CHAPTER - II

The Status and Education of Woman in Indian Tradition
History gives us the information about the evolution in the past and is necessary to understand the present.

Vedas, Upanishads, Epics or Puranas, Manudharma are the basic components of Hinduism and Hindu Life in General and social, educational, spiritual in particular. The Hindu Dharma has its own special entity in the world society. It emphasizes the way of individual life in the society and also morals, ethics, codes are prepared and Governed by the Dharma. These principles had showed a greater impact on social and spiritual life of the individual and group. Besides that the Islam and Christianity are a major part and parcel of Hindu life and society. The investigator would try to bring facts and to know the impact and influence of different philosophies on women as a member of Hindu society.

1. Vedas

The position, which women occupied in Hindu Society at the dawn of civilization during the Vedic age, is much better than what was ordinarily expected to have been during the Vedic age women enjoyed considerable freedom and equal opportunities with men. In the Vedic society the matriarchy came to be replaced by patriarchy. Within limits and limitation of a patriarchal system it is said that women in the Vedic period enjoyed a high status. Although the Vedic society was a patriarchal one, headed by the father of the family, and though the son was given the prime of attention and position in the family, the daughter was said to have been equally entitled to most of the
privileges given to a son, even in the matters of education equal opportunities was provided for them.²

In the Vedic period women were not discriminated against in matters of the right to initiation. The Atharva Veda says: A maiden wins a young husband through brahmacharya (study of Brahman). Harita, a well-known law giver refers to the study of Vedas by women. Katyayana maintained that women were equally entitled to perform sacrifices. There were many students of grammar and philosophy amongst women.³

The Vedic laws of marriage introduce us to a state of society where man and women acted as free agents in matrimonial matters and where women were treated not as inferiors but as equal to men. Early marriages were never common in ancient India. Both men and women were careful in observing their Brahmacharya for a proper period and they entered the gruhastha ashrams (life of householder) only when they were fully capable of being so. Husbands and wives used to dine together sit this on the same seats and drive in the same carriages always and not merely on occasions of marriage. The father of the girl had not to beg or borrow to find a bridegroom for her, but gave lands, cows, dresses, buffaloes, gold, jewels, horses and other things to the best of his means.⁴

The marriages of girls used to take place at a fairly advanced age. The normal time being the age of 16 to 17 educated brides of this age had naturally an effective voice in the selection of their partners in life.
Very often there were love marriages, which were later blessed by parents. Marriage was not a contract but the most important sacrament in life, particularly to women. The attraction of the sexes to each other was not condemned as unnatural or unbecoming and submission. Women were regarded as created for raising progeny, not as mere sources of transient joy. Every care was to be taken, where a marriage was arranged by parents to select a suitable partner for the girl. The social organization rested on the family, which was of the patriarchal type. Polygamy was practiced, at least in the princely families. There was no polyandry, nor (except in one doubtful case) infant marriage. In rich and royal families polygamy prevailed to some extent, but ordinarily monogamy was the rule. The ideal marriage of the Vedic period was a religious sacrament.

The position of the wife was an honoured one in the family. In theory she was the joint owner of the household with her husband, though in actual practice, she was the subordinate partner. The Hindu wife had control over her own property (stridhana) derived from parental and nuptial gifts. Except for family emergencies, the husband had no control over it. The obligation of marriage to women was a measure of protection for her. The gift of the bride was lauded above all other gifts for its spiritual efficacy and the Asura marriage, in which a bride price was paid (Kanya sulka), was deemed a low type. On marriage the women passed into a new family. Her rights to property and inheritance were derivable from the new family, except as regards
her dowry (Stridhana). Due to physical power discrimination women could not hold and maintain property.

There is abundant evidence in the Rig Veda, the most authoritative text, that women held an honorable place. They had access to and the capacity for the highest knowledge. In her husband's home she was honored and she participated in religious ceremonies. In social and religious gatherings they occupied a prominent position. Women had an absolute equality with men on the eve of religion. They could perform Sacrifices Independently.\textsuperscript{10} The Sati custom was not in vogue at all, the widow could, if she liked, contract another marriage, either regularly or under the custom of Niyoga.\textsuperscript{11} It is not clear if the remarriage of widows were allowed, except in the case of the levigate as to the burning to widows.\textsuperscript{12}

Education of women in the Vedic period was very much prized. A girl was not all allowed to marry unless she completed her student life-Brahmachary. Even the married women were required to perform the Yagnas along with their husbands. This means their participation in Yagnas entailed compulsory education. There were instances of lady scholars who had participated in religious discussions and composed verses. Their names appeared in sacred literature and it shows that the number of women receiving education in those days must have been fairly encouraging. Gargi and maitreyi were the leading philosophers of the time.\textsuperscript{13}
It would appear that women enjoyed the general freedom and better status in the Vedic age. Women used to take an active part in agriculture and the manufacture of cloth, bows, arrows and other war material. They were useful members of society. Maidens and bachelors had no admission to heaven, gods accepted no oblations offered by the unmarried. Wife was not an impediment but an absolute necessity in the religious service. These circumstances naturally helped to raise her status. The position of women on the whole was fairly satisfactory. In the Vedic society women were glorified.

2. Upanishads

The Brahmans form an influential corporation maintaining a hold through religion upon the essential activities of the country. They were guardians of the Veda, teachers and performers of the rituals. The gradual changes had taken place during this period. It appears quite clear that in the Vedic times there was some liberty of choice amongst both men and women, as to their partners. But whatever liberty may have existed in this respect in ancient times, it is very certain that such was not the case in the later Vedic period.

The institution of child marriage had entirely destroyed that liberty. Girls were married before puberty and usually it was done while they were quite young. Other castes and non-castes may marry later on in life; still even amongst them the vows of matrimony are taken at a very early age. This necessity for marriage is often a great burden, as the choice is more or less limited.
In the Upanishads the wife a passive one in the ritual. The nuptial rites emphasized the high value attached to the wife at the religious level: "the friend half of the man". But from the Rig Vedic times onwards, pity or contempt was expressed for the "girl without a brother" and the birth of a daughter was deplored.\(^{18}\) Man had more wives than one at the same time, it was only within strictly recognized caste limits. One of the stories in the "Vikramarkacharitra" turns upon the fact of a Brahmin being allowed to take to wife a woman from each of the four castes. The Property rights of women continued to be unrecognized. Naturally religious and secular training became possible only in the case of the rights of rich and cultured families. There was a tendency to curtail the religious rights and privileges of an average woman.\(^{19}\) The Sati-custom was altogether was unknown and the widow had the option of remarriage either with her bother-in-law or with an outsider. Naturally, women had ceased to attend public meetings.\(^{20}\)

Brahmanas are also mentioned as having accepted women and maids; servants and maidservants as a token or gift. It is very strange that women and maidens, servants and maidservants were given as a gift to mendicants and Brahmans, as it is equally ridiculous to observe slavery in the ascetic world too.\(^{21}\) In the higher sections of society, the sacred initiation (\textit{upanayana}) of girls was common. There was a gradual decline in female education as the period advanced. The system of sending out girls to famous teachers or centers of education came to be discouraged.\(^{22}\)
In the period reflected by the Brahmanas, when the priestly caste dominated society, we see a definite downward trend in the position of women. On the one hand, the feminine concept and motherhood was glorified in abstract theory, but in actual practice, by and large women were reduced to degradation.

3. Epics

The status of women deteriorated prominently in this period. The considerable reason is the Aryan rule had become well established over the major part of India. There was a temporary setback in the status of women after the Vedic period. The deterioration seems to have set in the Puranic or Epics age. What contributed to this were inequality of opportunities in religious and spiritual matters and a disparity in the field of education. The pre-puberty marriage became popular and women came to be consigned primarily and exclusively to home and the family, without education and self-development.\(^3\)

The position of women in the Ramayana was confronted with contradiction. Women mostly followed the ideals. The social ideals were tending towards a condition where women were assigned a low position in the social set up. The Mahabharata also traces the story of the fall of the status of women in the Hindu society. The social and religious status of women had declined. She was denied Vedic education and was married when she had no idea of matrimony. At home she entirely depended on men folk. She was no more a real partner in her husband’s mundane and spiritual efforts but mere a devotee and follower.\(^4\)
At the beginning of this period (C. 500 BC) there arose a tendency to child-marriage or to lower the marriageable age of girls and as a consequence to discourage their upanayana and education. At about AD 200, it was declared that marriage was the substitute for upanayana in the case of girls. Towards the end of this period (C AD 500) parents felt the upanayana age 9 or 10 years was better or ideal time of marriage for girls. Parents could not keep their daughters unmarried after this age of 12. The discontinuance of upanayana, the neglect of education and early marriages produced disastrous consequences upon the position and status of women.

There were new forces in the society which were clamoring for child marriages. The Aryans had settled in a rich, prosperous and unquestioned stage and led luxurious life. The marriageable age of the boys and girls began to be lowered. In Rigvedic age son was used for secular purpose rather than religious purpose but in later Samhitas; the son became a religious purpose rather than secular necessity. The Kanva Maharshi has admitted that it was his mistake to got his daughter's marriage at the earlier, which later interpolated in the Mahabharata.\textsuperscript{24A}

According to the didactic portion of the Mahabharata the age of marriage for girls was even lower than that described by Manu,\textsuperscript{25} i.e., 10 years. The child marriages generally prevailed even in the later societies were depicted in the Epics. The Dharmasutras during 600 BC to 300 BC,\textsuperscript{26} indicate a tendency of lowering down the age of marriage. As already explained regarding father's duty in daughter's marriage, in case a father failed to get a bridegroom, the daughter may incur sin
against 'prajapati'\textsuperscript{27}. So if father secured a worthy bridegroom they married their daughter even at an early age.

Naturally parents were anxious to get suitable matches for their daughters. In the later didactic portions the marriage of girls assumed greater importance. The foremost duty of a father came to be the marriage of his daughter.\textsuperscript{28} Failure in his duty amounted to great sin (Mahapataka)\textsuperscript{29} of Brahmahatya. The success of women's life was considered and depended on marriage and duties of women began with marriage\textsuperscript{30} (i.e., being wife and being mother). Husband thus assumed the position of preceptors.\textsuperscript{31} 'Panigrahana',\textsuperscript{32} taking of the hand, was the symbol of taking charge.

The custom of child marriage was due to the foreign invasion after 300 BC. According to the social conditions pre-marriage chastity has assumed great importance between the character of women in such areas may have been doubted.\textsuperscript{33} The virginity as the qualification of marriage was stressed in the earlier Dhamasutras.\textsuperscript{34} So the real reason for child-marriages seem to be a rigid chastity imposed upon women.\textsuperscript{35} The tendency of lowering down the age of marriage certainly curtailed the right to voice to women.

In the Epic society the Foetus-murder was considered to be a crime, there could be no possibility of exposure of the female infant.\textsuperscript{36} In the Epics, the birth of a daughter is considered an unhappy event.\textsuperscript{37} The daughter in those days, as even now, was a source of an anxiety.\textsuperscript{38} The marriage of a daughter was considered not only necessary, but also an
obligation for the daughter as well as for the parents.\textsuperscript{39} Epics believed that marriage was a normal, natural, and usual custom in every civilized society. However, in case of ‘Subhru’ the Narada enlightened her than without marriage paradise was lost for her.\textsuperscript{39}

In the Rigveda society no evidence of cases of Aryasudra marriages was shown. But the Brahmanas and the Epics supply ample evidence to show that the Aryan chiefs were freely marrying non-aryan princesses, for example Arjuna married Udipi, a Naga princess; Bhima married Hindimbi, a sister of a Raksasachief. The sage Kavasa, who played an important part in the Aitareya Brahmanas, was the one of a slave girl. The marriages of Aryan men with non-Aryan women were becoming common. Early dharmasastra writers had no objection to an Aryan marrying a Sudra woman, provided he had another Aryan wife.\textsuperscript{40}

It was a general belief of society that the goddess of wealth resided in maidens.\textsuperscript{41} Chastity was considered to be a perfect ornament of women-kind. Woman had also great independence in their father’s home.\textsuperscript{42} Ex. Kunti hide the fact of pregnancy before her marriage. Polygamy was common in the society. A man could marry more than once. The Mahabharata mentions polyandry; but it was not a common or popular form of married life. A Hindu could marry any number of wives. We come across cases of polygamy and polyandry during the Mahabharata polity. Chastity of women was glorified during the Ramayana society but it declined during the Mahabharata polity.\textsuperscript{43}
Inter-caste weddings were coming to be hated. In the didactic portions such weddings were not recommended. There was a horror against the mixing of the castes (Varna Sankara). Although monogamy was an ideal even in the Epics, polygamy was a common practice among Kshatriyas. Among Brahmanas polygamy was allowed by law.

The idea of or dowry (Kanyadana) was recognized. The dowry as a part of wedding settlement. As a wife the concept of 'Sahadharnini', Where the dignity of wife is upheld, another idea, of wife "as a shadow", which loses is identity and has no personality was developing. Kauutiliya mentions the wife's rights towards property (Stridhana). He states that her dowry, her ornaments or the bride-gifts should be considered as her personal property and, to a certain extent, should be at her disposal when her husband dies. A man desiring divorce has to return whatever has been received in the marriage ceremony.

The introduction of the non-Aryan wife into the Aryan household is the Key to the general deterioration of the position of women, that gradually and imperceptibly started at about 1000 BC. Naturally the non-Aryan wife was not educated and lack of knowledge in Sanskrit language, she did not permit to be associated in religious sacrifices. Especially, the black non-Aryan wife may be confined to provide pleasure to her husband but not to regular duties. During this period wedding became an irrevocable union, irrevocable only so far as the wife was concerned. The husband can discard his wife and wife could
not take a liberty step and marry a second time. The wife ought to revere her husband as a god, even if he were vicious and void of any merit.

Pativrata ideal aimed at worshipping the husband by a wife as a faithful and obedient one. A faithful and obedient wife was always rewarded in the Epics. The barren wife's fate was miserable. As for the Pativrata there was no god other than her husband, the ideal of Sahadharmiini received a great setback and started losing ground as the ideal of Pativrata advanced more and more,\textsuperscript{51} ex: Gandhari behaviour i.e., bandaging her eyes

It has already been shown that even the attainment of paradise for women depended upon men.\textsuperscript{52} By doing service to her husband woman could attain heaven.\textsuperscript{53} Husband was for women a divine incarnation, a good as well, to be gained only through men.\textsuperscript{54} To live without him was considered sin for her.\textsuperscript{55}

In the great Epics a Widow's sorrow was compared to the sorrow of a person who had lost his son. A widow's grief was not considered to be the greatest sorrow. She may believing in the theory of 'karma' calamity that her sorrow or plight was the result of her 'karamas'.\textsuperscript{56} It may be stated that the state of widowhood was a great calamity, because her protector was no more. The widow should therefore never think of remarriage. But Smritis permitted widower to remarry immediately after the death of the first wife. The greater calamity that overtook the widow in this period was the revival of the Sati custom. In
this period the sati came to be regarded as a great religious sacrifice. Society had begun to discourage widow remarriages. As a consequence, there began to arise a class of childless young widows.

The first case of 'sati' in the Mahabharata is that of Madri in the Adi-parva. 'Kunti' also thinks performing 'Sati'. The Brahmaṇa Ladies did not practice sati even long after the Mahabharata gained its present shape.⁵７ Among the Aryan widows, however, examples of remarriage are not to be found in the Epics.⁵⁶ There is no virtue greater than a virtuous woman's burning herself with her husband. No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women, at any time after the death of their lords, except casting themselves into the same fire. If the husband be out of the country when he dies, let the virtuous wife take his slippers (or any thing else which belongs to his dress) and binding them (or it) on her breast, after purification, enter a separate fire.⁵⁸

Mother or motherhood is supreme and is so recognized at one place in the great Epic.⁶¹ yet according to epic ideal a woman's love for husband must outweigh that for her child, she had been advised to love her husband as a child.⁶¹ Woman was called as 'Dhartri' and 'Janani' purifying quality was also an attribute of the epic mother. The attitude of society towards women determines her property and legal rights. An unmarried daughter, however had the right to inherit her mother's dowry.⁶² The daughters of poor people might have helped their fathers in their daily work for 'Satyavati' served her father by playing the boat.⁶³
Woman was also victim in the Renunciation of husband. Due to various reasons like political, war atrocities, wealth etc., men preferred to ideal of Renunciation (Sannyasa). Kautilya prescribes a punishment for a person who would renounce the world before his old age, and without providing for his dependents. In the Mahabharata that renunciation appeals only to those who are unsuccessful in life. Maidservants were another class of women doing household work. The position of these working women was virtually that of slaves, but the treatment given to them was human and not unkind. Usually this occupation was hereditary, continuing from generation to generation.

As far as education is concerned, the Epic heroines were highly educated. Draupadi, Oghavati and Arundhati. Women were able to perform sacrifices alone, even without their husbands. In the Ramayana Kausalya offered oblation to fire, reciting 'mantras'. And Tara performed 'Swastayayana'. True, the mere fact that these women could recite 'Mantras' does not warrant the conclusion that they had a knowledge of the Vedas. Even though the few names on finger tips may not be applicable to the entire women community.

Conditions changed by the time the didactic portions of the Mahabharata were being written, religious as well as the literary education was not imparted to girls. Women were considered incompetent to perform sacrifices. Although later a Kshatriya woman was given military education. In the epics themselves there is no evidence that such education was imparted. There is no mention of Gurukulas for the girls. It is, however, clear that there was no academic or institutional education for girls. The marriageable age for
girls everywhere was lower than that of the boys. Early marriages may have retarded the intellectual and physical growth of maidens. Besides these petted and pampered daughters there were slaves girls who were treated as property and this was really a great blot on the social systems described in the Epics.

In general behaviour woman was to be marked by tenderness, delicacy, gentleness, serenity and self-control. She was never to laugh a loud except in jest. The didactic portions of the Epic generally paint women betraying their husbands. Lust and wrath are stated to have been bestowed upon women by the creator and they live upon lustful men. It is stated that the woman is insatiable like the fire, the ocean and Yama, the destroyer. She is a sharp of knife. Poison, snake and fire all combined into one. Women were considered as creatures of illusions, devoid of religion, fickle, crooked, frightful as kryta power which brings destruction.

4. Manu Dharma

The most relentless of the Brahmin lawgivers was Manu, whose code of laws, the Manu niti is the most anti feminist literature. Unfortunately, it was Manu's code and not the earlier liberal ideas that largely influenced Indian social attitudes towards women.

In Manu Smriti 3.56 and Mahabharata 13.45.5 it was said: Yatra naryastu pujiyante remante tatra devata, yatraitastu na pujiyante sarvastatphilah kriyah (where women are worshipped, there the Gods
are delighted. But where they are not worshipped, all religious ceremonies become futile).\textsuperscript{79}

The laws of Manu shows by a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house. In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons, women must never be independent. According to this law any woman, irrespective of her caste affiliation is subjected to male chuavinism. This law treats women as objects, which do not have the ability to decide right or wrong.\textsuperscript{80}

"From Manu down to Yajnavalkya we find that Smriti composers have prohibited intermarriage with Sudras, and children of Pratiloma marriages been degraded as Asta."\textsuperscript{81} Brihaspati stated that "a father who does not give his daughter in marriage in proper time (before she has reached maturity) deserves contempt and shall be punished as ordained in law."\textsuperscript{82} Thus performance of the marriage of their daughters became a compulsory duty of parents, and at the same time pre-puberty marriage came into existence during this period.

Brahaspati is emphatic that where wives are honoured, there alone property dwells. The idea that the father is reborn in the wife as a son is a restraint against asavarna or unequal marriages. The rule of pre puberty marriage in place of marriages resulting from adult choice has an advantage. It prevents the formation of preferences or attachments that, not being fulfilled, leave permanent disappointment to poison wedded life.\textsuperscript{83} The denial of divorce and of remarriage for the
divorced woman in Dharmasastra, which has come in for strong condemnation, is defensible. It is a feature not peculiar to the Hindu system. Marriage is as much an obligation to men as to women, the snataka is exhorted to marry and settle down to the duties of life and to the serious pursuit of the last purusartha, i.e. liberation. A wife, as mother and home keeper has not the leisure for the work of the world. The rule of Manu that the wife, and the slave have no freedom to dispose of wealth and that's what they earn is their owner's, is incorrectly interpreted.  

The laws of Manu show most unmistakably that they were made by men and that their whole aim was to keep the other sex in complete submission, not only in matters of general behaviour but also in the sacred matter of religion. The woman must never dare to have a will of her own, or at any period of her life decide for herself in any thing. The husband is directed never to eat with his wife nor to look at her when eating. A wife is to be considered as a mere maternal machine and domestic drudge. The production of children, the nurture of them when produced, and the daily superintendence of domestic affairs are peculiar to the wife. Sinful women must be as foul as falsehood itself and this is a fixed rule.

The position of women during the later Vedic period, K.P. Bhadur observes, "the picture of a happy family and a full auspicious conjugal life is continued in the later Vedic period too, but with the replacement of the wife (as the husband's partner in the
sacrifice) by the priest in many ceremonies, the women's dignity and status fell." During the time women were treated as ritually inferior and polluting.

Remarriage of widows was not encouraged, but on the other hand, a wife faithful to the memory of her departed husband was extolled. Smritikaras narrowed down the scope of freedom of women. They mentioned and encouraged performance of the wife's duties, which appeared to be beneficial to men only. Manu says, "The wife must be in cheerful temper, devoting herself to good management of her household, care of furniture, and never neglecting her husband, while he lives and when he dies. She must constantly revere him as god and must never do anything unkind towards him, be he living or dead. Such wives will attain heaven." He further says that "when the husband is dead, she should voluntarily live on flowers, roots and fruits; but let her not even pronounce the name of another man."

All her hopes for the future life is determined by her faithfulness to the memory of her lord and master. "No sacrifice is allowed to women apart from their husbands, no religious rite, no fasting: as far only as a wife honours her lord, so far she is exalted in heaven" (Manu, v.155). With the consent of her husband a wife may go on a short pilgrimage without him. Apart from her husband, the women has no religious status whatever, and practically very little even with him. In the apprehensions of a Hindu, therefore, marriage ought to be a very serious business.
Polygamy, however, is a true Hindu institution, and it is duly legislated upon in the various codes. Manu lays down the law as follows. A Sudra woman only must be the wife of a Sudra, and a Vaisya of a Vaisya, these two and a Kshatriya of a Kshatriya, these two and a Brahmana of a Brahmana. The position of Hindu woman has been a subject of controversy. Manu said, "The father takes care of her in childhood, the husband in youth, the son during old age. A woman does not deserve freedom." But it was the same lawgiver who also said that "the gods reside where women, are honoured." The ancient code of Manu has decreed that: under no circumstances could a widow inherit the wealth of her husband; failing a male legal heir the wealth was to go to charity. The son was considered to be more important than the daughter because he not only performed the funeral rites necessary for the salvation of father but at the same time retained the family-tree.

With the advent of the Sutra period the deterioration of the status of woman began to appear gradually. The Vedas were the supreme source of authority for all dharma sutras, which was considered a divine revelation. Manu made a departure and mentioned Veda as one of the sources of dharma. According to Manu Vedas are the first source; tradition is the second, and the usages of the virtuous men the third source. Thus, by passage of time there was departure from strict observance of Veda, in the name of tradition and usage.  

Women were equally qualified to receive education in ancient India till the code of Manu. He restricted their study of the Vedas and the continued till. Manu deprived woman of her religious rights and
spiritual life. "Sudras, slaves and women" were prohibited from reading the Vedas. A woman could not attain heaven through any merit of her own. She could not worship or perform a sacrifice by herself. She could reach heaven only through implicit obedience to her husband, be he debauched or devoid of all virtues. In fact, a woman was not regarded as a person in her own right but as a piece of property, a possession, a thing. She lived all her life under the domination of some man; first of her father, later, of her husband. If widowed, she again came under the jurisdiction of her father or possibly, of her son. Such was the position of women in pre-Buddhist India. Women do not have a right to divorce. According to Manu, a woman is part and parcel of the property owned and is no better than a slave. She is subject to corporal punishment like any other slave. A woman does not have a choice in selecting her life-partner. After marriage she has to worship husband and be faithful to him even if he is a lecher and womanizer. Even the killing of women is only a 'minor offence'.

According to Manu some of his other principles concerning women are:

- A girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, must do nothing independently, even in her own house.
- The males must keep day and night women in dependence. If they attach themselves to sexual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control.
• Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never for independence.

• It is the nature of women to seduce men in this (world). For that reason the wife is never unguarded in (the company of) females.

• A wife, a daughter, and a slave, these three are declared to have no property.

• For women are able to lead astray in (This) world not only a fool, but even a learner man, and (to make) him a slave of desire and anger.

• The husband is declared one with wife, which means that there could be no separation once a woman is married.

• A wife, a son, a slave, a pupil and a younger brother of the full blood, who have committed faults, may be beaten with a rope or a spoilt bamboo.

• A woman shall not perform the daily sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas. If she does it she will go to hell.

• Liquor and the slaying of women, Sudras, Vaisyas or Kshatriyas and atheists (are all) minor offenses.

In this context Dr. Ambedkar says “can anybody doubt that it was Manu who was responsible for the degradation of women in India”?
5. Hinduism

The Aryans called their new home the country of the river Sindhu (The Sanskrit name of the Indus, from which are derived the terms Hindu and Hindustan), from the racial mixing and cultural interaction of the patriarchal Aryans and the patriarchal Dravidians (Who worshipped goddesses associated with fertility and the control of disease) emerged the Hindu religion as we know it, with its crowded pantheon of gods and goddesses.

Hinduism / Hindu religion is a very old religion. It believes in spiritual a self. It prescribes different ways for attaining of salvation or moksha rather than social salvation or individual either man or woman. The status of women in society has changed from time to time. Their position in society has been variously estimated and diametrically opposed views are current regarding her place in different stages of civilization. On the one hand she is considered little better than a slave or beast of burden, condemned to drudgery.

In the ancient period of Indian History, birth of daughter (girl) was not welcomed, but it certainly did not frighten the parents. A woman's position and prestige after her marriage increased tremendously when she became, preferably mother of a son. In medieval times early marriages became a rule - to safeguard the honour and chastity of girls,. The Hindu law gave unequal and indifferent treatment for women. They were discriminated in marriage, marital status, divorce, widowhood and inheritance.
The following figures of early marriages according to the Census of 1931.

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<th>Age group</th>
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Marriage in the eye of Hindu religion is a sacred act. Men and Women are to marry for the achievement of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Duty, wealth, Purpose, Sex, Liberation). Men had liberty in marriage. There was no upper limit to the number of women he could marry without divorcing any. This kind of custom had been continued up to Hindu-Marriage act 1956.

Polygamy is a symbol of social status of men in Hindu society. To show his economical conditions and status of man and adopted this custom in Hindu society. The Hindu society itself permitted men to marry more women rather than one wife. Before Hindu Marriage Act 1955 usually the different civilizations and societies allowed polygamy in Hindu society. The Hindu social structure allowed men to have greater freedom and liberty. These practices were the product of medieval India.
A Hindu husband could remarry in certain circumstances with the consent of Brahmins but a Hindu wife had no such privilege. The old Hindu law did not know divorce. The reason is that a marriage from the Hindu point of view, creates an indissoluble tie between the husband and the wife. When the husband died the wife had no choice even if she desired to marry. Hindu wives disliked and abhorred the very idea of remarrying and preferred to maintain their fidelity even after the death of their husbands. The belief that the Dharma of a wife is to serve her husband and that with his death it becomes irrelevant for her to live, widow-burning or Sati became a well-established practice in many parts of the country. In order to escape from the ordeal of Sati many Hindu widows got themselves converted to Islam.

Progeny has gained importance and significance in the Hindu Society. When the wife was barren, the man could take another woman as wife. As per Hindu religion the wife should conduct herself as a 'pathivratha' (Loyal and subservient to the husband). She is to devote her Whole Life for the welfare of her husband (like kunti). Therefore they are not in a position to understand their needs and rights. If a wife does not become a mother, her position is crucial in the family and in society. There is no limit to the cruelty and torture to which they subject their wives. The husband is the supreme master of the wife's, body, mind, wealth and even life.

Wife-beating is the most common atrocity in majority Hindu families, it includes physical beating and mental torture i.e., psychological harassment, dowry harassment and dowry deaths are also
common in majority of Hindu Families, irrespective of caste, education, economic position and region.

As a wife woman has been receiving physical violence and psychological violence from men and family members, in terms of abuse, neglect, nagging, degrading a person by words and conduct, and taunting, sexual harassment, rape, burning the person (women) alive etc. Hinduism and Hindu Society permitted men to have rights and freedom from which women were excluded. Different standards were adopted to judge the individual and social conduct of men and women. Hindu women suffered because of their ignorance i.e. lack of education, early marriage, their infant motherhood, enforced widowhood and dependence on men.

Many Hindus in India Killed their female children just after the birth. They preferred a son to a daughter because a son had to perform his parents last rituals. An infant girl was killed either by drugging or by mixing poison in her milk. Sometimes a layer of poison was also applied on the mother's breast so that the baby died when sucked. Till today we can see the infant death babies in Municipality dustbins, bushes, drainage canals beside Govt. and corporate hospitals.

As a law of Hinduism the widows were burnt on the pyres of their husbands, i.e. sati. It was prevailing from Medieval age. In general the Hindu widowhood was miserable and tragic. The widow heads were shaved and made to wear white sarees without bangles and tilakam and women were made to appear ugly and horrible. They were
leading the life as servants either in their parental homes or their husband's homes. Widow was not permitted to remarry as a social custom and tradition. The same culture and customs are carried over and have been prevailing in modern age in the majority of Hindu families.

In Hindu Society men have right to hold the property. Men are independent; women are dependent in terms of economic conditions. Girl or woman is always treated as a burden to the family in view of economic situation, like dowry is a major economical problem of every Hindu Family. Sati was prevalent among upper caste Hindus for at least 2000 years. There is no evidence how and when this evil first entered into Hindu Society. There was no sati before 300 BC\textsuperscript{107}. If widow was childless she could have one through Niyoga\textsuperscript{108} which was in vogue up to 500 A.D. Among the Rajputs families in north India women performed sati honour by self invited death.\textsuperscript{109} This practice traveled from the higher strata of Hindu society to the Lower people.

As a token of evidence the Bengal provided many instances of widows committing sati as the following data shows.\textsuperscript{110}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Satis</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Satis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>572</td>
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<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>539</td>
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<td>1819</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>518</td>
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<td>1820</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>517</td>
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<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>654</td>
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<td>463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These were the few known numbers against sati but the unknown number was more and more regarding sati in Hindu Society throughout the continent.

As far as education was concerned very few women in the 1850's received education and after 1857. There was hardly one woman in a hundred who could read and write.\textsuperscript{11} Since the dawn of history education is a sky in the Life of girl child and women in Hindu society. No religion, no dynasty, no culture and no society helped to provide education to innocent girl or woman in Hindu society. This was so because of the evil socio-religious practices, sinister customs, irrational religious rites and inhuman superstitions and ceremonies. Apart from that early marriage, enforced widowhood, sati, temple prostitution (Devadasi System), purdha, dowry, female infanticide, polygamy are common and natural practices in Hindu society.

No where else in the world did religion dominate and determine the Life of a woman as Hinduism in India. “Her economic activity, her social Life, her marriage, birth and death, her physical movements were strictly and minutely controlled by Hindu religion.\textsuperscript{12} The aforesaid mentioned illustrations show that the position of woman and her education in Vedic and later Vedic period was low and miserable. Women were discriminated in every walk of life.
6. Islam

The basic notion of Islam are two, the unity of God and the unity of man. The status of women in Islam was remarkably elevated considering how degrading their lot had become on the eve of the rise of Islam. It did not give them perfect equality, but neither did it exit even in the West until the twentieth century. Considering the rights and privileges conferred on Muslim women more than 1400 years ago, the change in their position was really revolutionary. The Prophet said that heaven lies beneath the feet of your mother. His daughter, Fatima, was referred to as 'our Lady to Light' and 'the Lady of the Paradise'. There were women saints, Sufis and mystics, the most celebrated among them being Rabiya-Basri.

In fact, Islam treated women with a greater measure of fairness than any other religion. The principle of equality of the sexes was laid down and enforced. The Quran says: "They (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is mighty, wise" (2:228). The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) declared, inter alia, in eloquent terms "Ye men! Ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you" (Ibn-e-Hisham). In accordance with these principles the Muslim law declares equality between a man and woman.

The preservation of human race is impossible without the existence of women. This means that in the eyes of God sons and daughters are equal. The Holy Quran further lays stress on the equality
of both the sexes. "God has created man and woman from a single entity" (4:1). Islam does not discriminate between man and woman on the basis of sex.

This example would amply show the regard of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) for women. Here are reproduced some sayings of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) about women:

- Women are the twin halves of men.
- The world and all things in it are valuable; but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.
- When a woman performs the five times of prayer and fasts in the month of Ramzan, and is chaste and is not disobedient to her husband then tell her to enter Paradise by whichever door she liked.
- Allah enjoins you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters and aunts (Sayings of Muhammad by Allama Sir Abdullah Al-Mamum Al-Suhrawady).

Islam stated that to kill a female child was a great sin. The Holy Quran laid down that: And they (Women) have rights similar to those of men" (2:228).

Islam lays emphasis on the acquisition and development of knowledge by both the sexes. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) says: "The search for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim (male or female)". Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. And Acquire knowledge. It will be seen that in the sphere of knowledge too, a Muslim male and Muslim female have been placed on an equal footing. In fact many Muslim women have adorned the throne of learning with distinction.
Apart from their role as a mother, wife, sister and daughter, they have established their superiority as teachers, scientists, physicians and saints.\textsuperscript{124} There is nothing in Islam, which justifies the exclusion of women from political, or public life. There is no distinction between men and women in these matters.\textsuperscript{125} Islam has allowed women to attend public meetings and religious ceremonies and take part in public affairs of their community.\textsuperscript{126}

Islam has raised the status of women giving them human rights on par with men. She has the right to divorce her husband under certain circumstances (Khula). She can get a condition inserted in the deed to marriage requiring her husband to transfer his right to divorce to her (Tafwiz-e-Talaq).\textsuperscript{127} At several places in the Holy Qur'an it has been categorically stated that spiritually man and women are equal e.g. "Whosoever, does right whether male or female."\textsuperscript{128}

Polygamy has the express sanction of the Quran and the number of wives restricted to four, that too under special circumstances, provided that the man is in a position to treat his wives equitably and justly.\textsuperscript{129} The Quranic injunction enforcing Purdah system is contained in verse 24: 30-31 of the Holy Book. According to these verses Muslim females have been cautioned to restrain their eyes from looking at other men and to guard their chastity. They should not exhibit their decorations except before their husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, sons, step-sons, brothers, nephews, their own women and male attendants
lacking sexual sentiments or, infants and boys who are not yet conscious of the female anatomy.\textsuperscript{130}

According to the directions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) a Muslim woman may uncover her face and hands if unavoidable.\textsuperscript{131} The women being a weaker sex, have been further enjoined to observe some additional precautions to safeguard their honour, against the evil intentions of men with "unhealthy hearts".\textsuperscript{132} As stated above, in some parts of the Muslim culture "Purdah" is considered as the sign of respectability and family dignity. As far as the "Burqa" or veil is concerned, Islam does order women to cover their face.\textsuperscript{133}

In the eyes of God, men and women are alike and Islam deals with human beings and not with men or women.\textsuperscript{134} In Islam woman also gets dowry on her marriage and inherits property from other relations as well.\textsuperscript{135} The Islamic rules of matrimonial alliance are a judicious code, giving equal rights to women. Her consent is a must; she cannot be married against her will. Even an adult woman, if married against her will, can repudiate the marriage before consummation.\textsuperscript{136}

After marriage the husband is legally bound to maintain his wife and her domestic servants.\textsuperscript{137} Islam prohibited conditional marriages and also temporary marriages.\textsuperscript{138} Islam said in the book of Traditions (Hadis): "Among things permitted in Islam, the most hated by God is divorce". Both men and women have the right in Islam to ask for separation, if they cannot get on.\textsuperscript{139} The divorce effected by the former is called Talaq, where that effected by the latter is called Khul'a.\textsuperscript{140}
The socio-economic structure of Islam presents a code, which is not difficult to practice, which is based on equity and justice, which is intended to promote human happiness and progress.\textsuperscript{141} As far as equality between man and woman is concerned, Islam has established justice between the two sexes, a sort of equality between men and women from social cultural and economic points of view. Women have the same social opportunities as men; and as regards the economic point of view the Muslim women have obtained their economic rights.\textsuperscript{142}

Though the Holy Quran provided Human Rights i.e., Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity to women, but in phenomenal social structure of Islamic Society, the women positions gradually degrade by male dominate principles. The following examples and illustration will justify the realistic condition of women in Islamic Society rather than Idealistic position. In later times in pre Islamic, the application and implementation of passage and principles of Holy Quran are taken into different directions according to the male dominated society. Suffice it to say that the lot of women before the advent of Islam, about 1,400 years ago, was most unfortunate and miserable. Prior to Islam, the position of women was very deplorable.

A few examples of proverbs current among Islamic illustrate their ideas about women:

- Women are the whips of Satan.
- Trust neither a king, a horse, nor a woman.
- Our mother forbids us to err and (herself) runs into error.
- Obedience to a woman will have to be repented.\textsuperscript{143}
According to the Law a boy should be married at puberty, a girl at the age of twelve. In Sjnd it fixed at fifteen for males and twelve for girls; in Gujarat between sixteen and twenty two for men, ten to fifteen for girls; in north India eighteen for youths, thirteen or fourteen for girls. Akbar forbide boys under sixteen and girls under fourteen to marry.

It is obvious Islam very much insisted on fidelity on the part of women. The demand of chastity from the wife during wedlock is associated with a similar demand before wedlock. One of the grounds for the dissolution marriage is that the bride claiming to be a virgin is discovered not to be so by the bridegroom. Infidelities and desfloration in public is practiced to assure premarital chastity.

The Muslim Personal Law as followed in India declares that if a man marries a fifth wife the marriage is only irregular but not void. But if a woman marries second husband she is liable for bigamy under section 494 I.P.C. All these raise serious questions regarding the status of the Muslim woman under the law. According to law "a Muslim woman has no soul" and that she will not be allowed to enter paradise. Whereas according to a saying of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) "Heaven lieth under the feet of mothers".

The purdah system was unknown in ancient India. Its general adoption, according to Dr.A.S Altekar, is subsequent to the advent of Muslim rule in India. Elizabeth Copper mentioned that Hindu adopted purdah as a protective measure to save the honour of their womenfolk
and to maintain the purity of their social order. Hindu ladies considered enough to have a sheet or dappa to cover their heads; Muslim ladies, on the other hand, covered themselves with a burqa from head to foot.

Some reformers have termed the Purdah system as a stumbling block in the way of women's progress in educational, economic and social activities and national affairs. As for the allegation that "Purdah" hampers the educational and social development of the females, it may be asserted that this is simply a figment of imagination.\textsuperscript{146} Islam was the first religion to convert marriage from a sacrament into a contract, from a ceremony essentially religious into a public and legal proceeding.\textsuperscript{147} The Indian Muslims are allowing themselves to be regarded as defenders of polygamy, or conscientious objectors to monogamy, whichever might be worse.\textsuperscript{148}

A prejudice against widow marriage exists, however, amongst many classes of Mohammedans, especially those who are descended from local coverts.\textsuperscript{149} Temporary marriages (muta, sigha, nikah-I-muwaqqat), contracted for a limited period are recognized by Shias, a practice that has done much to demoralize the community and women. They were forbidden, but subsequently in part sanctioned by the prophet.\textsuperscript{150} When a man wishes to marry, he sends for three or four women. Widows are to be avoided and four points are to be sought; her stature should be less than that of her husband; she should be younger; possess less property; be inferior in rank and status.\textsuperscript{151}
Women were not treated as human beings but as articles of trade. A man was free to have as many women as his wives as he liked or could afford. Polygamy existed in medieval society because of certain circumstances, such as to prevent women from starvation or utter destitution. During wars when more men were killed and women were left in larger numbers in society, polygamy was the only alternative to a breach of chastity. It should also be remembered that the woman in those days was not the bread earner and hence as a last resort the safety value of polygamy was provided to meet the exigencies of the situation. Moreover, Islamic law says that it is better to have legal rather than illegal relations with a woman if emotional factor compel a man to seek satisfaction in more than one woman. Even though the Quran limits the number to four, emperor Akbar had during his life more than three hundred wives.

Every woman is a shepherd in the family of her husband and will be questioned about the well being of every member thereof. You have rights over women and the women have rights over you (Tabari). There are two forms of divorce, namely Khol and Talaq. Khol is a friendly arrangement between the husband and the father of the wife by which the latter repays the dowry and gets back the daughter. On refund of the consideration the power of purchaser husband comes to an end. The prophet can not but approve talaq as a means to put an end to marriage. He however abolishes Khol as a means of divorce.
Man's domination over his wife is implicit in the word "talaq" itself; and the status of the woman is affected in another way too.

According to A.A.A Fyzee, "The law of divorce whatever its utility during the past was so interpreted that it has become the one sided oppression in the hands of the husband". When the talaq is pronounced thrice, and the divorce becomes irrevocable, under the Muslim Personal Law, the divorced couple cannot remarry each other.

The widow for instance, whose remarriage is as much the responsibility of her guardians as the marriage of virgin daughters lost her right and it was restored only gradually as the result of reform movement in the early nineteenth century. Ages indicate that public women still occupied a recognized position in the social economy. Prostitution was recognized under Muslim rule; a large number of prostitutes were kept as concubines in their harems. During Shah Jahan's reign, great liberty was given to public women of whom the greater numbers were dancers and singers.

During the Muslim period the education of women almost came to a standstill because of Purdhah system and child marriages. There was no provision of education for the common girls, though the girls of royal and rich families were imparted education at their houses, Gulbadan Begum, Salima sultana, Nurjehan, Muntaz mahal, Jahnora Begum were some of the famous women who could acquire higher education and learning. Like the Hindus the Muslims also had two types of institutions. The Maktab, which corresponded to the Hindu
elementary school, was generally attached to the mosques and functioned with the primary objective of teaching boys and girls to read and write, particularly to read the Holy Koran.\textsuperscript{187}

The aristocracy families in the early medieval times were in a position to provide education to their women folk closed doors and not much evidence comes to estimate the extent of education among the women of the lower rungs of society.\textsuperscript{158} Many of these girls have not gone beyond primary school; some have never entered a classroom. Against this background Seema Mustafa proceeds to ask: Will Muslim women never be equal to the men?

Women acquired an admirable place in the text of Quran, but not in practice of social life. Woman was treated as sub-human in Islam culture and society. As far as the social conditions concerned in Vedic, Later Vedic and Islam, there are some fluctuations in the women life rather than the constant progress. In Vedic period women enjoyed considerable freedom and equality in the home and in society. Both men and women were permitted to participate in spiritual worships. And also women received a meaningful education. But in later Vedic period women's position and status had degraded. In all the stages she had faced a lot of humiliation and frustration in her life. Son occupied a highest place in the family and daughter was neglected. No permission was given to her to participate in social activities and spiritual worships. In a common platform, education was not provided to women.
The liberty, equality, justice and fraternity have remained as were dreams in her life. It is a fact according to historical evidence and scriptures, that women were not treated as a human. In the later Vedic and Islam cultures they were treated as sub-human.

7. Christianity

The Christianity or Christianism is one of the oldest religions in the world. It was born in Eden Garden (Jerusalem) as far as the relation started between god (Almighty) and Adam on the earth. The father of Christianity is “jehova” and Jesus Christ is the son of father (jehova). Who created this universe or cosmos.

Father, Son and Parishudatma are three basic principles of Christianity. Mahakrupa, Sacrifices and forgiveness are three components in Christian religion. The Holy Bible says that the human beings birth is the gift and krupa or karuna of father (jehova). All are equal and same in the eye or view of father (God).

In the Christian world there was a debate made on women personality, whether woman had soul. By a simple majority of one in an assembly of 400 in 43 AD it was ruled that women possess souls. This ill ostriches to some extent the deplorable condition of woman.

In Judaism from which Christianity sprang, it was Eve who brought death into the world by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and persuading Adam to do like wise. God pronounces the following punishment on Eve. “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow
and thy conceptions, in sorrow those shall bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee. A curse is thus laid on women in the very first book of the Old Testament.

According to New Testament Jesus Christ showed equal compassion for men and women. In one occasion pharises asked, whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife, and they said Moses had permitted the writing of a bill of divorcement, Jesus, said. “For the harness of your heart he wrote you this perpect” (Mark 10.5)

On another occasion, when the pharises produced before Jesus a woman taken in the act of adultery, and reminded him of the law of Moses that such should be stoned, Jesus said: He that is without sin among you, let him first a stone at her”. And all the men, “bring convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one beginning at the eldest, even unto the Last” (John, 8.7-9). It shows, no one has right to punish other individual against their sin. Only God will punish them according to their behavior and sin.

In Christian Religion there is no child-marriage among the Christian families. Girl is never treated as secondary in Christian family and society. No evidence for child-marriages in Old Testament and in the New-Testament period. After puberty and maturity the girls and boy are permitted to marriage and the considerable age is 18 and 21 years respectively. Girl has some sort of freedom in the selection of Life partner. She has liberty to express her opinion. She is never treated as burden to the family. There is liberty and equality for girls in her social life.
The law defines Christian marriage as the "voluntary union of one man and one woman for life to the exclusion of all others". The Christian marriage can be conducted by a priest with a License from the Govt. or a marriage through registration. Saint Paul has stated that marriage has become necessary in order to avoid unchaste and debauchery. He did not state that it was meant for fulfillment of life and attainment of happiness. The early Christianity extolled celibacy as the best. That Christians have to take the marriage is very much in evidence in Christianity.

The Bride and Bridegroom Sign the register in evidence of the marriage. They have to take the oath "in the presence of Almighty God and in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, I take thee C.D. to be my lawful wedded wife/husband". The marriages will be complete according to Christina marriage Act of 1872. The tying of the 'Tali' (Sacred thread by the bridegroom round the neck of the bride is a Hindu tradition. The Christian have also adopted the same traditions in their marriage customs.

There is no polygamy and polyandry in Christian Law and Society. Monogamy prevails in Christian community. One man and one wife is the Law of Christianity since the period of Abraham.

The Christian husband treats his wife with compassion. He is to conduct himself in a charitable manner. According to the Roman Catholic view, marriage is intended to beget children and lead a sacred life. The later reformists introduced the value of friendship into married relations. They went to the extent of declaring that married

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life was greater and better than celibacy. Husband is not a God to the wife in Christian family. Both are treated as friends and interdependent on each other. The mutual understanding and cooperation prevails between wife and husband

Divorce is permitted based on mutual consent of men and women in Christian law. The Marriage Dissolution Act, 1866 provides divorce. When the both parties together request the court that they have been living separately for a period of one year or more, that they have been unable to live together and that they have mutually agreed that the marriage should be dissolved. The Act also contains provision enabling the court of award maintenance to a wife whose marriage has been dissolved.186

As a window, woman has freedom to choose her future life, without any committing self-death along with husband. Throughout globe, there is no evidence for sati in Christian communities. Though husband is relieved from her life the widow always enjoyed the same privileges in the family and society in terms of religious and social events and customs. In the event of husband's death, woman is relieved from her commitment i.e. marriage binding. A widow can remarry in Christian society. “If she remarries after her husband’s demise she can never be considered as debaucheries” (Roma 7:1-4).187

Christianity recognizes education as a key source and major instrument for the progress of individual and society. It also believes it should help spread the Christianity among the masses. In this connection Christianity used education as a weapon and instrument to
spread the gospel. They established a number of schools and colleges. Education is provided for girls and boys, no gender bias in the Christian philosophy and religion. They opened separate girls schools and colleges. The Baptist mission started its first school for girls in 1819 in Calcutta. Miss Cook was also called from London in 1821 to promote the education for girls. It is interesting to note that by 1823 the number of schools increased to twenty and of the students to 400. Lady Amherst was made the patroness at the Calcutta School Society in 1824 for promoting the education of girls in Calcutta and its vicinity.

By and large Christianity imposes relatively less social restrictions and allows more freedom to women as compared to many other world religions. There is no purdah for women. Christianity does not prohibit widow marriage and the family regulations are not very rigid for the girls. Girls enjoy freedom in respect of education and selection of life partner. Divorce is permissible and both men and women enjoy the right of property.

8. Woman According to Indian Scholars

After the decline of Buddhism, Hindu Dharma was revived, Woman-education during this period received a major set back because Sankaracharya, the leader of the movement of revival of Hinduism, was against it.

In the eleventh century Ramanuja and afterwards Basava tried to pull down Varna system. In the succeeding centuries saints like Chakradhar, Ramanand, Kabir, Chaitanya, Eknath, Tukaram, Rohidas,
and Chokhamela tried to establish quality in matters of their 'Bhakti' cult. However, the movement of saints was mainly religious, it tried for the spiritual elevation of the 'Shudras' and the 'untouchables', but it did not touch the fundamental problems of social and economic life of the untouchables.\(^{172}\)

Child-marriage and widow-marriage are the two important problems of women in Hindu Society. The following illustration shows that how these social evils are prevailing in the society. Child marriage was uncommon. European travelers mentioned that Hindus, as a protection against Muslim raiders, who had their eyes on virgins and would not usually carry off married women, resorted to early marriage of their daughters. The girls were married even before the age of puberty.

Marriage is not for sense enjoyment, but to perpetuate the race. Marriage is sacred and inviolable for the Hindus. The Hindus to keep up the high standard of chastity in the race, have sanctioned child-marriage, which in the long run has degraded the race. Child marriage makes the race chaste but at the same time it weakens men and women physically. If people select their own husbands and wives, that does not seem to bring much happiness. The daughters of India are more practical than sentimental. If parents select husbands and wives for their children, then this evil is minimized.\(^{173}\)

Widow marriage was prohibited and the rigidity of the custom required a widow to shave her head, wear borderless saris and no under garments, no ornaments; cook her own vegetarian food in a separate
kitchen, keep regular fast on prescribed days, not allowed to be present at auspicious functions in the family, not allowed to stir out of the house alone or receive any male guests in the house. A widow was treated as a maidservant and required to perform all household duties sweeping, washing floors, cleaning utensils, etc.

Women under menstruation were treated as untouchables. In the major periods of Hindu history woman has been considered the property of man, to be disposed of as the master pleases. Women were not expected to undergo the hard discipline of Ashrams like boys "The Hindu Scheme of Education"- says Prabhu, 'seems to have been formulated with reference to the sons of India only; there seems to have been no place in that scheme for the daughters of India. In addition to these factors, we may note here the comment of Dr.Gravex, a renowned American Historian of education. "Education in India is based upon a gloomy religious belief and the rigid caste system accompanying it."

Naturally half of the population was travailing to get recognized as human beings. It was a great misfortune that the then religious concepts and interpretations justified the treatments made out to women folk. The practice of (Sati) wife burning is one of those forms of oppressions. It is a fact that Sati is not completely eradicated from the Indian soil even today. "People who are in the political life of the country are also reported to be the supporters of the practice of Sati. If this is the case today, one can imagine the amount of resistance that
would have been staged by the orthodox Hindus of the days of Roy.\textsuperscript{178} In one of his tracts he described Sati as a murder. He said, "thanks to heaven, whose protecting arm has rescued our weaker sex from cruel murder."\textsuperscript{177}

As far as sati is concerned there were attempts from political circles to stop it. Especially the Muslim rulers who ruled India endeavored to put an end to the practice of sati. Akbar was against compulsion; Jahangir prescribed capital punishment for abating sati. Aurangzeb declared that no women within the Mugal territory would be allowed to be burnt alive.\textsuperscript{178}

Coming to the reforms of society and in woman's life, which have helped to bring changes in her social status, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (popularly known as Sarada Act) limiting the marriageable age of the boys and girls was conceived by Iswarchandra Vidyasagar in 1856. However, Hindu orthodoxy did not permit to adopt the liberal measures for emancipation of women.

The socio-religious reformation movement started by Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) was the first social protest movement against degenerated Hinduism, and the barbaric customs of society. It was at the behest of Raja Rammohan Roy that Lord William Bentinck outlawed the practice of widow burning (Sati) by Regulation XVII of 1829. It was Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, a towering personality of the period (1820-91), who directed his attention to many social evils but his most memorable crusade was for widow-remarriage. Vidyasagar in Bengal and Justice Ranade, Phule, Vishnu Shastri, Dayananda
Saraswati and others from different parts of the country were ardent advocates of the cause of widow remarriage, the remarriage of Hindu widows was legalized by the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1956.

Some of the notable figures with Western education took leading part in the socio-religious movement of the country. The main problems that confronted them, along with the political backwardness, were the caste system, untouchability, child marriage, widow marriage and emancipation of women. A bitter controversy arose whether social reforms should precede political reforms. Men like Ranade, Agarkar, Dr. Bhandarkar actively propagated the views of social reforms. But Tilak was on the side of the political reformers. Consequently, some of the leaders of the Indian National Congress firmly decided to drop social reform from the future agenda of the Congress. Men like Raghunathrao, Mahadev Ranade, Narendranath Sen, Janakinath Ghosal felt the need of a separate organization for social reforms.

To be sure, social reforms woke up in the different parts of the country who worked for the cause of women. The wave of reformist thought in the 19th century initiated by social reformers led to very significant legislative, social and educational changes. The social reform movement of the 18th and 19th centuries favoured and encouraged women's education in India. It became the main urge for the future advancement of women.

The father of the Indian renaissance was Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1774) in West Bengal. He founded Brahma Samaj in 1828 and used English education to transform the social system responsible for the
misery of women. In fact West Bengal produced several other social reformers. For instance, Devendra Nath Tagore 1817 fought for the introduction of woman education. The agitation started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others was further taken up by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820). He opposed polygamy and child-marriage. He was all out for education of women. It was his efforts that fructified in the establishment of the Bethune School in 1849 in Calcutta for female education the first institution of its nature.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the forerunners of Indian renaissance. Roy's greatness lies in his ability to see his society a sick society. It was a sick society because half of its population - the women folk were subjected to ill treatment. The normal womanhood was not recognized. She was either treated as sub-human who would obey the men in all her roles as daughter, sister, wife and mother or hailed as super-human when she does some 'adventurous' tasks involving self-destruction.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy collected facts and figures and knew that in one year 463 widows were burned in Bengal alone. Raja Ram Mohan Roy argued that in the Vedic period, the primitive custom of self-immolation of the widow was forbidden among the progressive elements of the population. Raja Ram Mohan Roy endeavored for a new humanism in which women and men would relate to each other as partners with self-dignity and mutual respect. Therefore, Roy was concerned about the condition of widows who were alive. From the biography of Roy we understand that he was a widower at the age of 8
by the death of his child-wife. During his time a Bengali Hindu widow was treated as a symbol of misery: her head shaven, her limbs stripped of every piece of Jewellery: her red-bordered sari replaced by a borderless dhoti so that she may neither look like a man nor a woman.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy endeavored to the abolition of child marriage. He interpreted the Vedas. "The condition of women in India during the Vedic age was immensely superior to what we find now. There was no early marriage in the Vedic age." Roy saw Child marriage as part of the whole gamut of oppression of women, by the prevailing patriarchal system. Education was the prominent weapon with which Roy was fully armed and fought the evils of the society.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) established the Arya Samaj, which tried to revive the ancient purity of the Vedic Society. It was opposed to the rigidity of caste distinctions based on birth. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society, rendered valuable service in reforming the behaviour patterns in Hindu Society in their own ways.

Dhondo Keshav Karve (1858) himself married a widow and faced a lot of social ostracism and condemnation. His greatest achievement was in the field of women's education. He started female education institute (Mahila Vidyalaya) in 1907 and by 1915, he succeeded in starting a University. He assigned woman a class of different functions in the economy from those of men.
Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861) started Shantiniketan in 1901 and inaugurated Viswabharati in 1921. He glorified women in his writings and highlighted the sad plight of Indian Women. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866) established Servants of Indian Society to carry out the work of social reform. He was deeply interested in the propagation of female education. He opposed the seclusion of women. All reformers had to face opposition from the reactionaries in Hindu society.

Some outstanding women of the Nineteenth century, Indian renaissance struggled against heavy odds to pursue their mission of women's emancipation. For instance, Pandita Ramabai Ranade (1862-1922) worked for the education of women, prepared women for service, and imparted education-religious, literary, scientific, medical and technological. Francina Sorabjee advocated for female education and established many schools for this purpose. These and many other men and women social reformers gave guidance and direction to the movement of women education.

Swami Vivekananda wanted women to be emancipated from all restraints through education. He exhorted them to acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. Education of the right type, says Vivekananda, should make women capable of solving their own problems, the freedom secured by the women will develop in them an intelligence to decide for themselves what reforms are necessary to elevate their position. Swami Vivekananda says: "The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women". "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons." As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya upto the thirtieth
year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents.

Swami Vivekananda is of the opinion that there cannot be any progress of the country without the spread of education first among the women. Another aspect of Swami Vivekananda's social thought which deserves our attention is his attitude towards women. He says, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world, unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing". He says, "Our part of the duty lies in imparting education to all men and women in society." Because of this education, he says that, they will themselves be able to know what is good and what is bad and so on. According to Swami Vivekananda, a proper system of education was the remedy for all our social evils and ills. His message in the field of education was unique one. He believed that all souls are potentially divine as he says, "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man".

In South India, Viresalingam Pantulu and Sir.R. Venkataratnam Naidu were the social reformers of renown. In Madras, Viresalingam devoted himself to the women's advancement through education and marriage reforms. Venkata Ratnam, too, encouraged female education.

Iyah Yazai is one of the social reformers in 19th century. Iyah was committed to the liberation of women. In the thinking of liberation of women is looked at in a broader perspective. It is not merely to become
equal to man. But it is a struggle of both men and women to establish a
new humanism. In the new humanism of men and women have a
complementary role. Talked of men and women together. Both are
equally important and both complete one another.

Annie Besant demanded equality for women in all spheres. She
desired to spread liberty and true thought among woman against
bigotry and superstition, to make the world freer and better.202 As the
first woman president of the Indian National Congress, she raised the
prestige of Indian womanhood.

Since nearly 1920 onwards the liberation movement of
untouchables was led by two great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi
and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. There were basic differences in the
ideologies of these two leaders, in their approaches to the problem and
in the solutions, which they advocated for one of India's major social
problems - the problem of the untouchables,203 which is major hurdle to
women's liberty, equality and fraternity.

At the time of his assumption of leadership of the Indian
National Congress in 1920, Gandhi started taking the active steps to
eradicate the evil practice of untouchability. Gandhi's appeal to the
caste Hindus or 'Savarnas' was essentially directed at a change of heart.
He had no faith in legal measures. He always felt that all change must
come voluntarily from the heart. Gandhi's whole approach to the
problem was reformative and not revolutionary. He believed in gradual
change of attitudes.204 Another major Evil is caste in Indian Social
structure, which is humiliate women empowerment.
Indeed the whole future of India's greatness is bound up in the emancipation of her women.

This is the high time to recognize the work and significant efforts, which are made by various scholars and thinkers to enhance the status of women. Their contribution will be remaining as a milestone of Indian History. Somehow women are enjoying and receiving some social benefits and also avoiding a few social evils, due to strong and identical support of modern Indian social reformers.

It is identified that majority of the renowned persons were concentrated on political reforms and spiritual life rather than social and cultural reform. In Eleventh century and afterwards the saints and reformers concentrated on the development of 'Bhakti' cult rather than the renaissance of social and economical life of the people in general and women in particular. Some of the scholars aimed at to reduce the influence of Islam and Christianity on Indian social and culture but did not emphasise to root out the social evils and wrongs of Indian society which have impaired the woman social life, status and education. That's why some of the old traditions, customs and evils are replaced by another new social evils and wrongs.

9. Buddhism its Origin and Growth

Gautama Buddha Chief-exponent and preceptor of Buddhism was born in 563 BC. Towards the end of the six century B.C., in the city of Kapilavastu, the capital of a small kingdom of the same name situated in Central India at the foot of the mountains of Nepal, north of the present kingdom of Oudh, the Buddha was born. His father
Suddhodana, of the tribe of the Sakyas, a descendant of the great solar race of the Gautamides, ruled over the country. His mother, Maya Devi, was the daughter of the King Suprabuddha.305

Naturally in the sixth century B.C. that the world saw the Light of Asia, that perfect embodiment of knowledge, courage, love and sacrifice whose heart overflowed with purest emotion on seeing that human life was essentially fraught with misery and pain; who, moved by that spectacle to seek a remedy for men's ills, at the age of twenty-nine, boldly left not only the material luxuries of the Shakya Kingdom but also his beloved wife. After six years' rigorous religious austerities, at last found enlightenment as he lay emancipated under a tree near Gaya, dispelling the dark clouds of ignorance and conquering Mara, the Prince of Evil; who then preached the truth he had discovered. And Buddhism was embraced by the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the intellectual and the dull alike. It spread like wild fire far and wide from the lofty Himalayas to Cape Camorin and ranged beyond the frontiers of its homeland to Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Malaya, Java, Sumatra and then again to Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, China and Japan. It became a world religion and a great cultural force at least in Asia.306

Originating as a monastic movement within the dominant Hindu tradition of the day, Buddhism quickly developed in a distinctive direction. The Buddha rejected significant aspects of Brahmanic philosophy, but also challenged the authority of the priesthood, denied the validity of the Vedic scriptures, and rejected the sacrificial cult.
based on them. Moreover, he opened his movement to members of all castes, denying that a person's spiritual worth is a matter of birth.

The Buddha underwent a period of intense inner struggle. He began to preach, wandering from place to place, gathering a body of disciples, and organizing them into a monastic community known as the sangha. In this way he spent the rest of his life. The Buddha was an oral teacher; he left no written body of thought. His teachings were transmitted as an oral tradition for several centuries, and were subsequently systematized and interpreted by various individuals and schools within India and elsewhere.

At the core of the Buddha's enlightenment was the realization of the Four Noble Truths. (1) Life is suffering. This is more than a mere recognition of the presence of suffering in existence. It is a statement that, in its very nature, existence is essentially painful from the moment of birth to the moment of death. Even death brings no relief, for the Buddha accepted the prevailing Indian idea of life as cyclical, with death leading to further rebirth. (2) All suffering is caused by ignorance of the nature of reality and the craving, attachment, and grasping that arise from such ignorance. (3) Suffering can be ended by overcoming ignorance and attachment. (4) The path to the suppression of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right-mindedness, and right contemplation. These eight are usually divided into three categories that form the cornerstone of Buddhist faith: morality, meditation, and wisdom.
Buddhism analyses human existence as made up of five aggregates or "bundles" (skandhas): the material body, feelings, perceptions, predispositions or karmic tendencies, and consciousness. A person is only a temporary composition of these aggregates, which are subject to continual change. Buddhists deny the permanent, independently existing self or soul (atman). The Buddha held that belief in such a self results in egoism, craving, and hence in suffering. Thus he taught the doctrine of anatman, or the denial of a permanent soul.209

To the Buddha, all existence was characterized by "the three universal truths": impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-substantiality or no-soul (anatman). The doctrine of anatman made it necessary for the Buddha to reinterpret the Indian idea of repeated rebirth in the cycle of phenomenal existence known as samsara. To this end he taught the doctrine of Pratitya Samutpada, or dependent origination. This 12-linked chain of causation shows how ignorance in a previous life creates the tendency for a combination of aggregates to develop. These in turn cause the mind and senses to operate. Sensations result, which lead to craving and a clinging to existence.210 This condition triggers the process of becoming once again, producing a renewed cycle of birth, old age, and death. Through this causal chain a connection is made between one life and the next. What is posited is a stream of renewed existences, rather than a permanent being that moves from life to life—in effect a belief in rebirth without transmigration.211
Closely related to this belief is the doctrine of karma. The Sanskrit term karma literally means "action", and as a technical term it refers to a person's intentional acts and their ethical consequences. Human actions lead to rebirth, wherein good deeds are inevitably rewarded and evil deeds punished. One's karma determines such matters as one's species, beauty, intelligence, longevity, wealth, and social status. According to the Buddha, \textsuperscript{212} karma of varying types can lead to rebirth as a human, an animal, a hungry ghost, a denizen of hell, or even among the various categories of gods.

The ultimate goal of the Buddhist path is release from the round of phenomenal existence with its inherent suffering. To achieve this goal is to attain Nirvana, an enlightened state in which the fires of greed, hatred, and ignorance have been quenched. Not to be confused with total annihilation, nirvana is a state of consciousness beyond definition. After attaining nirvana, the enlightened individual may continue to live, burning off any remaining karma until a state of final nirvana (parinirvana) is attained at the moment of death.\textsuperscript{213}

In theory, the goal of nirvana is attainable by anyone, although in early Buddhism it is a realistic goal only for members of the monastic community. In Theravada Buddhism an individual who has achieved enlightenment by following the Eightfold Path is known as an arhat, or worthy one, a type of solitary saint.\textsuperscript{214} The ethic that leads to better rebirth, however, is centered on fulfilling one's moral duties as a member of a family or society. It involves acts of charity, especially support of the sangha, as well as observance of the five precepts that
constitute the basic moral code of Buddhism. The precepts prohibit killing, stealing, telling lies, sexual misbehaviour, and the use of intoxicants. By observing these precepts, the three roots of evil-lust, hatred, and delusion—may be overcome.

Shortly before his death, the Buddha refused his disciples' request to appoint a successor, telling them to work out their own salvation with diligence. At that time Buddhist teachings existed only in oral traditions, and it soon became apparent that a new basis for maintaining the community's unity and purity was needed. Thus, the monastic order met periodically to reach agreement on matters of doctrine and practice.

The Buddhist canon is known as the Tripitaka, or Three Baskets, because it consists of three collections of writings: the Sutta Pitaka, a collection of discourses; the Vinaya Pitaka, the code of monastic discipline; and the Abhidhamma Pitaka, which contains philosophical, psychological, and doctrinal systemizations and classifications.

The Visuddhimagga is the masterpiece of the most famous of Buddhist commentators, Buddhaghosa (early 5th century AD). It is a large compendium summarizing Buddhist thought and meditative practice. Theravada Buddhists have traditionally considered the Tripitaka to be the recorded words of Siddhartha Gautama. Mahayana Buddhists have not limited their scriptures to the teachings of this historical figure, however, nor has Mahayana ever bound itself to a closed canon of sacred writings.
From the first, the most devoted followers of the Buddha were organized into the monastic sangha. Monastic life was governed by the rules of the Vinaya, one of the three canonical collections of scripture. The sangha included an order for nuns as well as for monks, a unique feature among Indian monastic orders.

Lay worship in Buddhism is primarily individual rather than congregational. Since earliest times a common expression of faith for laity and members of the sangha alike has been taking the Three Refuges, that is, reciting the formula “I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the dharma. I take refuge in the sangha”. Although technically the Buddha is not worshipped in Theravada, veneration is shown through the stupa cult.

One of the lasting strengths of Buddhism has been its ability to adapt to changing conditions and to a variety of cultures. It is philosophically opposed to materialism, especially of the Marxist-Communist variety. Buddhism does not recognize a conflict between itself and modern science. On the contrary, it holds that the Buddha applied the experimental approach to questions of ultimate truth.

In Thailand and Burma, Buddhism remains strong. Reacting to charges of being socially unconcerned, its monks have become involved in various social welfare projects. Although Buddhism in India largely died out after the 12th century, resurgence on a small scale was sparked by the conversion of 3.5 million former members of the untouchable caste, under the leadership of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.
beginning in 1956. A similar renewal of Buddhism in Sri Lanka dates from the 19th century.

Growing interest in Asian societies and spiritual values in the West has led to the development of a number of societies devoted to the study and practice of Buddhism.

10. Buddhism Views on Education and Woman

Buddhistic contributions to the philosophy of education have been tremendous. The Buddha himself is understood as the teacher (Sattha).

The notion of education entails many subsidiary notions, of ignorance and knowledge, of teacher and student. In the case of Buddhism and of Indian religions in general, ignorance (avijja, avidya) is never the mere lack of information. It is an expression of the fundamental human condition. It follows, then that knowledge (Panna, Prajna) cannot be reduced to information, but is a radical restructuring of the way in which we know and it is the case that, in Buddhism, this restructuring of the way in which we know has very direct stereological impact. Through the development of Panna or Prajna, one develops insight into the habitual patterning of mind and the skillful means (Upaya) as to how one cuts through such patterns. This learning process leads to the desire to work for the welfare, of all living beings, so that the mark of learning in Buddhism has been compassion Buddhist education, then has begun with insight into individual's
suffering and has devoted itself to the alleviation of the suffering of all.\textsuperscript{216}

The goal of Buddhist education is lofty one to eradicate suffering. Buddhist educators were very diligent in providing a course, which provided many penultimate goals enroute to this final goal. While Buddhism is tautological in the sense that all teaching is understood in the content of progress towards Nirvana.\textsuperscript{217}

The importance of education was duly recognized and emphasized in Buddhism. The education that was imparted in Buddhist institutes was 'an education of the kind that lifted the savage to the sage and the saint, the barbarous to the fraternal, the warring to the peace.

Since the conception of Dharma was a most dominant feature of Buddhist culture, its stamp is evident on education also. The educational ideals followed the dictums and dictates of sacred Law and tradition, and never conflicted with the general philosophy of life which was built on an awareness of the temporal nature of the phenomena that surround us on the one hand, and a postulation of a supreme spiritual goal which transcends the world of sense on the other.

Thus, education in Buddhism was conceived as a process of creative self-culture, and aimed at constant growth and constant illumination of life, ultimately leading to perfect awakening, resulting in the climax of all striving. The aim of education to illumine life and to
give wisdom, which is the supreme eye. It disciplines and subdues the human instincts and renders the individual noble and affable.

The Buddhist notion of education must always be understood in the content of overcoming avail, the fundamental egoistic structuring of one's experience, so a Buddhist notion of teaching must be understood as aiding the overcoming of suffering, and not merely the conveying of information. Of course, for a Buddhist this essentially involves the teaching of the Dhamma, it also involves instruction in these more 'secular' matters such as medicine and agriculture. In so far as ignorance of these matters redounds the suffering of the laity, Buddhism has rightly understood it the duty of the Sangha to provide secular as well as religious education from classical to contemporary times. The Buddhist monastic centers are particularly suitable in the India context for the development of higher secular learning.

There are many instances, which show that education of women was prevalent in Buddhist period. Women were permitted by Lord Buddha to join Sangha. Buddhism attracted a large number of women and they became life long students of its philosophy. Sanghmitra, the sister of Ashoka went to Ceylon for preaching the principles of Buddhism. Subha, Anupma and Sumedha were the great preachers of Buddhism.

The life of women who came from the higher strata of the Society had a privilege to enjoy comforts of life and they were more cultured and accomplished than working class women, who had to struggle for
existence. These women got more scope to educate and elevate themselves. Naturally, they were philanthropic, religious intelligent and possessed a breadth of vision.

11. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s Views on Education and Woman

The purpose of this study is to examine Dr. Ambedkar’s efforts towards women’s status and education, Ambedkar chooses his social reform approach only after understanding the reality of the status of women. He traces the existing low profile of women status in Indian society. In his research and observation, Ambedkar says that Manu propounded a theory of perpetual slavery for women. The Manusmriti laid down certain rules and code of conduct for women, according to which women should not be allowed free rein in any respect. According to Ambedkar men treated women as objects of pleasure created only for pleasing them. The right to education and the right to property is denied to women.

Dr. Ambedkar had an intense dislike for injustice done to women. He endeavoured to improve the condition of every poor house like his own house. He considered every poor child and tried to educate him or her and bring up nicely. He tried his utmost to mitigate the pains and sufferings of men and women. It shows his generosity towards women.219

‘Dana’ is one of the chief virtues of paramitas according to Mahayana tradition. This particular virtue ‘Dana’ was part and parcel of Dr. Ambedkar life. He gave, gave and gave, whatever he could, he
Dr. Ambedkar recognized education as a weapon and major instrument to all success in life and eradicates the darkness, slavery and social evils in all spheres of life. He always advised to the masses to give proper education to their sons and daughters and himself helped them by establishing educational institutions, societies, schools, colleges and hostels. He was a man and mission who confined to the "Life Long Education Process" based on thrust for knowledge and education. He had to fight to secure for people the right of receiving education.

Dr. Ambedkar was a pioneer of social awakening. His social awakening was based on education can help to secure self-respect, self-dignity, self-help in the individual's life. His life is an example to helpless downtrodden masses of humanity. No bar of riches, privileges and varna can prevent the growth of an individual, who confines to the education.

Dr. Ambedkar was a great educationist. He believed that no democratic process could be complete unless masses were properly educated. He thus considered true education as the solvent for many hardened problems. He wished to establish a new social order based on the lofty principles of social, economical and political for one and all. He stated that it was possible only through education.
Dr. Ambedkar founded the people's education society and started colleges at Bombay and Aurangabad. He emphasized that greater responsibility for providing educational opportunities should be that boys and girls should be given the same education. He asked: "What was the use of teaching Burke and Shakespeare literature to girls? Girls must be well-versed in education, especially in home education. In his speech in Nagpur, he said that the measure of the progress of a community is determined by the degree of progress which women have achieved. He asked them to educate their children and to remove inferiority complex.

Dr. Ambedkar laid great emphasis on education – schooling for the depressed class children and extend all possible facilities like hostels, libraries, books and stationery. He advised the depressed classes to observe the cleanliness and send their girls also to the school. Only then could there be some hope of uplift, he told them.

In his study Dr. Ambedkar identified women were discriminated in chatuvarnya society and Brahminic Law. He stated the right of education was given to the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vishyas. The Sudras and women have no right to education according the charavarnya society. According to him in Brahminic Law, "The higher class should not inter marry with the shudra. They can however, keep shudra women as concubines." One of the Brahmanism principles is "Complete subjugation and suppression of women."
According to chaturvarnya, a man's life is divided into four stages, Brahmacharya, Grahastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Dr. Ambedkar explained that "The benefits of these stages were open only to the male members of the three superior class. The first and fourth, were not open to the shudras and women". According to Ambedkar every individual has inalienable rights. These rights are natural and inherent. Women also have the same rights. He created human rights for all. His aim was essentially social and human related to all who suffered from slavery, injustice, tyranny and exploitation.

Dr. Ambedkar advocated women have right to education, right to marry on their own, right to property, right to divorce, right to adoption and right to live as human in the Nature. In this connection he introduced Hindu Code Bill in the Constituent Assembly, which helped women kill all kinds of social evils in their life, i.e., slavery, injustice, tyranny and exploitation, etc.

Dr. Ambedkar stated, the Hindu Code Bill introduced only four new things in the present law. They were abolition of the doctrine of the rights by birth, absolute right over property to women, share to daughter and provision for divorce. He added that there was nothing either anti-social or anti religious in them.

Dr. Ambedkar firmly suggested the necessity of mass education and radical change in Hindu social system. His trinity "Education, Organization and Agitation" were the key words for women's liberation and empowerment. His crusade wars against Hindu social evils were part and parcel of women's liberating momentum.
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