessed as much intelligence as men for deliberating upon the issue of national welfare and implementing plans for achieving these objectives.

The debate on child marriages figured frequently in the columns of various journals and it was also highlighted that there was growing resentment of critical reformers against this discriminatory social norm of the society.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 16 Nov., 1909, p. 17-18.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, April, 1913, p. 14.
The custom of child marriage was, to some extent, the result of Muslim conquest. The Muslim invaders used to carry Indian women but according to their shariat law it was forbidden in their religion to carry off married women. So as a means of protection, Indians resorted to marrying their daughters not only at the approach of puberty, but even as infants.\textsuperscript{84}

But after the decline of the Muslim power, this evil custom was performed because of economic reasons. Whenever child marriage was performed, the new bride usually came to the joint family and by this the young bride was in no way dependent on the earning of the groom. Secondly, she was always an asset and not an outlay, as she took the place of an unpaid servant. Thirdly, the little bride also brought dowry with her, so the earlier she came into the household the better. Fourthly, child marriage was also preferred as the younger the bride, the less the chances of her surviving for long the strain of marriage duties and the more likely the early need for a ‘new bride’ who brought another dowry.\textsuperscript{85}

The vernacular print media of early twentieth century became the forum between the supporters and opponents of child marriage. Editorial commentaries of \textit{Phuleran} criticized this evil custom. In February, 1927 issue, it was mentioned that European and American people when they came to know about marriage of five year old boys

\textsuperscript{84} S. Das, \textit{Purdah: The Status of Indian Women}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Ibid}, p. 80-81.
and girls, then they used to laugh and ask questions how India could develop when such kind of evil practices were prevalent. The consequences of these type of child marriages were also explained. Young girls were married and before their ideal age they become mothers. Firstly, there was no time left for them to get education; secondly, due to young age their bodies were not fully developed so weak and sick children were born. Thirdly, after giving birth even young mothers were not strong enough to do any physical labour which in return reduced their capability to earn money for their living. Thus appeals were made to the people to get rid of this practice. The reformers were asked to eradicate this evil from its roots.86

Examples of animals were also given in these newspapers for opposing the marriage of children. It was stated, that as family in animals started at a particular age then why human beings started their family before time and particular age. It is illustrated in the following extract:

86 Phuleran, Feb., 1927, p. 67-68.
Spread of diseases and number of physical problems to women were increasing at a high rate. The maximum number of child marriages in Punjab were amongst the Hindu castes than Sikhs and Muslims.\textsuperscript{88}

*Istri Sudhar* magazine gave examples of various states which had fixed the marriageable age for girls and boys. *Kota Riyasat* made a law, by which a girl of not less than twelve years of age was to be married and a girl of eighteen years was not to be married to a man double her age.\textsuperscript{89}

Similarly various examples were given of different states where child marriage was prevalent. In Jaipur, a Jain ‘Isher Lal’ married his ten year old daughter to Phool Chand of fifty years age for the sake of rupees five thousand.\textsuperscript{90} A widow of Indore also married her nine year old daughter to an old man for rupees five thousand.\textsuperscript{91} In April, 1932 issue of *Punjabi Bhain* it was also mentioned that an old man of Brahman caste went to marry a girl of his grand daughter’s age. But when people of that village came to know about the wedding, they all beat that old man and made him run from there. These type of incidents were becoming examples for others and even people were becoming more and more critical of this evil custom.\textsuperscript{92} In Rawalpindi in 1923, the marriage of a four year old girl was arranged with a forty

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, Jan., 1927, p. 264.

\textsuperscript{89} *Istri Sudhar*, Jan, 1926, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, July-Aug., 1926.

\textsuperscript{91} *Punjabi Bhain*, Sept., 1919, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, April, 1932, p. 32.
year old man on Diwali night. And this wedding was also stopped by the people of that place and the four year old girl was saved.\textsuperscript{93}

*Istir Satsang* newspaper used to publish the poems and the songs depicting the critical condition and psychology of the child bride. The following extracts illustrates the point:

\begin{quote}
हिंद बाल विवाही श्रीमाणी रा विलुप्त!

अतिर्यं भी मायें रेही थी भी बूढ़े! उदार में दे उदार देशत उद थाही भूषणे!! लगें महाणी देने चंगों ता गलही! बाल विवाह वे मेम्मु बीड़ा बेगाल ही!!!

हिंदी दे दिनती में गुड़ खील मेरी भी! सदां दे सदा विलुप्ता भि दीन आंखी सी! उदारी दे उदार देशा देशा देशा देशा शाबु! बाल विवाह वे मेम्मु बीड़ा बेगाल ही!!!

लेने में बूढ़े भारी बनी भवन में। बाल विवाह व बनीं देशा बजन में। यीता निमित्ती श्रेष्ठ एजा दिता गाल ही। बाल विवाह वे मेम्मु बीड़ा बेगाल ही!!!

छिम सन्दर के गुड़ विलुप्त है। उदार दे जेना देशा देशा विलुप्त है। यीता निमित्ती श्रेष्ठ बनी भवन में। बाल विवाह वे मेम्मु बीड़ा बेगाल ही!!!\textsuperscript{94}
\end{quote}

(A young girl asks her mother, why she married her so early, why no education was imparted to her and suggest others to marry their daughters when they are educated and when they have turned to appropriate marriageable age).

\textsuperscript{93} Azad Bhain, December, 1923, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{94} Istri Satsang, 25 March, 1909, p. 7-8.
These vernacular magazines and newspapers also advocated the role played by the various organisations at national and regional level for emancipation of women. In 1933, the All India Women Conference (AIWC) in its seventh session of Lahore under Lady Neel Kanth passed various resolutions regarding the persisting social evils in the society. A resolution was also passed against the child marriage.\textsuperscript{95} AIWC in 1910 also discussed the issue of child marriage. The age for marriage of girls and boys was suggested as fourteen and twenty years respectively.\textsuperscript{96} The Sikh Educational Conference of 1919 in its session laid emphasis to educate girls instead of marrying them at a very young age.\textsuperscript{97} The Women League of Punjab\textsuperscript{98} also discussed the aftermaths of child marriage on the health of girls at its session in 1916 in Lahore.\textsuperscript{99} A little bride of nine to thirteen years of age was subjected to burden of pregnancy before she had the strength to carry it to a successful end. Several miscarriages and still births before the birth of the first living child were usual. Sometimes non-consensual sex was done which led to the forced motherhood before their bodies were fully developed or their bones had solidly set. Added to this, the shocking conditions of midwifery, and the result was an abnormally high mortality of mothers and infants in child-birth, the prevalence of female disorders and children’s diseases.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{95} Punjabi Bhain, Jan., 1933, pp. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, Jan.-Feb., 1910, pp. 20-21.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, April, 1919, pp. 3-5.
\textsuperscript{98} The Women League of Punjab was established in 1900 at Lahore.
\textsuperscript{100} S. Das, Purdah: The Status of Indian Women, p. 82-83.
Another issue discussed in the columns of these newspapers and magazines was women trafficking. The practice of selling and exchanging females was prevalent in some areas of Punjab. The print media elaborated that this trafficking in women persisted well into the twentieth century and became lucrative moneymaking schemes for people in Punjab.¹⁰¹

_Punjabi Bhain_ in June 1917 gave examples of women trafficking in the hilly states. The British government had already banned the sale of women but still women below twenty six years of age were made to stand on ‘Square’ (चार्टर) and were sold in auction from rupees fifty one to rupees four hundred. The British government was appealed to take strict actions against the culprits. Other editors of different newspapers were also requested to publish the articles regarding this evil practice.¹⁰²

Even some women were involved in trafficking. Two minor girls were taken by women at Batala and were sold at the railway station. But ‘Sewa Samiti of Batala’ caught that lady and the girls were saved.¹⁰³ In Amritsar, a jat bought a widow and daughter for rupees six hundred. He sold the daughter for rupees twelve hundred and six months later got rupees three hundred for the widow.¹⁰⁴

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101 Donis R. Jakobsh, _Relocating Gender in Sikh History_, p. 111.
103 _Phuleran_, August, 1926, p. 91.
104 Doris R. Jakobsh. _Relocating Gender in Sikh History_, p. 111.
Istri Sudhar also launched a crusade against this evil and tried to make women aware about their safety and security. Istri Satsang wanted women to work and get education if they wanted to save them from these evils. To become financially independent was the best alternative to evade this problem.

The problem of sati system, female infanticide, polygamy, polyandry, dowry system were also discussed in the issues of these newspapers. The best option to end these customs according to print media was the spread of education and favouring British and reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Punjabi Bhain’s contributors wrote numerous articles, poems, songs in the form of appeals to make Punjabi society evil free. Various book reviews were published by the journal like 'Manual of Midwifery', 'Niti Ratan Bhandar', 'Bhai Mula', 'Istri Sudhar', 'Swarag De Ratan', 'Randepe De Dukhre' and many more.\(^\text{105}\) Istri Satsang published many articles which were against women’s jewellery. They wanted simple life for women and urged people that wearing jewellery was not in the Sikh tradition.\(^\text{106}\) Issues relating to 'Mid Wifery' and science and technology were usually discussed in Punjabi Bhain from 1930 onwards. All the health problems relating to the children and women were explained with symptoms and precautions. The concept of birth control was also published in 1934 issue of Punjabi Bhain.

\(^{105}\) Punjabi Bhain, December 1912, p. 10-11.
\(^{106}\) Istri Satsang, May 1909, p. 18-19.
These newspapers, magazines and journals played an important role in terms of gender issues. Regular articles and editorials were published about the husband-wife relationships. Slowly and steadily expectations of the young women were changed from one-sided devotion and fidelity, humane and personal equation based on mutual self respect, romantic love and a sense of comradeship. As more and more articles were published condemning enforced widowhood and ill practice of Sati, there was a change in the thinking of people and they started promoting widow remarriage leaving the sati practice. The vernacular press also helped in projecting the key role of mothers in the progress or decline of an individual, nation or mankind. Punjabi men and women sought to establish a new equation between the functions of mothers and project of nation-building. Even the women activists and reformers endorsed this new orientation. After discussing the social evils and ill practices, the contributors of this print media frequently referred to the economic dependence of women as an important factor for the degradation of women. They were encouraged to study new upcoming professional education like medicine, law, teaching and others. The economic independence of women was discussed regularly and they were also encouraged to take up cottage industries like making cloth, painting, stitching and many other skilled works.
Contemporary news of importance from social, economic and political fields were regularly published in the vernacular print media of colonial Punjab. This media succeeded in its mission of transforming the consciousness, that is self image, world views, ideals, aspiration and goals of the urban Indian women especially of colonial Punjab. It threw light on varied social aspects including female education, widow remarriage, sati system, purdah system, illiteracy, science and technology, women trafficking and others had national leaders as writers like Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others. The print media from 1901-47 in colonial Punjab wielded a tremendous influence over the Punjabi society as it fought against social evils and worked relentlessly for creating awareness among women in the colonial Punjab to fight for a more respectable status in society.