1.1 INTRODUCTION

In ancient Indian religious literature, the Devi (GODDESS) is described as PRAKRITI, which is pure infinite consciousness. Prakriti is inherent in all creation, male and female alike, and both forms of creation have within them, three gunas or qualities namely, Sathva, Rajas and Taamas, roughly meaning the most spiritual, the mixed and the gross respectively. Neither man nor women was thought of as superior to the other. Ancient thinkers also postulated that feminine and masculine traits existed in each person and that the development of either led to the assertion of male and female personalities but neither was thought of as superior. The cultivation of a life style in which both halves of the personality could co-exist in harmony was regarded as necessary. In art, this principle found expression in the concept of ARDHANARISWARA, (half man and half woman).

1.2 RELEGATION OF THE WOMEN TO SECONDARY STATUS

With the gradual assimilation of Aryan thought into the fabric of Indian life, the male Gods gained ascendency. In course of time, women appear
to have become objects of contempt and an obstacle to man's progress. It is interesting to see how, on the popular plane, the female principle, which was supposed to pervade all creation was reduced to the status of a consort. The God-Goddess couple was thought to be auspicious and benevolent but in mythology and folklore the Devi's supremacy was gradually eroded. A recurrent image, once Vaishnavism took hold, was the depiction of Krishna as the ultimate end of the Gopis whose souls longed for the bliss of Union with Him.

The rise of male supremacy brought in its wake disharmony between the male and female principles in man. Man learnt to hate the female part of himself; with hatred came fear, and with fear came the need to control the female. While woman was Prakriti, man saw himself as SANSKRITI (Culture), the evolved. Sanskriti was considered superior to Prakriti because it was the finer sophisticated outcome of the Prakriti. The subordinated position of women in society continued during the middle ages. The diffusion of Islamic culture with the advent of the Muslim rule in India still brought down the status of women shutting them in the home nor
even allowing them to face the world outside. Thus the activities of women were dragged down from the socio-cultural berth and confined to the hearth.

1.3 AWAKENING OF WOMEN :

As time rolled on, tidal waves in the form of western culture and western education gave Indian women confidence and stamina to scrutinise their positions and carve niches in the social structure. Patiently and steadfastly Indian women have been fighting for equal recognition of their role with fortitude and forbearance. In fact they have succeeded against male supremacy to certain extent and their success is well evident in the changing role of women at home and in the emergence of new roles in social and economic activities in the society.

1.4 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR THE CAUSE OF WOMEN :

Many outstanding events have been significant land marks in the awakening and emancipation of Indian women. The tide of degeneration began to abate with the
powerful reformist movements led by Raja Ram Mohan Ray in Bengal, Justice Ranade in Bombay and by Swami Dayananda Saraswathi in Punjab. These Indian stalwarts, who contributed substantially to the shaping of India's destiny were profoundly influenced and motivated by the British rationalism. These missionaries were among the first to carry on a strenuous campaign against the social evils imposed on women, namely polygamy, child marriage, enforced widowhood and sati. Believing that a close relationship existed between the social practices and the religious faith of the people, missionaries directed their fiercest attacks against religion as well as social institutions. The most notable among them was Raja Ram Mohan Ray, who lived a life of dedicated service and with whose name is intimately associated the establishment of Brahma Samaj, the founding of educational institutions and above all, the abolition of Sati. He stood squarely for those changes which underline the principles of social justice. The entry, about this time, of such religious savants as Swami Vivekananda, Annie Besant and Sister Mivedita into the struggle for social and
educational advancement further forged the links between religious and social observances. Gokhale and his colleagues paved the way for a more intellectual and practical approach to the solution of social and other problems concerned with Indian womenfolk.

With the turn of the century new ideas began to sweep across the country and it was then that women's organisations and a strong women's movement took shape. Women entered public life and themselves became, through their organisation, the spearhead of attack against irrational orthodoxy, injustice and discrimination.

In the early years many associations such as the Arya Mahila Samaj founded by Pandita Ramabai, had their main objective the removal of women's social disabilities. When the role of education as a great liberating force came to be recognised, educational programmes were also included in their activities.

A few organisations of all India status have reached an eminence that has brought them international recognition and repute. The best known are the National
Council of Women, the All India Women's Congress, the Young Women's Christian Association and the Federation of University Women.

1.5 **SOCIAL CHANGE ON THE INDIAN SCENE**

Society is subjected to continuous change, growth and decay. In every society numerous processes of change are operating simultaneously which introduce variations and modifications in its infra-structure. However, the rate and direction of change vary from one society to another. In some societies the rate of change is rapid whereas in others it is slow and gradual. Indian society is not an exception to the type of social metabolism.

During the last few decades, the traditional society of India has been undergoing a series of changes. The traditional Hindu social system with an agro-handicraft economy, feudal dynastic policy, religio-philosophical foundation and social structure based on joint family, caste system and village community has been subjected to change in all these aspects.
Multi-directional forces of urbanisation, industrialisation and socio-economic and educational advancements are affecting various aspects of traditional Indian Society. In recent years changes have become more pronounced as a result of political independence, constitutional measures, planned economic development, programmes of industrialisation and social development, emergence of urban culture, western science and technology, secularisation and rational outlook. The family has been under the cumulative influence of changes occurring at different times in the Indian society. But as in the case of other social sub-systems, in the family sub-system also significant changes in quick succession have been occurring from the beginning of the twentieth century when western education and movements of progress and modernisation began to cast their direct impact on the Indian society.

1.6 ATTITUDINAL CHANGES IN THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The changes in socio-economic and political conditions have brought about a change in the attitudes, beliefs and value system of women. The new attitudes
and values in turn have generated and set in motion new forces which have changed the social scene. Increasing opportunities for education of women have brought subsequent alterations in the entire pattern of the society.

Change and modification in women's status and role have many latent and manifest dimensions. The attitudes, aspirations and value orientation of women will determine the pattern of relationships existing in the family. These will exercise a profound effect on the kind of quality of relationships which exist between generations and between sexes and the roles that women are going to assume as wives and mothers. The authority structure, system of rights and duties and allocation of work roles will also undergo consequential changes.

Since the family is generally the basic social unit through which socialisation of the individual will be accomplished and mode of thought and behaviour shaped, special attention has to be paid to the role of women. The role of mother has functions such as socialising the
children and maintaining harmony in the family. Mother plays a significant role in shaping the personality and behaviour of children.

1.7 POST-INDEPENDENCE-ERA AND THE UPLIFT OF WOMEN:

The process of modernisation set into motion during British regime was strengthened further after India gained Independence. The Indian constitution today prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Urbanization, education and employment have brought about changes in the attitudes and beliefs of women regarding equality, individuality and independence. The changes in the different status and role of women are a corollary to the changes in the society towards modernization.

In the last two decades due to advancement of science, the household work has been made easier and quicker by the introduction of different types of time-saving gadgets in India. The result is that women have time to spare after doing their household work. They
want to utilise the leisure for personal and societal
development. Education unfolds a large arena of social,
cultural, economic and political roles to women.

The number of new jobs now available to women
is a significant feature of emerging new India. Today
women's occupational horizon, once limited to household
chores and farm labour, has widened considerably.

1.8 CONFLICTING ROLES OF WOMEN

Social change implies a number of changes in
the personal and social life. Woman is generally considered
to be a lover of stability and a stabilising factor in
the life of an individual, family and community. In
Indian society which is tradition-ridden and custom
bound, woman is considered as the guardian angel for
cultural continuance and for saving the community from
the traumatic experience of complete loss of cultural
moorings in the wake of sudden upsurge of alien cultural
tides that may appear to be captivating at the surface
level. When two cultures come into contact, an interface
between them emerges and the pulling force of the interface
at times may be greater than the pushing force of the individual cultural arena. The guardian angels of the particular culture, namely the womenfolk in the Indian context, will then experience dissonance in cognition, affection and even in action. The result then will be the experience of role conflict. The Indian women having inbibed the traditional values and equipped mentally to play the traditional roles, finds herself in conflict when she is confronted by the role she is obliged to play in the present set up because of the on-coming waves of social changes.

1.9 SYNTHETIC APPROACH TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The system of laws and customs formulated centuries ago may not suit the changing modern conditions and environment. Yet they cannot altogether be abandoned. If done so, the entire society will be culturally uprooted. What is required therefore, is an integral synthesis of the traditional and the progressive value systems. Modernisation is a process of change from the traditional to certain desired types of technology
and associated forms of social structure, value orientations, motivations and norms. Society in India is in a transition, torn between an age-long tradition and a strong alien civilisation. This change is likely to bring about repercussions in the attitudes of women. Educational, political and social changes have necessitated change in women's role and the consequent status in society. Since the dynamism of social, economic, political and educational changes impinges on women, they have to perform other roles too. The radical changes have brought in new roles and also changes in the traditional roles.

1.10 WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY:

Social advancement of a country can best be judged by the status and position which it can bestow on its women. One of the most important changes that has taken place in recent times is the improved status of women. Economic factors among others freed women from the shackles of outmoded tradition, prejudice and ignorance. A notable feature of this awakening has been an appraisal
of women's place both within and outside home by women themselves.

The role of woman in society as a career woman and as housewife is indispensable. Indian women have achieved reputation as active politicians, efficient administrators and good jurists. They have contributed to scientific research and they have also served in armed forces. They have proved their worth as Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and Political Organisers. The fair sex is thus playing a significant role in the socio-economic and political development of our country. The old order which confined women to the home as servants and helpers to their menfolk is being replaced by a new one in which women increasingly undertake to fill many roles, in the home as wives, mothers and home-makers, and outside it, as partners and co-workers with men in different types of enterprises.

According to 1981 census from the women folk there were 7,138 engineers and technicians, 136 aircraft and ship officers, 1564 life scientists, 53,868 physicians and surgeons, 275 economist and related workers, 4,886
jurists, 1,322 legislative officers, 13,121 working proprietors, managers and auditors and 6,691 village officers. (Source - 1981 census). It shows that women are taking up jobs which were hitherto a prerogative of men. These facts and figures speak that women are quite capable of making their mark in all areas of public life and academic world.

The new occupations necessitate women to come out of their houses and assume new roles not always complementary, at times even contradictory. The old roles are changing and new roles are emerging and in the context of the changing and the emerging roles, the womenfolk of India have to be schooled to perform their varying roles. For better performance of these roles the first requirement is clear role conception. The women have to be educated about the new roles and the changes in the existing roles they will be called upon to play. The education system of the country will take this into account while preparing the curriculum for girls in schools and women students in colleges. And for all this to happen, a study on the changing and emerging roles of women in the Indian society is the first necessary step to start with.
Change is ubiquitous and is taking place with unprecedented pace. Society is in a fluid stage; the 'solidified' roles, if not 'melted' to accommodate the new roles, will break down. What are the emerging new roles? To what extent the traditional roles have to be modified to be in conformity with the changing conditions of the society. What are the implications of these emerging and changing roles for the educational system of the country? The present study aims at finding answers to these broad questions. The investigator has attempted to study the changing role of women in Indian society and its implications for education.

1.11.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

The present study has the following main objectives:

1. To study the status of Indian women in its historical perspective.
2. To study the changing role of Indian women in economic, social, cultural, religious, political and educational spheres.
3. To study the opinion of women about changing role of women.
4. To study the opinion of men about the changing role of women.
5. To study the educational implications of the changing role of the Indian women.

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