Traditions seldom die, rooted as they are in the subconscious of a society; they have an in-built mechanism which provides sustenance to prejudices, half-truths or total lies. In Eve, mother of evil, and Mary, mother of God, we have two extremes of religious thought concerning women, the former in most cases superseding the latter. The tradition embodied in the *Genesis*, the first book of the *Bible*, makes out woman as the first deserter of the divine law, and the first temptress of the forbidden fruit. In the Indian tradition, the counterpart of Eve is the nymph Menaka about whom a man complains in the spirit of Adam: 'Alas! what has become of my wisdom, my prudence, my firm resolution? Behold, all destroyed at once by a woman'.

From the pre-Socratic philosophers and mystics to Herbert Spencer, Marx and Freud - and, in our own day, Van Wyck, Alfred Adler and others - the fact of a woman's inferiority (stemming from her physical vulnerability or emotive psyche) has rarely been questioned in human societies. St. Paul described man as the glory of God, and woman as the glory of man, thus relegating her to a somewhat lower status.

In the Jehovic tradition, women were regarded as a misfortune or a necessary evil, and grouped along with cattle and real estate. In the sacred oracles of the Chinese, we find


these words: 'All was subject to man in the beginning. The wise husband raised up a bulwark of walls but the woman, by an ambitious desire of knowledge, demolished them. Our misery did not come from heaven, but from a woman.'

The Hellenic and Syriac traditions portrayed women as an ornament, a source of sense satisfaction and the cause of great catastrophes. According to Arnold J. Toynbee, 'If Alboin's unsatisfied desire for Rosamund was the cause of the extermination of the Goths, it is credible that the sacking of Troy was provoked by the satisfaction of Paris's desire for Helen'. More commonly, the women were undistinguished the mischief-makers whose malice drove the heroes into slaying each other. One may also mention that the Greek mythology ascribes all human ills to Pandora, the first mortal woman sent by the gods on the earth to avenge the stealing of fire from heaven by Prometheus.

Socrates asked the pathetic question: 'Is there a human being with whom you talk less than with your wife?' Plato, his worthy disciple, believed that society would disintegrate if slaves became disobedient to their masters and wives were considered equal to their husbands. Aristotle describes women as 'an inferior man'.

Tertullian, the Carthaginian philosopher, went a step further, and dubbed her as 'the Gate of Hell'. 'The Judgement of God upon your sex endures even today,' he wrote, 'and with it inevitably endures your position

---

of criminal at the bar of justice'. Not surprisingly, the status of women in many parts of the world remained one of mere bondage before the influx of modern ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. Karl Marx was right when he likened men of his times to the bourgeoisie and the women to the proletariat.

With the changing times women are gradually questioning the subservient roles assigned to them by tradition. Indian women have not lagged behind in this respect, although they still need to fight many battles to achieve a respectable status in society. But women welfare is not a matter of preventing eve-teasing or dowry deaths, or restoring to them their right to equality. Nor is it simply a matter of catering to the physical or marital problems of women. Women welfare ought to be viewed in a wider perspective than all this. It must relate to the total or all-round development of women in all spheres of human activity. The feeling that they are 'economically a parasite, intellectually an effete, and physically insipid' must be rooted out from the subconscious of society.

---


The problems of women need to be tackled at various levels. The hazards faced by the upper class women differ from their counterparts in the lower strata of society. Likewise, the problems of women in the cities differ from those of rural women. The degree of emancipation as also their status depend, more or less, on their exposure to the catalysts of change. Women's development cannot also be separated or viewed in isolation from the development of the whole community. The present work attempts to examine the role of voluntary agencies in promoting women welfare, and to see the extent to which they are performing their job in a meaningful manner.

Review of Literature

There is no dearth of literature dealing with the broader framework of the subject. The concept of social work and welfare finds an eloquent mention in the writings of Herbert Stroup, Rex Skidmore and Milton Thackeray, Walter Friedlander, Arthur Fink, Elisabeth Ferguson, and many others. Important Indian studies in this field are by A.R. Wadia, History and Philosophy of Social Work in India (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1961), M.S. Gore, Social Work

and Social Work Education (Bombays Asia Publishing House, 1965),
S.K. Khinduka, Social Work in India (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1965),
and Shankar Pathak, Social Welfare, Health and Family Planning in

Among the works which delineate Indian social issues in a
general manner, mention may be made of C.B. Mémoria, Social
Problems and Social Disorganisation in India (Allahabad: Kitab
Mahal, 1960), Sashil Chandra, Sociology of Deviation in India
(Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967), and G.R. Madan, Indian Social

The Silver Jubilee commemoration volume of the Indian
Council of Social Welfare makes insightful observations on four
themes: social development, social change, trends in social work
education and research, and fields of social action. The
Encyclopaedia of Social Work in India issued by the Planning
Commission, about two decades back, has not so far been revised or
updated. But it continues to be useful for beginners as it takes
up social issues and problems, in detail, and contains the
biographies of social reformers, workers, philanthropists, and
leaders of social movements. Another publication of
merit is Social Information of India: Trends and Structure
prepared under the auspices of the Indian Council of Social
Science Research. It provides vital statistics on such

(Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1975).
16. Social Information of India: Trends and Structure (Delhi:
subjects as population and migration, crime and justice, housing and health, employment and labour conditions, children and youth, and women. In addition, the reports, pamphlets and other publications of the Government of India and its allied agencies keep on providing necessary information on the development of social welfare institutions in India from time to time.  

Works dealing with the position and status of Indian women generally view them in a historical context. The most authentic and scholarly interpretation is by A. S. Altekar who has confined his study mainly to Hindu women. B. S. Upadhyaya, Shakambri Jayal, and M. V. Patwardhan have made a critical study of the position of women as sanctioned by the Rigveda, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the Manusmriti, respectively. Shibani Roy examines the status of Muslim women in the light of the Quranic injunctions and the Muslim Shariat Law.

17. The most important among them are Five Year Plans issued by the Planning Commission, Annual Reports of the Ministry of Welfare, and publicity material circulated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.


Devaki Jain's *Indian Women* (Publications Division, 1975) is a brilliant and scholarly study which highlights the impediments to women's progress in terms of social attitudes and government policies. Pratima Asthana, B.R. Nanda, Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya, and Geraldine H. Forbes provide excellent perspectives on the struggles and achievements of Indian women before and after independence. Jana Matson Everett traces the historical development of the women's movements in India from the late 19th to the mid 20th century. The main question that she tries to answer is, to what extent can the origins, ideology, success and failure of the Indian women's movement be explained by the same factors which explain these aspects of the British and American movements, and to what extent by factors specific to the Indian experience.

While delineating the position of women in a changing world, S.K. Ghosh explains the legal implications of rape, wife-battering, adultery and dowry deaths. He explains the anatomy of criminality, and argues that women too have launched a war on men's world by participating in activities which were once regarded as male strongholds. Susheela Kaushik discerns patterns in the social

exploitation of women, and makes a plea for their amelioration. Rama Mehta\textsuperscript{30} argues how even the Western educated Hindu women find themselves trapped in the prevalent social evils like dowry and the rigours of caste, despite their better status in society. A comparative perspective on Indian and Western women is provided by Urmila Phadnis and Indira Malini.\textsuperscript{31} The Third World women find an eloquent expression in the writing of Rami Chhabra and Alka Basu.\textsuperscript{32}

The Committee on the Status of Women in India defines the word 'status' not as rank or hierarchy, but as position vis-a-vis others in terms of rights and obligations. The Report makes a clear distinction between the ideal role behaviour, expected role behaviour, and actual role behaviour of women. It assesses the position of women in the background of constitutional and legal provisions, socio-cultural background, demographic factors, opportunities for economic participation, educational development, and policies and programmes for their welfare and development.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Rama Mehta, \textit{The Western Educated Hindu Woman} (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1970).
\item \textsuperscript{33} Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare (Department of Social Welfare), \textit{Towards Equality} (New Delhi, 1974).
\end{itemize}
A detailed, multi-dimensional picture of call-girls in India is provided by Promilla Kapur. She gives an interesting account of the life and inner world of call-girls, as also the reasons which made them choose the sordid kind of life. Besides, she tries to identify areas where social action could be taken to deal with this grave problem. In another work, she explains the dynamics of conflict and tension between adolescent girls and their parents of urban-dwelling upper and middle class families. A change of attitudes alone, she feels, can harmonise inter-personal relationships.

Consideration of sex as one of the important organizing principles of society, and special emphases on the study of kinship, family and marriage in other cultures explain the presence of women in anthropological writings, says Leela Dube in a latest work which includes scholarly essays devoted to gender studies. While introducing the subject, Dube contends that depiction of women as passive beings or as playing insignificant roles, an over-emphasis on the management of their sexuality, and on their role as mothers and wives, and an underestimation of their contribution to society in other fields are all aspects of their distorted visibility. Shirley Ardener lucidly shows how women are often misrepresented in

anthropological writings, and how their visibility in society is marred by the prevalent tradition which presents them as mere sex objects. Claude Maillasou\textsuperscript{38} attempts to prove that the dominance of the male is not absolute, 'as they cannot conceive and give birth'. Margaret Stephens\textsuperscript{39} takes a dig at the current management of childbirth in the West because it deals mainly with the physical aspects of child delivery, and has nothing to do with its psychological implications. Edwin Ardener\textsuperscript{40} attempts to explain the dynamics of male dominance in society by referring to the general tendency among human beings to overpower others. The remaining articles focus on the different modes of exercise of power by women, and their role in production, and in decision-making.

Women welfare and voluntary action are interrelated. The standard works on the subject which provide both a theoretical perspective and a functional framework are by Lord Beveridge,\textsuperscript{41} Henry A. Mess,\textsuperscript{42} A.F.C. Bourdillon,\textsuperscript{43} Constance Smith and Ann Freedman,\textsuperscript{44} and Joan L.M. Kyden.\textsuperscript{45} David L. Sills\textsuperscript{46} provides a sociological perspective to voluntary agencies in a succinct manner.

\textsuperscript{39} Margaret Stephens, 'The Childbirth Industry: A Woman's View', \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 70-84.
\textsuperscript{40} Edwin Ardener, 'The Problem of Dominance', \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 98-104.
\textsuperscript{41} Lord Beveridge, \textit{Voluntary Action} (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1949).
\textsuperscript{43} A.F.C. Bourdillon (ed.), \textit{Voluntary Social Services: Their Place in Modern State} (London: Methuen, 1945).
and classifies them in terms of their scope and area of operation.

Some Indian scholars too have contributed to the growing literature on voluntary agencies. D. Paul Chowdhry's studies are quite notable for their comprehension and clarity, even though they add little to the concept of voluntarism. V.M. Kulkarni's work which derives a lot from his three public lectures at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, is less informative but more stimulating than the former. Voluntary agencies are not a second state, but their work is complementary to the state, he says. Kulkarni explains the philosophy and nature of voluntary action, and finds justification for it in developing societies.

Kalpana Shah describes how, and, to what extent, voluntary social action has aided the process of the amelioration of women. Satya Sundaram reviews the role of voluntary agencies in the context of rural reconstruction in India.


Terry Alliband\textsuperscript{51} is, however, critical of the working of voluntary agencies in India. Without disparaging their 'special capabilities' and areas of strength, he points out their limitations and weaknesses. In his view, there are two broad categories of private voluntary agencies in India: those that intend to fulfil their catalytic function, to make themselves superfluous as soon as possible, and move on or wither away; and secondly, those that become dependent on a clientele for doing good in perpetuity. He describes how some agencies are run like cottage industries for the welfare of the director and his staff; how donor agencies wink at the 'cargo cult', and worse, of the natives; how aid-contributors in distant lands are successfully deceived; and how rural populations are alienated from programme concerns.

Any survey of literature on the subject would be incomplete without a mention of the special number of The Indian Journal of Public Administration on voluntary organisations, published by the IIPA, New Delhi.\textsuperscript{52} The volume contains articles dealing with conceptual aspects relating to the role of state in promoting voluntarism to meet developmental needs. It also takes note of challenges and opportunities for voluntarism, its role in social transformation, and its ability to involve the masses in the task of


\textsuperscript{52} The Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3, (July-September 1987).
rural reconstruction. Mohit Bhattacharya\textsuperscript{53} holds that voluntary effort alone cannot bring about social transformation, and to expect it will be 'a kind of day-dreaming'. C.P. Bhambhri\textsuperscript{54} corroborates this view by arguing that the state can, in no case, be relegated to a role of passivity. Voluntary organisations cannot supplant or supersede the efforts of social reconstruction launched by the state. They can, at the most, supplement them. M. A. Muttalib\textsuperscript{55} discusses the various concepts and types of voluntarism, and concludes by observing that they arise out of the environmental, socio-economic, and political milieu. N.R. Inamdar\textsuperscript{56} traces the evolution of voluntarism in different periods of Indian history. In his view, innovativeness, initiative, matching financial provision, realisation of popular or local needs, built-in correctives in informal organisation, and its mode of operation, are the assets of voluntary organisations. Rajni Kothari\textsuperscript{57} describes the role of voluntarism in a plural society, and reviews the dilemmas faced by it both in terms of financial constraints and their local rather than national character. J.S. Mehta\textsuperscript{58} is of the view that voluntary agencies need to guard against factionalism, authoritarianism and 'talent drain'. L.M. Prasad\textsuperscript{59} also plays a useful role for voluntary organisations.

\textsuperscript{53} Mohit Bhattacharya, 'Voluntary Associations, Development and the State', \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 383-394.
\textsuperscript{55} M.A. Muttalib, 'Voluntarism and Development - Theoretical Perspectives', \textit{Ibid.}, pp.399-419.
\textsuperscript{56} N.R. Inamdar, 'Role of Voluntarism in Development', \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 420-432.
\textsuperscript{58} J.S. Mehta, 'Challenge and Opportunity for Voluntarism in Rural Development', \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 524-532.
\textsuperscript{59} L.M. Prasad, 'Voluntary Agencies for Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - Their Role and Function', \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 588-612.
in planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes for the weaker sections of society, and also gives a gist of new areas in the field where voluntary organizations can discharge a meaningful role. Other contributions in the volume are equally useful for an understanding of the role of these agencies in a welfare state.

The aforesaid studies provide a viable backdrop against which the present project has been undertaken.

**Objectives and Scope of the Study**

Women organizations for voluntary action existed during the British rule, but their area of operation was limited as they remained mostly in the hands of a few influential individuals or families. Even after independence, most of the government agencies found themselves handicapped in terms of personnel and people's participation while implementing their welfare programmes. As a result, voluntary agencies came to be encouraged both by central and state governments.

There has been a feeling, over the years, that most of the women welfare agencies have not been able to fulfil their objectives due to financial and other constraints, although one may, as well, come across instances where they achieved enviable results in the domain of social work. This study examines the organization and working of voluntary agencies for women welfare in Jalandhar,
a prominent district of the Punjab. In addition, an attempt has been made to assess the programmes adopted and the procedures followed by these agencies. It was also thought relevant to analyze the financial position of these agencies and their relationship with the district administration. Some of the major objectives of the study are:

a) To examine the evolution of women welfare and that of voluntary agencies in a historical perspective.

b) To assess typologies and objectives of the voluntary agencies under study.

c) To analyse their organisational set-up, and to identify their weaknesses so as to make them instrumental for better performance.

d) To make a critical assessment of the major programmes of voluntary agencies and to bring out their impact on women welfare.

e) To evaluate the existing procedures of the agencies, and to suggest changes for making them more effective.

60. The Punjab is in north India and is bounded at its northernmost point by Kashmir, north-east by Himachal Pradesh, southeast by Haryana, South by Rajasthan, west and north-west by Pakistan. The area of the state is 50,376 sq km, with census (1981) population of 16,669. Jalandhar, a prestigious central district in the re-organised Punjab ranks second in urbanisation in the state. It claims the highest density of 507 persons per sq. km. against 331 persons per sq. km for the state. The sex-ratio in the district works out to 898 females per 1,000 males against the state figure of 886. The general rate of literacy which stood at 41.30% in 1971 rose to 49.39 in 1981 as compared to 33.67% and 40.74% respectively of the state during the same period. For details, see Government of Punjab, Director of Census Operations, Census of India, 1981, Series 17, Punjab, Part XIII-A and B, Village and Town Directory, District Census Handbook, Jalandhar District; Revenue Department, Gazetteer of India, Punjab; Jalandhar, Chandigarh, 1980; Director, Information and Public Relations, Facts About Punjab, 1985, Chandigarh.
f) To look into the financial resources and the patterns of expenditure of these agencies, and to suggest steps for making them financially viable units.

g) To throw light on the existing patterns of relationship between the agencies and the district administration.

The problems of women are so gigantic that it is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to make a micro-level study. Besides, some women organizations exist only in name, and are not doing any substantial work. They have neither kept their records intact nor changed with the changing times. Therefore, the study has been confined to only those agencies which have quite rich antecedents, and which appear to be active. Four such organizations of district Jalandhar (Pb.) selected for this purpose are - The Association for Social Health in India (ASHI), Bhartiya Grameen Mahila Samiti (BGMS), Nari Niketan, and Sewa Sadan.

The choice of these agencies for the purpose of study rests on a number of reasons. First, these agencies cater to the needs of both rural and urban women. Secondly, they reveal different organizational patterns which provide ample scope for a comparative study; and, finally, they have quite different purposes to serve. Although their main concern is the well-being of women, yet their approaches differ from one another. The ASHI cares for the mental and moral development of women, provides a short stay home to the aggrieved, and resolves marital discords. The BGMS is concerned with the upliftment of the illiterate and backward women in rural areas. Nari Niketan provides shelter to the
homeless women, and helps them in many other ways. Sewa Sansthan is concerned mainly with the residential problems of working women.

Research Methodology

The descriptive-analytical method was applied for understanding the structural framework and authority distribution among the various executive authorities of the voluntary agencies under study. This method was also applied for analysis of the programmes and other operational activities of the voluntary agencies. It was further supplemented by the empirical method where a structured questionnaire was personally administered to the respondents in the various samples of the study. Non-participant observation was also used for cross-checking the data thrown out by the questionnaires. In the course of this study, it was found that there were certain weaknesses and contradictions in the data. It was, therefore, thought proper to conduct informal interviews wherever necessary. The analysis has thus been made on the basis of both primary and secondary sources, viz.

a) Primary Sources
   i) Questionnaire; and
   ii) Interviews.

b) Secondary Sources
   i) Annual reports, booklets and bulletins issued by voluntary agencies;
   ii) Constitutions, memoranda, and rules and regulations of voluntary agencies.
   iii) Official records of voluntary agencies including files, staff activity registers, attendance registers, pay registers, minutes and proceedings of meetings etc.
   iv) Books on social welfare and on voluntary agencies;
   v) Government publications including Five Year Plans, reports of various committees, annual reports of the Ministry of Welfare, and publicity material issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
vi) Newspapers, journals and periodicals.

The Sample of the Study

Keeping in view the nature and functions of the voluntary agencies it was thought proper to draw three samples i.e. one for the functionaries, the other for beneficiaries, and the third for the inmates. These three samples were selected at random and care was taken that all categories were represented in terms of their strength in different agencies under study.

Among the 100 functionaries thus selected, 70 were office-bearers, 2 were taken from the ASHI, and 4 each from the DGMS, Sewa Seaden and Nari Niketan. Out of 30 staff members, 12 were selected from the DGMS, and 6 each from other three agencies. The reason why the number of office-bearers and social workers of the ASHI and that of the staff of the DGMS exceeded their counterparts was that they had a greater number of functionaries as compared to the other two.

The sample of 205 beneficiaries included 75 each from Sanju veni and Nari Kirman. Among the remaining, 15 each had benefitted from the Dairy Scheme and the Scheme for adoption, 55 from the Family Counselling Centre, 50 from women hostels and 40 from craft centres.

This is now an attempt was made to delve into the working of the voluntary agencies under study. Wherever possible, officials, and beneficiaries were cross-questioned again and again so as to make sure that they were not making false statements. The vast amount of data was thus distilled before making an analytical study.
Limitations of the Study

In the interest of intellectual honesty, accuracy of interpretation and reporting, there are the following limitations of the study.

a) Every institution operates in a particular socio-political and economic perspective, and constraints are created out of the nature of each perspective. All such issues could not be identified; only select aspects have been discussed.

b) The study being limited only to the analysis of the four women's voluntary organisations operating in Jalandhar, comparisons with other such agencies operating in other parts of the state/country were not made. However, a comparative analysis of the four agencies under study has been done in relation to some aspects.

c) When the functionaries, the beneficiaries, and the workers were asked sensitive questions, there was a tendency among some of them to hide facts. Therefore, more interviews had to be arranged to create a better rapport and gauge the problems in the correct perspective. Nevertheless, there is always a scope for refining the tools and methodologies of research.

d) The data thrown out by questionnaires and interviews could be interpreted in more ways than one. However, due to limited resources, time and patience, all avenues could not be tapped fully. Moreover, due to limited sample, sophisticated statistical analysis was avoided.
Office-bearers of the agencies and many functionaries of the district administration were evasive to the questions on the relationship between the district administration and the voluntary agencies. Hence this aspect could not be examined in more details.

Scheme of Chapters

This study has been divided into eight chapters. Chapter I describes the scope and objectives of the study, as also the methodology adopted for reviewing the functioning of four voluntary agencies in Jalandhar during 1978-85. Besides, it succinctly explains how women, as a community, have grievously suffered in all human societies throughout the course of history. Chapter II makes an attempt to evaluate the position of Indian women, from ancient times to the present, in the light of religious tradition, social taboos, restrictions, make-believes, legal sanctions, etc. The next chapter delineates the meaning and relevance of voluntaryism in a developing society. In addition, it explains the types and objectives of voluntary agencies under study. The milieu which shaped them has also been described. Chapter IV dilates upon the organizational structure of these agencies. An attempt has been made to study the motivation behind functionaries, their perceptions of women problems, and the possible solutions which they deem fit. Hinderances in job performance, co-ordination between office-holders and social workers, internal squabbles in different organisations, have also been discussed. Chapter V takes a comparative view of the programmes initiated by voluntary agencies
for the welfare of women, and examines the extent to which they are useful. As programmes are implemented through a set of procedures, the next chapter makes a detailed study of this aspect. Chapter VII reviews the financial position of these agencies, and throws light on their relationship with the government. The concluding chapter carries the main findings of the study, and gives suitable suggestions for the better functioning of voluntary agencies.