CHAPTER II

SOCIAL CHANGE

AND

STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The objective of this study is to examine change and traditionalism among college-going girls in a metropolitan city. An assumption of this study is that college education and urban residence represent two major forces of social change, and that they are likely to influence the attitudes, value-orientations and behaviour-patterns of college-going girls. It is further assumed that the attitudes, value-orientations and behaviour-patterns of college-going girls will reflect the changing status and role of the urban educated women in the contemporary Indian society. In this context, we shall examine first the concept of social change, briefly review the classical and modern theories of social change, and then obtain a brief historical perspective of the efforts to bring about changes in the role and status of women in India.

Social Change

Social change in society is inevitable. Davis (1966: 621) observes that "individuals may strive for stability and security; societies may foster the illusion of permanence; the quest for certainty may continue unabated and the belief in eternity may persist unshaken, yet the fact remains that the societies, like
all other phenomena, unremittingly and inevitably change. " Social changes are often merely variations from the accepted modes of life. Jonas (1949 : 96) defines social change as "a term used to describe variations in, or modifications of any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interaction, or social organization."

A change is said to have taken place when an object or member of a system of moving things has been positionally shifted in such a way that the structural arrangement of the system is different (Fairchild, 1976 : 36). According to Fairchild (1976 : 36) social change signifies variations or modifications in any aspect of social process, pattern, or form. It is a comprehensive term designating the result of every variety of social movement. Social change may be progressive or regressive, permanent or temporary, planned or unplanned, uni-directional or multi-directional, beneficial or harmful.

We deduce from the above views that change is the order of society. It may seem a paradox, even then, change is the only predominant factor in every society. The certainty of social change is unquestionable. It is the guiding force which keeps the society alive and energetic. No society on earth is completely static. Even though the rules of social statics do work, at the same time the rules of social dynamics also work forcefully. Social change in society is inevitable as well as unpredictable. At the same time, the rate of social change is unequal. Activity and change are ever-present universal facts of society.
Kuppuswamy (1972: 6-9) has described different factors and processes of change. There are many genuine factors responsible in bringing changes in society — geographical, biological and demographic factors, economic and technological factors, personality and psychological factors, and cultural factors. Sociologists think about and concentrate on different agencies which bring social change in the social structure. The state, educational institutions, political parties, voluntary associations, communication system, means of transportation, industrialization and urbanization, propaganda system and other agencies are responsible in bringing about social change in society.

According to Mac Iver and Page (1953: 521), the term 'change' itself is wholly neutral, implying nothing but difference through time in the object to which it is applied. Difference is there, but the type of difference implies different forms of social change taking place in the social structure. Social evolution, social growth or development, social progress, social regress and social reform are the main social processes working and affecting the social order and social structure. In a social process, "there is a continuous change taking place in a definite manner because of the operation of the forces present in the situation" (Kuppuswamy, 1972: 9).

While talking about social change as a process, the idea of continuity comes in. We observe a series of transitions between one stage of being and another. It also implies direction. It may be forward or backward and it may lead to integration or...
disintegration. 'Social evolution' and 'social development' imply continuity as well as direction. Biologically speaking, there is change, not merely in size but also in structure. The laws of heredity, variation and selection give evolutionary modifications. But this concept cannot be applied to the changes in society. The conscious willingness of human beings initiate, control and even delay the cultural and other changes in society. The concept of social development implies development in certain social aspects of society. Development means gradual unfolding of the abilities within the object. According to Hobhouse, there are four criteria of development: scale, efficiency, mutuality and freedom. He (1972: 10) thinks that the social development is an inevitable process for all societies.

Theories of Social Change.

The order that is society is after all a changing order. That changing order is explained theoretically by classical as well as modern thinkers. The evolutionary theory and linear theories dominated the sociological thought in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From 1920 onwards, interest has been concentrated on a systematic analysis of social systems, analysis of broad social and demographic trends, and finally investigation of the social determinants of behaviour.

The first assumption of the older evolutionary theory was that the development of human societies is unilinear and its major stages of development are universal. The second assumption was that the societies or institutions as well as the mechanisms and
processes of change transited from one stage to another. Most of the classical evolutionary schools pointed out the general causes of change (e.g., economic, technological, spiritual etc.) or some general trends (e.g., the trend from simple to complex) inherent in the development of societies.

**Evolutionary Theories**

The nineteenth century evolutionary view sees change as cumulative, tends to equate it with 'progress' and generally sees it as a one-way process leading to 'civilization' and ever-increasing complexity in social organization (Mc Gee, 1977: 605). Evolutionary theories of change have basic assumptions about change, namely (i) change tends to be cumulative, (ii) it brings about increasing social and cultural differentiation and complexity, and (iii) it enhances adaptation and promotes progress.

Early thinkers were convinced that change inevitably brought about improvement in society. Darwin looked upon society as a process of continuous development through regular stages. He emphasised that societies went through these stages like biological evolution. For Morgan, change meant the passage from savagery to barbarism and ultimately to civilization. For Comte, change meant the passage from the theological stage of social organization to a scientific stage. He believed in existence of moral development side by side with intellectual progress, i.e., from egoism to altruism. He thought the presence or absence of education to be responsible for creating privileged and under-privileged classes in
society. His observation was that dynamism in masses could be through education. For Spencer, change meant the replacement of military-religious societies by industrial orders. He thought that there is a cosmic progress from undifferentiated homogeneity to differentiated heterogeneity in society. He believed in universal and inevitable social evolution. For Durkheim, change transforms the basis of social cohesion in society, from a 'mechanical' solidarity of primitive societies to an 'organic' solidarity found in complex industrial societies. Tonnies' theory is consistent with Durkheim's view; 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft' societies parallel Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. According to Tonnies, in the urban society, the individualism and struggle for power, result into cultural breakdown. The people become isolated, independent and aloof from social bondage and as a result, the stability and integration of traditional societies weakens. For Durkheim as well as Tonnies, change does not always bring progress.

**Neo-Evolutionism**

The modern view is that change is continuous and cumulative, but not necessarily 'progressive' in all spheres. Neo-evolutionists restrict themselves to talking about increasing complexity, particularly in technology and social organization (Mc Gee, 1977 : 607). Early evolutionary theorists thought progress as an all-pervasive phenomenon taking place throughout every facet of social as well as cultural life, while the contemporary evolutionists are reluctant in applying the above thought.
White (1977 : 606) was the first thinker to revitalize the evolutionary theory. He noticed that as culture evolves, there is a progressive increase in the amount of energy placed under human control. It means that "the idea of progress is confined to greater mastery of the environment". Service (1977 : 606) sees progressive developments in social organization. As agricultural economies become more proficient and capable of sustaining larger populations, differentiation and specialization of functions continue. State is the last stage of social organizational development characteristic of industrial societies. Redfield built his conceptual scheme on the basic work of Durkheim, Tonnies and others. After conducting research in several communities, Redfield concluded that social change tends to result in a gradual shift away from the 'folk' or traditional community to an 'urban' society where the values, the life-qualities and the features of the social organization diverge from their traditional forms. Urban society represents a fundamental contrast with its folk antecedents.

Conflict Theories

All conflict theorists maintain that the competition between groups for scarce resources inevitably produces divergence, opposition, and conflict. The struggle between these groups makes continuing change. As one group succeeds over another, the group in power attempts to implement and impose its ideas and values on the rest of the society. Once again the subordinate groups have control and power and they become the ruling party. It goes on like this, and the cycle of conflict and change is formed.
Marx emphasised the development of technology and the changes in the production of goods and services and the relation among social classes. He asserted that the development of the productive forces changes the relations among the classes (that is, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots') leading to inevitable social conflict and a new social order emerges. For Marx, conflict arises from the clash between economic interests, while Dahrendorf focused on authority interests in contemporary industrial societies. For him, conflict arises as those who possess authority seek to maintain the status quo, while those who lack it attempt to expand powers.

Cyclic Theories

Cyclic theories see societies as undergoing periods of growth and decline or as swinging back and forth between extremes along several important dimensions. Many of them compare societies to living organisms and view the pattern of change in society as following the stages of the life-cycle — birth, growth, maturity and old age.

Spengler viewed cultures as autonomous systems, each having its own style and unique destiny. Cultures pass through the same stages of growth and decline as individuals. Each has its own childhood, growth, maturity and old age. He analysed the eight high civilizations and noted that each civilization had an existence like an organism with birth and adolescence, maturity and decline, and a period of decay and disintegration. He thinks civilization to be the final stage in the life of a culture. The life span of a culture is approximately a thousand years. Toynbee observed that
civilizations arise in response to some challenge from the social or physical environment. He studied twenty-one cultures and asserted that in all of them a common pattern of growth and decay was seen. His theory of change is constituted of two major concepts—challenge and response. Society develops as it faces challenges internal or external. According to him, each succeeding civilization is little higher in stature than the preceding one. Sorokin talks about 'sensate' cultures and 'ideational' cultures. The first gives importance to sensory experience, while the other to the spiritual metaphysical values. In 'sensate' culture, art, literature, religion and ethics appeal to the senses, while in 'ideational' culture these expressions appeal to the mind and spirit. He expressed that no society is completely sensate or completely ideational. When a culture swings back and forth between these two themes, rather like a pendulum, there are periods when it reaches an 'idealistic' point, where a mixture of both sensate as well as ideational values prevail. Pareto presents his theory of 'the circulation of elites.' He suggests that social change is brought about by the struggle for political power among different groups. The periods are altering periods of 'harsh rule by a newly victorious elite and a mild humane rule by the declining elite ' (Mc Gee, 1977 : 608-611).

Equilibrium Theories

The idea of equilibrium was originally borrowed from mechanics and the biological sciences. The fundamental assumption of equilibrium theory is that when change takes place in any one component in a system, it tends to spur further change in other
elements, which accommodate the new element and integrate it within the entire structure. Systems stride towards equilibrium.
Societies by new developments keep the social order in balance.

The best known equilibrium theory is the 'structural functionalist' viewpoint. Parsons developed the perspective this way: society is a system, composed of a set of inter-related parts or structures that are integrated with one another, functioning so as to promote overall social stability. Every society must provide five basic needs: (1) member replacement, (2) member socialization, (3) production and distribution of goods and services, (4) preservation of order, and (5) provision and maintenance of a sense of purpose in order to assure committed participation in group activities; e.g., the family provides for replacement, while the educational system for socialization, and so on. According to Parsons, in primitive societies, these structures typically are fused together, while as the societies evolve, there is an evolutionary element of structural elaboration and differentiation. Differentiation leads to further structural elaborations and the institutions evolve to integrate the more diverse structures. The institutional components of the social system are functionally interconnected with each other. When change occurs in any one part of the social system, it tends to have further reverberations among the others, whose overall thrust promotes adaptation, equilibrium and social stability (Mc Gee, 1977: 608-609).

Having briefly examined different theories of social change, we should note that different sociologists study change in different
spheres of society. For example, studies of acculturation by social/cultural anthropologists, studies of demographic/ecological change and urbanization, studies of social mobility and dynamics of elite, studies of institutional and community change as well as social movement (Kuppuswamy, 1972 : 13-15). The studies in different areas of social change have their own importance. Yet in the contemporary society, we see a change, as noted by Mac Iver, due to a process of differentiation from a traditional cultural setting towards a modern utilitarian urban setting. According to Becker, the differentiation between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' has distinctive features of social development. There is also a change from non-empirical belief-system, namely, philosophy and religion, towards empirical cognitive belief-system, namely, science and technology. In the modern urban-industrial society, the universalistic achievement-oriented form can be seen as a result of the process of rationalization in the empirical as well as the non-empirical belief systems. All societies do seem to change from a traditional to a modern type. For the last two centuries, a number of nations have been the forerunners of modernization. Yet many contemporary societies are still traditional in their demographic, economic, educational, religious and political structures. Most of these societies have started already to move towards modernization.

The Indian society, like any other society, is experiencing a change from traditional to modern. Modernization process has started since a long time. After independence, there is an overall change in different spheres of Indian society. The nation is experiencing the fresh air of democracy. The expansion of education
at all levels is made with a view that democracy without literacy is like a temple without an idol. Access to education is necessary because the need for educated masses prevails in the new democratic situation. A new 'educated' class has come into existence. For a developing country like India, industrialization has become a necessary fruitful process. With the development of industries, new industrial cities are established. The development of science and technology has changed the climate of Indian society. As a result of urbanization process, people from rural areas flock towards urban-industrial areas, to experience social mobility. A need for achieved status has become the dream of many. Specially, the youngsters crave for n-achievement. They try their level best to take higher education and to achieve 'degree' labels, in order to get employment somewhere in some occupation. Social movements and social planning implant new ideologies for national progress. This way, our society has experienced change after independence due to democratic attitudes, expansion of education, industrialization, urbanization, social movements and social planning.

The change brought about at the societal level in India, and in Gujarat, naturally influence the individual's personality. New ideologies of liberalism and rationalism change the views of the individual regarding his outlook of life. The attitudes, value-orientations and the behaviour-patterns of the individual are changed. This change is not the change of the masses, but it touches only the upper surface of society. The study of change reveals the origin of change from a particular section of society. With the spread of primary, secondary and higher education, a class of educated
individuals has come into existence. They think of imparting education to girls and try to teach them three R's. In that way, there comes a change in the personality development of girls and with that the status of women in society.

Status and Role of Women

Anuradha and S. D. Muni (1978 : 30) state that "the status and role of women in a society are conditioned by that society's organization and ethics." Each status position is expressed in terms of a role. Role is status translated into action. The term 'role' signifies "the function or expected behaviour of an individual in a group, usually defined by the group or the culture" (Fairchild, 1976 : 262). Role denotes a set of expectations and obligations associated with a particular status position within a group or social situation. Each individual occupies a number of distinct statuses within a society and therefore he/she performs a variety of roles. Around each particular status position centres a role-set. Status is realised through roles. The best way to assess the status of women of any group or sub-system, is to analyse the roles women are being called upon to play and the manner of their performance.

If we want to assess the status of women in a society, we must start from the social framework. Social structure, cultural norms and value-systems are important determinants of women's roles and their position in society. Social traditions have a major influence in shaping the attitudes as well as behaviour-patterns of human groups. General concepts like equality, role-differentiation,
legal, social and political rights are not applicable to all sections of our population. Since a large section of our society continues still to be under the influence of traditional norms, we need to redefine the role-conception, norms and values in all their variety in traditional society, against the new dimensions in women's status and roles introduced by the Constitution and the processes of change.

The radicalism of the Constitution, and its departure from the inherited social system, lay in its assumption that every adult woman will function as a citizen and as an individual partner in the task of nation-building. The new roles that women are expected to play in the political, social and economic spheres, have created problems.

With respect to the status given to woman by law and by the Constitution, we observe that there is a gap between the theoretical possibilities and their actual realization. Religion, family and kinship, roles and cultural norms delimit the spheres of women's activities and obstruct their full participation in society and the full achievement of their potentialities. The new roles and status should be visualised for Indian woman in the present social/cultural contexts.

Socio-economic and political changes needed the extension of the spheres of knowledge and activity for all the members of society. Modern trends in demographic/social changes call for a redefinition of women's roles as well as her status in family, occupation and society. Changes in the age of marriage, size of families, urbanization, migration, rising standards of living and
greater participation in the decision-making process within the family and in society at large, all lead to acute changes in the roles and responsibilities of women. The inability of women to face these challenges of life due to social handicaps puts obstacles in the smooth way of adjustment to the process of social change.

After independence, a new encouraging socio-economic climate has emerged in Gujarat, as in several states of India. Women have at least theoretically attained equal rights and opportunities in all fields due to equality of sex. Due to upward mobility in the fields of education and occupation, woman has achieved somewhat better status than before; and now she is making a heartfelt effort to occupy a much better and respectable position at home and in public life.

Emancipation of Women

In Europe, the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries were the centuries of renaissance and reformation. The chief advocates of rationalism and humanitarianism were Beacon, Locke, Hume, Voltaire, and Rousseau who fought and lived for the propagation of individualism. The social structure which was formerly based on status in feudalism, changed into equalitarian individualistic pattern of society. New wave of liberty, equality, rationalism, democratic attitude and individualism started a new process of change in society. Industrial revolution also had its impact on the material and non-material life-style of the western world, which change the outlook of the western society.
As Britishers were the rulers in India in the middle of the nineteenth century, the elite and educated class of the Indian society tried to adopt the liberalistic ideology of the western culture. Liberalism advocated the removal of status by birth. It emphasised rationalism, which was against the then prevailing customs, mores, religious rituals and blind beliefs of society. The third principle advocated was that of individualism.

With the advent of new educational pattern during the British rule, liberalistic attitude in the ideology of new reformers, political leaders, literate men and the elite of society had its spell on them. New attitudes, values and behaviour-patterns due to the effects of new education evolved in the Indian social structure. Liberty of thought and speech, patriotism, doubt in the traditional ideology, and importance of human-rights were some of the new values and ideologies which gave new outlook of life to the newly educated citizens of India. These new values had great effects on the status of women. Liberty of women, equality towards women and individual personality development of women changed, to a certain extent, the status of women and widened the horizons of progress for them.

In the nineteenth century, the newly educated class tried to bring social change in the Indian social structure and in the status of Indian women. There were two ideologies prevailing among the social thinkers. Both the ideologies believed in bringing changes in the customs and institutions prevailing at that time. But their approaches were different. On one side were the 'social reformers' who were against the evils of the social system because
they were the ardent advocates of liberalism. On the other were the 'social revivalists' who thought that the evils of the social system were there because of the departure of the social system from its Vedic ideals. So in order to bring changes in the social system, they advocated the revival of Vedic ideals and ideologies. The social reformers wanted to bring changes in the then prevailing social system by the new westernized ideologies of liberalism, rationalism and individualism (Neera Desai, 1963: 63-69).

In a way, both the social reformers as well as the social revivalists tried their level best to change the position and status of women in the Indian society. Not only they but also the literary men by their writings and journalists through their journals boosted the spirit of reforms as well as the feeling to emancipate the status of Indian women. We shall briefly review here the contributions of certain outstanding social reformers to improve the status and role of women in India.

Raja Rammohan Roy was the foremost reformer who fought for the removal of the custom of Sati, blind beliefs, hypergamy, dowry-system, castism, idol-worship and old conceptions of religion. *Sambandh Kaumudi* was his journal and Brahma Samaj was his association through which he spread his liberal and reformative ideas in the Indian society of that time. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was the other torch-bearer of women's emancipation. He fought against child marriage, polygyny, hypergamy, dowry system, and advocated widow-remarriage and women's education. Behramji Malbari was also a noteworthy reformer who advocated the removal of child marriage
and advocated widow-remarriage and the law of the age of consent. Mahadev Govind Ranade was an ardent follower of liberalism. He believed that the change in the nineteenth century India was mainly due to western education, activities of Christian missionaries and the new approach and outlook of law and justice brought about by the British authorities. He wanted to bring social revolution through social reforms. His social activities were mainly in the fields of child marriage, widow remarriage, women's education and in the activities of National Social Conference. Maharshi Karve is well-known for his women's University, imparting education through mother tongue. No doubt, he advocated other reforms like widow remarriage, yet the focus of his activities was on the propagation of women's education. Having been inspired by the experiment of Japan, Karve founded the first and the only women's University of its kind in India, imparting education in mother tongue. With the help of the Thakershi family, he founded in 1916 in Bombay the S.N.D.T. Women's University. His approach for the emancipation of women was mainly through education.

The revivalists also contributed to the uplift of women. Swami Vivekanand, the torch-bearer of Hinduism and spiritualism as well as of rationalism and liberalism, worked in the field of women's education. He believed that if women are educated they could solve at least their own problems. He was an ardent believer of liberty of women. He thought that the main cause of the advancement of the western world was the educated and cultured women of that world. He was against child-marriages which became a hindrance in the mental, physical, social and spiritual development
of girls. The other revivalist was Dayanand Saraswati who founded Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875. He believed in equality towards women, liberty of women and education for women. He established Gurukuls and Chhatralayas for girls in order to develop their all-round personalities. He thought it necessary to give physical training to girls along with mental training, for a sound mind could only be in a sound body. The third revivalist of India was Anne Beasant who established Theosophical Society. She was an ardent follower of Hinduism. She established in 1898 the Central Hindu School in Banaras. She was totally against child marriages. She was also against widow-remarriages because she thought marriage to be a sacrament and not a contract. However, she was in favour of the remarriage of child widows. She believed that the burning problems of the nation could be solved if there are educated women in the country. An educated woman can help her father, brother or husband in the nation-wide struggle of development. She thought it advisable to introduce religion, ethics, art, literature and science to the married women. She was not in favour of occupation for all women, but she emphasised economic independence for widows.

The reformation movement of the nineteenth century in India was a country-wide reform wave. As in Bengal and Maharashtra, Gujarat also had enthusiastic social reformers who wanted to mould women with new reformatory ideas. The reformers of Gujarat focused their activities on women's education, widow remarriage and removal of child marriages and constraints of caste on the individual. In Gujarat, most of the reformers and revivalists were literary men. They were essayists, novelists, dramatists and poets.
Durgaram Mehtaji was the first reformist in Gujarat who laid the foundation of reform movement, while other reformers cemented the structure of that movement. He founded Manav Dharma Sabha in 1844, the aims of which were to fight against castism, idol worship and blind beliefs and to advocate widow remarriage. Naradashankar was another enthusiastic reformer who adopted liberalistic attitude towards all the problems of the then prevailing Gujarati society, due to the impact of western education. He was an advocate of rationalism. He tried to uplift women with the diffusion of his ideas about women's education and widow remarriage. His Social Reform Movement was full of vigour through his whole hearted participation in the Widow Remarriage Association and publication of his popular reform fortnightly Sandip. Dalpatram was a foremost poet as well as a reformist. He, by his friendship with Alexander Forbes, came in touch with the western liberalistic ideals. Through his pen and satiristic poem-compositions, he tried to bring social change in the matters of illiteracy, child marriages and widowhood. Dalpatram was the soul of Gujarat Varnaculuar Society, founded in 1848, which advocated women's education and fought against the evils of old customs of Gujarati society. Karsandas Mulji, Lalshankar Umiyashanker and Mahipatram were other reformers who tried to strengthen the reformistic movement of Gujarat in the nineteenth century. Mahipatram founded Prarthana Samaj and he tried to change the position of women through its women-reform activities.

The radical reformers of Gujarat lighted the lamp of emancipation of women and the revivalists of Gujarat tried to bring change in the social structure without hindering some of the
idealistic concepts of caste, family, position of women and religion. Among the revivalists were mainly the two literary men of Gujarati literature, Goverdhanram and Manilal Dwivedi who had faith in the ethics and religion of that times.

Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda State was a reformist. He had the opportunity, authority and foresight to develop his State with reformatory works. He gave his contributions in the fields of child marriage, widow remarriage, age at marriage, divorce, monogamy, women's education, free education and opened associations for the intellectual, industrial and cultural development of women (Neera Desai, 1963: 72-134).

In this way, the new European civilization and the western education influenced the Gujarati society with their liberalistic, equalitarian and individualistic ideologies. Social change touched the fringe of Gujarati society. Social change was evident in a few urban centres like Surat and Ahmedabad, and that too among a small section of political elites, social reformers and high-born Brahmins, specially Nagars. Chitra Desai (1976: 121-122) noted that most of the leaders of this neo-renaissance movement belonged to the Nagar Brahmin caste. This caste was in the vanguard in administration, judiciary, literature, education and many other spheres of the public life in Gujarat of the nineteenth century.

The caste was an extremely powerful organization. Under such a caste-dominated social structure, it was no wonder that the access of girls to school or higher education in Gujarat proceeded very slowly during the British rule. Social change was
very little in Gujarati Society of that time. Various caste-
groups were guided by traditional beliefs and customs, values and
practices which denied women equality in education. The caste
authorities and ethos were against education of girls beyond certain
age and by male teachers, and were also against co-education.
Shardaben Mehta (1938 : 17) described in her life memoirs that the
Gujarati society was indifferent to educating girls from the very
beginning. The change in this area was due to the exogenous factors
like the impact of western English education and the endogenous
factors like the National Educational Movement launched by the
Indian National Congress in the 1920s. The movement was under the
dynamic leadership of Gandhiji who awakened the political leadership
of educated women like Sumati Lallubhai Shamaldas, Vijayalaxmi
Trivedi, Baji Gauri, Shiv Gauri, Bachubai Kanji Sheth, Sulochana
Desai, Shardaben Mehta, Vidyagauri Nilkanth and others (Trivedi,
1934 : 194-201).

Gujarat opened a new page in her political, social and
educational life under the magnetic influence of Gandhiji. Several
events such as the Bardoli Satyagraha, the civil disobedience
movement, etc. built up a new Gujarat. Women came out in a large
number to participate in this national awakening. The climate
created by these forces was very favourable for the growth of
women's education at a faster rate than before. Women's social
status, economic position and educational opportunities went on
increasing. Yet a vast majority of Gujarati women of lower castes
and scheduled tribes of rural areas were miserable and had very
limited access to education.
The writings of several well-known literary men of Gujarat like Dalpatram, Navalram Pandya, Mahipatram Nilkanth, Goverdhanram Tripathi and others initiated the process of change in the societal perceptions, values and attitudes towards females and their education. The Gujarati literature published in the twentieth century also made valuable contribution to the improvement of social conditions of women and directly or indirectly advocated the spread of education among women. Writings of Ranjitram Vavabhai, Mahatma Gandhiji, Kanaivalal Munshi, Hansaben Mehta, Ramnal Desai, Ramnarayan Pathak, Zaverchand Meghani and many others contributed to public awakening about the social position of women in their own characteristic way and to the movement of higher education for women beyond the secondary stage (Saroj Desai, 1972: 133).

Some social institutions of Gujarat made valuable contributions to the spread and progress of girls' education and the improvement of the social status of women. The institutions which made outstanding contributions on this score were Gujarati Hindu Stree Mandal and Mahila Vidyalaya at Bombay, Bandhu Samaj at Ahmedabad, Vanita Vishram at Ahmedabad, Surat and Bombay, and the Jain Sewikashrams at Bombay and Ahmedabad. They contributed profusely and wholesomely for the improvement of the social position of women (Saroj Desai, 1972: 185).

The Gujarati newspapers, weeklies and monthlies also kept the ball of the process of social change rolling. For female uplift, welfare and education, the journalism of Gujarat tried its level best to highlight and focus the problems of women. *Stri-Bodh*
monthly was started in 1858 in Bombay, for the emancipation of women, by Karsandas and then edited by Navrojee Kabraji. It advocated the uplift of Gujarati women by strong reformatory articles and editorials of Kabraji.

Sundari Subodh was the other prominent journal for women, which began its publication from 1903, by Bandhu Samaj, association of young reformists in which Rammohanay Desai and Bhogindrarao Divetia were prominent. The journal set forth in its first issues, its objectives of providing useful and interesting reading material for women. The journal devoted itself to provide a forum for expanding and developing secondary, higher and vocational education for women. This popular journal for women of Gujarat enlightened the spirit of liberalism, advancement, literary taste and ability in the women folk of Gujarat. The journal reached the apex of popularity and trained the women-folk under the able editorship of Rammohanay Desai, who himself was a poet, novelist, essayist, historian, researcher and Professor of Sociology. His two famous novels, Yoginee and Bala, discussed some of the women's problems of the then prevailing Gujarati society.

The Gujarati Hindu Stri Mandal had started a quarterly entitled Stri Hitopadesh in 1918. It was intended more for those grown up women who did not have the benefit of fuller schooling. In 1923, the monthly Gunsundari saw the light of the day. To use the words of its editor: "The objective of the monthly is to discuss such issues as would concern the life of the women in the social, religious and political fields, to guide women in their
public life, their duties and responsibilities in the spheres of home-management, child-upbringing, social service, initiate them in certain arts like sewing, embroidery, knitting, cookery; to build their character through life-stories of Satis, great men and women of the past through interesting and moral stories. The journal will try to help the women in her all sided development so that she can attain a high social status, be qualified for equal rights and opportunities and be a critical, thoughtful and dynamic 'New Woman' " (Saroj Desai, 1972 : 138).

With the heartful efforts of reformists, revivalists, literary men, newspapers, women's magazines and the elite of society, a considerable change in the thinking about women's status, role in life and their education began to take place in the then prevailing situation of Gujarati society.

We should note here two studies, one by Neera Desai (1978) which depicts social change in Gujarat, especially the Gujarati society of the nineteenth century, and the other by Tara Patel (1953) which gives a historical perspective of the social status of Indian women during 1900-1950.

Neera Desai (1978) discusses and describes the impact of British rule on India and the structural transformation that took place at that time and after independence in Gujarat. The qualitative transformation in socio-politico-economic and cultural subsystems are studied in detail. She notes that there is a great dearth of studies regarding the changes during the British period. She has examined social change arising out of exogenous factors.
The traditional Gujarati society evolved into a peculiar type of society, with the elements of both tradition and modernity. A fruitful attempt has been made to understand this process in this study. She has described the Gujarati society on the eve of the British rule, and during the British rule; changes in the political system, changes in the rural and urban economic system of Gujarat, the development of modern education, and new mediums of mass communication, and also the changes in the social and value-system of Gujarati society. She has observed that on the eve of the British rule, the Gujarati society was a traditional ascriptive society. The 'Legal-rational' principle was introduced which became the basis of bureaucratic organization. It altered the philosophy of political authority by separating law and regulative systems. The changes in rural/urban economy ushered in a new economic framework based on modern commercial practice. With the impact of modern educational system, a new class of educated intelligentsia nurtured new values and they became the pioneers of different socio-politico-cultural movements of that time. The new means of written communications developed and the emergence of journalism, new publications and creative literature brought changes in the Gujarati society. She noted that a slow change in the position of women was taking place. The idea of development in the form of evolution and progress, and individualism, rationalism and secularism developed in the Gujarati society of that time. In spite of its limitations, the new social system fabricated the Gujarati life. The development of twentieth century movements in socio-economic-politico-educational and cultural fields tried to remove
the traditional customs and institutions. The Gujarati society experienced in this way a qualitative transformation which resulted in a new type of social structure based on achievement, secularism and legal rational norms.

Tara Patel (1853) has studied the position, duties, powers, status and disabilities of women as daughters, wives and widows during the twentieth century. She has discussed the problem of the status of women with reference to the general amelioration in the position of women with the growth of women's institutions during the twentieth century; different marriage customs and traditions and the existence of practices like payment of dowry, bridgroom-price; and special problems arising out of the prevalence of child marriages, enforced widowhood, 'purdah' and prostitution; and the cultural-politico-legal and economic status of women. She has described the status of women in the Vedic and Medieval times upto the end of the nineteenth century. Revolutionary changes became reality due to the growing consciousness of the masses demanding liberation through great political movements. There were workers who fought for the amelioration of women. Gifted women worked for raising the status of women. The position of women in the family reflects her status in society. She was important as the house-wife, but she was completely lacking in authority. Marriage was the only resort open to her to get economic/social security. Women of the lower strata worked to add to the family income. The percentage of child marriages was quite high in the first half of the present century. Educational advancement, efforts of the social reformers, the demands of social institutions
and the legislation helped to lessen the prevalence of child marriages and in that way they raised the status of women. The extent and content of education determine the status of women in any society. Education is the only enlightening force which gives courage to overthrow the orthodox custom and to adopt the rational and democratic outlook of life. After 1921, a new leadership was rising amongst women due to secondary and university education. Educated women desired to seek career and economic independence because of the economic pressure on the middle classes due to the rising costs of living. Tendency among women to qualify themselves for various professions came into vogue. Politically Indian women became conscious of their rights and fought for their emancipation under the influence of worldwide women's movements. The battle for suffrage for women in India was won partly in England and America. The enfranchisement for women of India was asked in 1917 and they were given right to vote in different provinces afterwards. Their right to vote as well as the duty they owed to their country required active participation in all the spheres of life and society. Legislation for women evolved slowly but progressively. Property laws were modified from time to time. The idea of independent life was a dream to an ordinary Indian woman till the first world war. Since then there had been a revolution and awakening among women. The political movements inspired the Indian women to organize themselves and assert their rights and helped them to establish their position of equality with men in the socio-politico-economic spheres.
Movements

The question of equal status for women was first raised in the early days of the founding of New England. Anne Hutchinson challenged the puritan theocracy of Boston in its assumption that "no woman could have a voice in church affairs." Her demand was that she, a woman be permitted to think for her about God. She challenged the church and the State on behalf of new ideas of tolerance and religious freedom (Jain, 1978 : 213).

The French Revolution kindled the torch of liberty, equality and fraternity in 1789. Mary Wollstonecraft published the first book, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman in 1792. Liberalist J. S. Mill championed their cause by publishing Subjection of Women and claimed equality for women for the first time (Hare, 1958 : 3-5).

It was the Industrial Revolution which provided a real potent force for change in women's status, and provided them the opportunities to follow men out of the home. The new industrial system reshaped the role of women and inspired the 'feminist movement'. The fresh possibilities for the use of women's labour broadened the horizons for her new role-performance. With new business and communications, new opportunities came as telephone operators, typists, clerks, stenographers, etc. (Jain, 1978 : 216).

The emancipation of women slowly started from the middle of the nineteenth century, and quickened in twentieth century after the first world war. The participation of women in the national war effort in allied countries won them the right of
franchise. After the second world war, there was a socio-economic upheaval along with the tremendous advance in science and technology, thus bringing about changes in social relationships. The consciousness about the human rights was the bright side of the change. The UNO declared its Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. "Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and have determinant to promote the social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom... Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (Hare, 1969: 3-5).

Lerner has said that the changes in the social position of women during and after the second world war were so drastic that they can be spoken of as 'revolutions'. According to him, one can see these revolutions as a succession of liberating movements. The suffrage revolution was a long-hard-fought movement for equal rights in which a succession of strong-minded women, in the face of fears and humiliation, broke into previously barred professions and won the right to an equal education with men to speak in public, to vote for, and to hold office. The sexual revolution was directed against the double standard of morality. Coming in the wake of the equal rights movement, it was a phase at once of the revolt against puritanism and of the dislocations caused by the first world war. The revolution of manners refers
to women's adoption of firm-fitting clothes and swim-suits and shorts, taking part in sports, driving cars, and even piloting planes, serving in wartime, smoking cigarettes and drinking in public. The kitchen revolution started with mechanical kitchens and canned and prepared foods, giving some women greater leisure and enabling others to get industrial and clerical jobs. The job revolution transformed the American working force as it also transformed women's role in the economy. In 1920, there were eight million women holding jobs; in 1955, there were more than twenty-seven million, comprising over thirty per cent of the labour force (Jain, 1978: 217-218).

The American woman may be better educated, better dressed and more comfortable to-day, yet she seems to be quite restless in her familial role. It is due to the growing women's liberation movement and the cult of new feminism which has demanded full social equality for women. Many of them are in search of a 'new role' that is more independent and less restricted to the traditional triangle of children, kitchen and the church (Jain, 1978: 240).

Some individuals of the lib movement and new feminism have focused their attention on problems associated with personality development, while others have concentrated on women's labour force marginality. The new feminism has influenced young women to stay single and it has affected material ties by questioning traditional assumption about woman's position as a wife.
One of the battles in the war of the word is fought over
the use of Mrs. and Miss. The feminists have decided to be called
Ms (pronounced Mis). The new feminists have emphasised that if
women continue to assume the role of house-keeper, it should be
from choice rather than from tradition or man's insistence.

Many currents of social change have made the idea of
new feminism to develop into a mere 'ideology'. Better education
has broadened women's view beyond home and hearth and has helped
to increase their expectations and possibilities outside their
traditional circles as also their sense of frustrations when these
expectations are not realized.

The new feminism argue in respect of biological differences
of women. Judith Hole and Ellen Nevine argued that there are no
inherent, emotional, intellectual or psychological differences
between men and women. All differences are not in 'nature' but in
'socially-imposed values'. Secondly, the feminists described the
social values, which distinguish male from female, as a system of
'sex-role stereotypes'. They analysed the social institutions and
values which reflect and reinforce the sex-role system --- the
family, the educational system, marriage, social expectations, etc.

The women's movement has been a middle-class one, attracting
educated and affluent individuals. Sociologist Joan Mandle (1978,
242-243) has distinguished three groupings in to-day's movements.
(1) Firstly, there are women whose dissatisfaction focuses on the
ways in which society limits the personality development, personal
fulfilment and freedom of choice of its female population. Younger
college-educated women recognize and expose the contradiction between the culture which emphasizes equality, opportunity and individual development, and on the other hand, a social structure which works to ensure that women fulfil largely stereotyped and low-status roles. This group demands a radical change in the socialization and development processes of the young men and women. They demand opportunities for all individuals to choose their own goals and develop skill and abilities best suited to their natural talents.

(2) Secondly, there is the group of women to whom work and occupational discrimination based on sex stereotypes are of pressing importance. For them, equality involves social ideas like equal pay, security and the end of discrimination against women workers.

(3) The third group of women activists comprises those to whom the organization of family life, child-bearing and domestic care in American society is most salient. Some of these groups desire an end to the family as a social institution altogether, while others suggest a significant reduction in the work hours per week for both men and women so that mothers and fathers could adopt identical roles.

The women's lib movement and the feminist cult seem to be directed towards achieving this goal: "If feminism is to be the ultimate revolution it must establish a community in which, roles will not be assigned according to gender."
In western democratic countries prejudice still lingers against women. Unlike these advanced nations, India is not apparently making any discrimination against women in any field. The values set by Indian Constitution after independence are socialistic pattern of society under democratic form of government, wherein equality, freedom, non-exploitation are granted to all sections of the people irrespective of race, religion, and sex, as their Fundamental Rights. Article 15 of the Constitution lays down that "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex" (Hate, 1969: 3-5). According to Taya Zinkin (1969: 3-5), "Emancipation of women is filtering right down to the villages."

The position and status of women of India was viewed as one of the indices by which to measure the extent of modernization and traditionalism of a nation. British scholars, missionaries and bureaucrats applied European standards to judge the position of women in India. They described Hindu women as tradition-bound and religious. But a change came in the position of Indian women when the evolution of women's role from a private to public life was influenced by Westernization. Westernization created an awareness of the oppressed situation of Indian women. New western perception of women was influenced by the introduction of English education for elite Indians. The educated elite generated leadership for the women's movement and provided sympathetic response to such activities. But a movement which recommended western ideas or behaviour for women had virtually no impact on society, because elite Hindus were selective in adopting any measure of modernization for their women (Agnew, 1979: 1).
Women's participation in the nationalist movement was the major force which brought them into light. A small group of women were associated with the nationalist movement. Some took part in social reform activities of Gandhi and involved themselves in Khadi campaign and village industry, while living in Ashrams. Slowly and gradually, women in leadership roles were given special privileged status in the movement. Elite women's participation in the nationalist struggle opened a new avenue of advancement for the women of India, as well as for the women of Gandhian Gujarat.

The participation of women in the nationalist movement created female-involvement in politics. The leaders of this period questioned and challenged the social values and norms of society. Women of that time took advantage of this change and adopted new roles. The nationalist movement in India enabled women to involve themselves in the social and political affairs of the country. Almost all women politicians supported the women's movement and were involved in women's organizations such as the All India Women's Conference and the Women's Indian Association, which was guided by Cousins, Annie Beasant and Sarojini Naidu. The Women's Indian Association gave a common platform for women to express their grievances and demand their rights. The All India Women's Conference, linking different associations for women came into existence in October, 1925. Its first conference took place in Poona in 1927. Then onwards it became the focus of women's activities in India. Sarojini Naidu was its friend, philosopher and guide (Sengupta, 1974 : 189).
The second A.I.W.G. on Educational Reform met in Delhi in 1928. Stress was laid on social, intellectual, physical and moral aspects of education. The importance of compulsory primary education, the abolition of child-marriages and other social reforms were made. From 1928, the A.I.W.G. took up the cause of women's emancipation. It took interest in socio-political problems and was more national-minded. The National Council of Women in India was purely social and educational. This is how the women of India, in the first half of this century gathered together to fight for freedom for themselves and the nation.

On the eve of the British rule, Gujarati society was traditional and ascriptive. The political, economic, educational, communicational, social and cultural changes led to the emergence of consciousness in Gujarat. We also notice the emergence of a new category of educated intelligentsia nurtured in new values and pioneering many modern socio-politico-cultural movements (Neera Desai, 1978: 402-410). Women movements in Gujarat were the outcome of this changing transitional phase. A new framework of modern society was formed within Gujarat, which opposed the traditional values and customs and tried to change the position and status of Gujarati women for the better.

At present in Ahmedabad, many voluntary associations for women work for the uplift, equal rights and economic independence of women. Self-employed women's Association, Women's equal rights Association, 'Aavaj' are some of the new active associations at present.