INTRODUCTION
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For a long long time in the past the land of Orissa has been a territorial, political and cultural entity. This position of Orissa can be traced back to the period prior to the emergence of Gautama Buddha in the sixth century B.C. However, Orissa's most ancient name was Kalinga. Although this name does not find a place in the list of the sixteen Mahajanapadas mentioned in Anguttara Nikaya, it figures in the list of the Kingdoms referred to in 'Niddles'. Furthermore, Orissa's antiquity is proved beyond doubt by the mention of the name Kalinga in the epics and the Jaina and Buddhist literatures. The King of Kalinga is said to have been an ally of the Kauravas in the Mahabharata war. Similarly, Kalinga was believed to have been ruled by a Jaina King Karakandu in the eighth century B.C. After the mahaparinirvan of Gautama Buddha, his tooth-relic was brought by Ksema Thera, a Buddhist monk, and presented to Brahmadatta, the King of Kalinga. On the basis of these references it can be said that this kingdom in the ancient times roughly extended from the mouth of the river Ganga in the

North to that of the Godavari in the South. However, the dated history of Orissa began with the conquest of Kalinga by Asoka in 261 B.C. It was then a great power.

The political and social condition of Orissa in ancient times was more or less identical with that of other parts of India. As such the position of women in ancient Orissa was somewhat identical to the one obtaining in the rest of India. The women in Orissa had never enjoyed an independent life. They were always under the care and control of some male member of the family, whether unmarried, married or as widows. The education, the principles of marriage and the standard of female morality of Orissa were almost the same as elsewhere in India. Of course variations were there, but they were almost negligible. Thus, the women of Orissa were in no way different in status than their counterparts in the rest of India.

The position of women in India during the Pre-Vedic, Rig-Vedic, Later-Vedic and Puranic Ages needs a discussion so as to give an idea of the status and position of women in Orissa during this Period. Right from very ancient times India in her long social, political and cultural history has produced great women, ranging from rishis to stateswomen, from great warrior-queens to ideal housewives. The majority of women, however, suffered
from ignorance and poverty.

The social and political organization of the Pre-Vedic period was based on the matriarchal system. That was because the institution of marriages did not clearly exist at the time and children mostly depended on their mothers. It was on this account that the mother had a very important place in the society. Even to-day, the worship of the Mother-Goddess is extensively prevalent and the mother in each home is greatly respected. Ancient Indian literatures are alive with the praise of many celebrities who took their names from their mothers and not from their fathers. Mention may be made of Jaratkara, Paruchchapa, Sariputra, Vainateya, Daityas and Kodraveyas, who were respectively the sons of Jaratkaru, Devadasi, Sari, Vinata, Diti and Kadru.

In the primitive society a time was there when men and women used to live mostly like animals without the institution of marriage. In courtship, mating and living together, the dominating factor that worked was 'might is right'. But subsequently in the process of evolution

4 Ibid., p.32.
the institution of marriage came into existence with the formation of a political organisation coupled with an administrative machinery which ensured individual rights. The Indian literatures further highlight the fact that primitive men, even Indo-Aryans, wanted to marry, not out of sexual urge, but to assert their property rights on women. As long as a woman lived with a man and worked for him, she was considered his property. Of course in those days the man had no right to restrict her sexual freedom. To him sex was a natural function like eating, drinking or playing. As such sexual relationship was more or less an individual affair.

The sacred literature like the Vedas of the ancient Aryans reveal the political, social, religious and economic conditions of the women. The Rig-Veda, the earliest of the four, contains a full account of some of the Indo-Aryans who settled in the Punjab mostly between 1200 B.C. to 1000 B.C.

It was during the age of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata that the position of women in India underwent a great change. They were esteemed highly. The paragons of feminine perfection of this age were Ahalyā, Draupadi, Tārā,

7 Ibid.
Kuntī and Mandodari. In a Sanskrit sloka it is said that if a person recite everyday the names of those five women celebrities, all his sins will be washed away. Of course, circumstances forced them to have marital relationship with more than one person. Yet it was not considered illegal then. Even the present society has accepted them as virtuous women of a high order. A brief resume of each one of them is given below to give an idea of their status in the society.

Ahalyā was the wife of the sage Gautama. She was extremely beautiful. They lived in an āśrama near Mithila. Once the celestial Lord Indra, being passionate, came in the guise of the sage Gautama and entered the āśrama while the sage was away. He wanted to enjoy the company of Ahalyā. So she lost her judgement and yielded to his desire. Meanwhile Ahalyā realised that Indra was not her husband and had betrayed her. So she warned him of a serious danger after the arrival of her husband and requested him to leave her at once. While fleeing in panic Indra almost dashed with the sage who was returning after taking bath, clad in wet garments.

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8 Smṛti, "Ahalyā Draupadī Tārā

Kuntī Mandodari tathā,
Pancākanyāḥ smaranītyāṁ (smaramiṣyān)
Mahēpātaka nāśanāṁ."  

Indra is the King of heaven and lord of rain and thunder.
Seeing the spiritual lustre radiating from his body, Indra fell at his feet. Immediately the sage could know everything, that has happened. So he cursed Indra. He became a eunuch. Ahalyā was not spared. Her husband, Gautama prescribed a long penance for his erring wife. She would live unseen till Dasaratha's son Rama set his foot in the āśrama. The sage then left his āśrama and went to the Himalayas to devote himself to a life of austerities. One day while Rama was on his way with Viswamitra, the latter narrated the story of Ahalyā's misfortunes to him. Rama was then led to the āśrama. No sooner had he set his foot in the āśrama then the curse was lifted and Ahalyā stood before them with all her beauty. A shower of flowers fell from the heavens, Ahalyā was cleansed of her sins and appeared like a goddess. The repentant and purified Ahalyā worshipped Rama and with his permission she went to her husband.

Ṭārā was a woman of the age of Ramayana who attained celebrity in the age of the Puranas. She was the queen of Vāli. There are two different versions of her story. According to one Rama killed Vāli, the

* Vāli was the ruler of Kiskindhya.

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opponent of Sugriva. In his death bed he spoke to Rama that Tārā, his wife was to him a blameless and affectionate wife, a very wise and far-sighted counsellor. Whatever she foretold used to happen. So something good should be done to her. But Valmiki's Ramayana tells a different story. While Tārā was weeping near the dead body of her husband, Rama approached her with hesitation and fear. He saw in her face the sign of anger. She requested Rama to kill her as well, to enable her to join her husband in heaven as he would not be happy without her. The accomplishment of such a union between husband and wife would be a meritorious act on his part. Thereby he would cleanse the sin which he had incurred in slaying her husband by resorting to treachery. But when she saw divinity in Rama, her mind changed.

Tārā was a great diplomat and an expert in the art of statesmanship. She wanted the welfare of her son Angada, for which peace with Sugrāva, the younger brother of her husband Vāli and the friend of Rama, had to be maintained. After Vāli's obsequies were performed with due solemnity and ceremony, Sugrāva was made the crowned king and Angada the prince. Thus Sugrāva inherited the

11 Ibid., p.193.
throne from his brother Vāli along with Tārā and other women. In ancient times a custom was prevalent in the royal as well as other noble families regarding the marriage of the widows. When an elder brother died leaving behind his wife, the younger one was to accept her as his wife and protect her.

Mandodarī of the Age of Ramayana was venerated for a different reason. She was the crowned queen of Ravana, the notorious demon. Yet in her was found saintly qualities. She always gave her husband the wise counsel to return Sita, the beloved wife of Rama, the one who had been kidnapped by Ravana. This Rama was believed to be none other than Vishnu himself in human form.

Kuntī, a woman of great veneration, belonged to the Age of Mahabharata, she was the adopted daughter of King Kuntibhoja. While she was in her father's house during childhood the sage Durvasa stayed with them as a guest for a year. Although a child, she served the sage with great care and devotion. The sage was greatly pleased with her, and gave her a divine mantra which, when uttered, would fetch a boon. If by reciting the

13 Ibid.
mantra she invoked any God, then the God would manifest himself before her and bless her with a son. And that son would be equal to that God in power and glory. He gave her this boon because the sage could foresee by his Yogic power that a great misfortune would befall her future husband.

Out of curiosity Kunti, one day, used the mantra and called a God who appeared before her. Kunti was simply amazed at his vision and wanted to know his identity. He replied that he was the Sun and had appeared before her to bless her with a son. Kunti then told the Sun God that she was unmarried and she was only testing the mantra given to her by the sage Durvasa. So she requested him to forgive her and go back. But the power of the mantra was so strong that the Sun-God could not go back, without giving her a son. Kunti was then mortally afraid of the blame that the world would put on her on this account. The Sun God then assured her that after the birth of the son, she would regain her virginity. Accordingly Kunti conceived and immediately gave birth to a son. He was named Karna. She found him carrying the divine armour and ear-rings as bright and beautiful as those of the Sun. In order to hide her sinful act Kunti

placed the child in a sealed box and floated it down a river. Thereafter in response to the boon granted by the Sun, Kunti once again regained her virginity.

When Kunti attained the age of marriage, a swayamvara was arranged for her. She chose King Pandu of the Bharata clan as her partner. After their marriage, she accompanied her husband Pandu to his kingdom of Hastinapur.

One day the sage Agnika was sporting in the forest in the guise of a deer with his female partner. King Pandu chanced to see them both. Then in ignorance he killed the male deer with an arrow. While dying the sage cursed Pandu that he would die at the moment of his union with his wives. Pandu felt unhappy as he would never have any son because of this curse of the sage. Another sage Agasti told him about the mantra that Kunti had received from the sage Durvasa in the past. Pandu then advised both of his wives, namely Kunti and Madri, to use the mantra, saying that in olden days women were not

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17 Rajagopalachari, C., Mahabharata, p.41.

Swayamvara is generally organised in the royal families. It is a ceremony of choosing one's own husband from a number of suitors present there.

engaged to their husbands alone and yet they were not considered immoral. That was not considered sinful, too. That was because this practice had been sanctioned by the Great Rishis of the age. So the sage Agasti advised Kunti that if she entertained relationships with human beings, she would be considered immoral. But if she had relations with the Gods she would be considered *chaste. Kunti in her union with God Yama got Yudhistira, ** with God Vayu, Bhima and with God Indra, Arjuna.

There was yet another woman of celebrity. She was Draupadi, the daughter of Drupada, the king of Panchala. In the swayamvara arranged by her father Arjuna won her hand by fulfilling the conditions laid down by Draupada. Thereafter Arjuna instructed Draupadi to place a garland around the necks of the four other brothers of his, namely, Yudhistira, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva, so that she would be the wife of all the five. But the king Draupada seemed

* In the Hindu religion Yama is the Regent of Death.
** Vayu is the God of wind.
19 Sarala Mahabharat, Adi Parva, pp. 55-56.
*** Draupada placed a mighty steel bow in the marriage hall. The candidate for the princess' hand was required to string the bow and with it shoot a steel arrow through the central aperture of a revolving disc at a target placed on high, all the while looking at the reflection of the disc in a bowl of water placed below. This required almost superhuman strength and skill and Draupada proclaimed that the hero who would win his daughter should perform this feat.
to consider this act as immoral, unrighteous and contrary to the traditional usage. Yudhistira convinced him, saying that once at the time of great difficulty they had vowed to share the wife in common. This was also sanctioned by their mother Kuntī. Ultimately Draupadī agreed and Draupadī married all the five brothers.

Thus, from these stories of the five celebrities, the Pañcakanyakas, it is to be seen that Ahalyā committed adultery, Draupadī was polyandrous, Tārā and Kuntī had engagements with more than one person, yet their devotion to their husbands were supreme. Their actions represented different types of morality and feminine virtues for which they are being worshipped as Pañcika Satis.

In the Rig-Vedic period the pre-Vedic mother-worship and the matriarchal system were replaced by the patriarchal system in the social and political organisation. The father dominated the family. His authority was final. It was transferred to his eldest son upon his death.

In the Rig-Vedic society, the family was a unit, and in the family the position of the women was determined

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by their marital status. All women members of the family such as the unmarried daughter, the daughter-in-law, the wife, the aged widow and so on, had to depend on the head of the family. Furthermore the women never had a free life. In this connection Manu writes: "The women are never independent. They are under the care and control of their fathers when they are unmarried, of their husbands after their marriage, and of their sons in their old age." Though they were never independent, yet they led a secure life under the protection of the respective male members of the family. Their position in the family was also one of dignity and honour. This is evident from the Rig-Vedic hymn that was to be chanted at the time of marriage. Furthermore, the wife was the queen of the house, lording over the husband, children, aged father-in-law and the household servants as their guardian. The term Sahadharmini, as a wife used to be

24 Manu Smrti, IX, 2-3.
"Pita rakseta Kaumare
Parthaa rakseta youvane,
Putra rakseta Vardhakye
Stri svatantrya marhati",
25 Tripathy, R., Hindi Rigveda, Bhumica, p.65.
called, testifies to her honoured position in the society. Manu clearly declares in his Smriti that "Gods are pleased 27 when and where women are held in honour". Speaking on the esteemed position of women Manu writes on another occasion: "The family is ruined within no time where females are tortured, whereas it prospers within no time if the women of the family lead a contented life." 28

Furthermore in the Rig-Vedic Age, marriage does not appear to have been compulsory for women. They could grow old in their parent's houses without public censure. Families being patri-lineal, a male child was always desired. But when a female child was born she was not neglected. Education was not denied to her either. On the contrary, a man with only one daughter in the family considered her as good as a son. At times she was not given away in marriage. Thus the position of women seems to have deteriorated considerably in the Rig-Vedic times compared to the earlier age when marriage was not sacramental and women enjoyed unlimited freedom in sexual matters. 29

27 Yatra Nārīyesu Pūjayante,
Ramayante Tatra Devatāḥ.
Vatsastatārāphalāḥ Kriyāḥ ॥

Na socantī tu jatratā vadañnete Vardhaṃ
taddhi saṁtadā.

Speaking on the position of women in the Rig-Vedic Age, Manu further says that a husband is to be punished by the ruler if he is found abandoning his wife without sufficient reasons. And the punishment is the loss of caste. At the same time he also enjoins the wife to worship her husband as a God even though he was devoid of good qualities. She is expected to remain chaste and faithful to him. There was then no purdah system.

The girl was given freedom of selecting her life's partner. The Greek writer Nearchus has also referred to women being brought forward by their fathers for selection of their partners. Girls were usually married after attaining the age of puberty. Instances of child marriage were few. The essential rites in a marriage ceremony during that period were the solemn handing over of the maiden by the father (Kanyādāna), the joining of the right hand of the bride with that of the bridegroom (pānigrahana), the offering of libations into the sacrificial fire and the three-fold circumambulation of the fire, the seven steps taken together by the wedding pair (ṣaptapadi) and finally the taking away of the bride to her new home by the bridegroom.

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31 Ibid., p.98.
groom. All these rites have continued even to this day.\textsuperscript{32}

Furthermore, the marriage of widows was permissible. The custom of \textit{Sati} was not there.

In the later Vedic Age, the position of women underwent a change. When the caste system came into vague, intercaste marriages were performed between the \textit{vaisyas} (Guptas) and \textit{Brahmanas} (Kadambas), and even between \textit{Brahmanas} (Andhras) and foreigners like the sakas. Later on marriages were performed between the Indian and Hun princes and princess respectively.

Dowry system as well as bride-price somewhat prevailed at the time. In particular, girls with physical defects had to be provided with dowries during their marriage. Weddings were celebrated in the house of the bride's parents. Monogamy was the general rule, but polygamy was practised. Polyandry was very rare. The standard of female morality was high. Girls, even unmarried ones, used to obtain a share of the paternal property.

In the Rig Vedic Age one important feature was the participation of women in the intellectual life of the

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community. They also secured intellectual honour both in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Mention may be made of some talented ladies like Visvavara, Apala, Lopamudra, Sikata, Nivavari, Shashiyasi, Ghosha, Indrani and Sachi. Some of the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed by them. Some of them rose to the rank of Rishis. Apala and Vishvavara were poetesses. Both of them belonged to the Atri family. While Vishvavara has praised Agni to regulate domestic relations between husband and wife, Apala in her poems has praised Indra.

Lopamudra and Shashiyasi were two other poetesses of the time. Ghosha was another. She happened to be the daughter of the King Kakshivan, who was also a Rishi. Ghosha was said to have suffered from leprosy. So she could not marry. But when in her beautiful poetry she praised Asvinī, the godly physician of the heavens, he was pleased, and cured her and provided her with a husband.

36 Rig. I, 179, V.28, VIII, 91, IX sl. X. 39-40.
* Agni, the fire God.
Education in this period aimed at the attainment of the highest knowledge, that of the Atman, the Absolute, or self-realization. Gargi and Maitreyi represented the enlightened women of the time.

Another poetess Sukanya was known to have persuaded the same Asvini through hymns to confer youth on her aged husband. Thus in the hymns composed by the poetesses, they sometimes used to ask for personal boons pertaining to material needs, and miraculously many of their prayers were granted.

Furthermore in great philosophical gatherings women were permitted to participate in discussions on metaphysical subjects. In the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad the story of the celebrated lady philosopher Gargi finds mention. She has challenged Yajnavalkya, the distinguished president of a philosophy conference, held under the auspices of King Janaka of Videha. At the end of the discussion she acknowledged Yajnavalkya's greatness. Then he initiated her into the highest spiritual faith, the doctrine of the Upanishads. This used to be revealed only to the favoured few.

39 Upanishad, Anka, pp. 479, 481-482.
The women of Vedic India in general were educated, enlightened and cultured. They used to receive systematic education. A father used to send his daughters to Gurukula Ashramas where they studied along with boys. They were termed as Brahmacharinis. The Atharva Veda insists on a woman marrying only after the completion of her education. Women were at times referred to as Āchāryāṇī and Upādhyāṇī as they were competent to perform sacrifices and read the Vedas. The ancient forest universities educated girls along with the boys. "It was in these universities", writes Dr. Radhakrishnan, "that there evolved the beginning of the sublime idealism of India." The girls used to study the Vedic texts after the sacred thread initiation which was performed at the age of eight just as in the case of the boys. But the Upanayana for the girls was not performed as the marriage ceremony was considered equivalent to the Upanayana for women.

Women also took part in the spiritual life of the community. During the age of the Upanishads women were not debarred from the study of the Vedas. The Rishis, as a

41 Atharva Veda, XI, 7, 20
   Agrawal, B. S., Panini Kalina Bharatavarsa, (Venaras), pp.103-104.
rule, used to initiate their wives into the sacred knowledge, as in many rituals the husband and wife had to perform certain rites together. In the later Vedic Age even the Sudra wives enjoyed this privilege.

Janasruti, a wealthy Sudra, wished to study the Vedas and met the sage Raikva with presentations amounting to a thousand cows, a necklace and a pair of bulls yoked to a chariot, but the sage refused to teach the Vedas to the Sudras. So he took the next step. He offered his beautiful daughter in marriage to Raikva and the sage married the girl. Then the sage initiated his wife into the study of the Vedas, and the lady in turn instructed her father in Vedic lore.

It was towards the last part of the Smriti period (between 500 B.C. to 600 A.D.) that women were prohibited from the wearing of the sacred thread, the utterance of sacred texts and the study of the Vedas due to their degeneration. In the epic age, women became more and more involved in their domestic activities. Yet their education was not neglected. It is said that Atreyi of this age attended Valmiki's Ashrama along with the two sons of Rama, namely Kusha and Lava. Kausalya, the mother

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
of Rama, was known to have been a Mantravit, one who is well-versed in the Vedas. Similarly Draupadi was a learned Pandit.

In certain exceptional cases daughters were competent to perform funeral rites in the absence of sons.

It was in the later Vedic Age that the position of women underwent a slight deterioration compared to the Rig Vedic Age. They lost their right of being initiated in Upanayana. They also lost the rights to perform religious rites and join in political affairs. They could not claim the right of inheritance. Polygamy became more general, almost a common affair among the royal and rich classes. The custom of sati, unknown in the Vedic period, came into practice during this period. Polyandry also appeared in a restricted way. Women were considered inferior to men in status. The birth of a female child was not looked upon with favour. The dowry system became popular. Married women of upper class families suffered in most cases from the presence of rival wives in the same

48 Apte, V. M., Vedic Age, p.454.
49 Majumdar, R.C., and others, An Advanced History of India, (Delhi, 1974), p.43.
house. Yet women during this period continued to have their share in religious rites. The education which some of them received was of a high order, as it enabled them to take a prominent part in philosophical disputations at royal courts. The Svayamvara form of marriage mentioned in the epics continued to be in vogue.

Furthermore, in the Vedic times, the father of the family was also its priest. That was because the patriarchal and joint family system worked in right earnest. Yet, if a lady was found to have possessed ability to compose and chant hymns, she was taken as the priestess. As spiritually she was her husband's partner, it was essential for her to attend sacrifices along with him. In fact, no sacrifices could take place without the presence of the lady. Oblations were prepared and offered to the deities jointly by the husband and the wife. They gathered the sacred grass together for sacrifices. In doing so they hoped to go to heaven together.

Thus in practice the wife in ancient India was the pivot around whom the whole household affairs revolved.

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53 Beg, T. A., Women of India, p.1
54 Durant, W., Our Oriental Heritage, p.401.
She was Jāyā, Janāi and Patni, the supreme ruler of her domestic world. Sage Visvamitra declared a wife to be the Grihasthatam, that is, the wife is the very house.

The best exposition of the status of the wife is given by Sakuntala in her argument with Dushyanta. Said she,

"The wife is half the man, his ardhanāri, and the best of friends. She is a father to her husband in the performance of religious duties. She is the source of Dharma and Salvation. She is a mother in sickness and at the time of woe." She added that the wife is the constant companion of her husband; even in exile, she accompanies him. In adversity, she is always beside him. In death, the devoted woman joins him in the grim regions of Yama.

If she goes earlier, she waits for her husband. Even Rishis cannot procreate off-spring without women...

Hence no man, even in anger, should ever do anything that...
offends his wife. Vyasadeva said that a family without a wife is equal to a forest.

In the Bhagavata it is mentioned that a girl used to be known by a number of titles such as Kanyā and Duhitā. From the latter the English word daughter is said to have been derived. Where the daughter is the only child in the family, she used to be called Putrikā. She could perform the funeral rites of her father, even if she was married. She also had the right to inherit property. There are references in later Vedic literature to Putrikā Putra (son of Putrikā), who was almost as good as one's own son.

Uma, the wife of God Shiva, with regard to the duties of married women, delivered the following sermon on the greatness and responsibilities of the wife. Said She, - "A woman who regulates her conduct by the prescribed ordinances is truly chaste and religious; she should observe all the vows of her husband, should wait upon him

60 Sanskrit Mahabharata, Santi Parva, pp.144-46.

* God Shiva is good, happy, lovely, auspicious.
and serve him as her God, surrendering her own will to that of her husband; she should always appear cheerful and should not even in thought entertain any man except him. That wife who, even when being treated harshly, assumes a cheerful countenance, is indeed truly virtuous ... That woman who has self control, who serves her husband with devotion and diligence is truly virtuous ... That woman who takes pleasure in rising at dawn, attends to the sacred domestic fire and keeps her house clean, offers flowers to the deities, feeds guests before all, gives to dependents and servants their due share and takes her meals last, acquires great virtues. It is further said that a woman who dutifully serves her father-in-law and mother-in-law as her own parents, it reckoned as possessing the merit of ascetics. She is also compared

63 Sarala Mahabharata, Adi Parva, p. 321.

Draupadi's mother advised her while she was going to her in-laws to serve her mother-in-law and father-in-law.


Janaka's wife advised Sita that serving the father-in-law, mother-in-law and the husband is the duty of a woman.


In connection with Sita's marriage it is mentioned that a woman's duty is to serve her mother-in-law and husband,
with the "Kamadhenu". It is further stated in the Mahabharata that devotion to one's husband is the greatest virtue of a married woman; it is her penance and salvation - To her the husband is the God. He is her friend and refuge. There is no greater God than her husband.

Draupadi has further given a more balanced account of the duties of a wife, drawn mainly from her own practical experience. Once Satyabhama, the wife of Lord Krishna, asked Draupadi about the secret of her success in her domestic life. She also wished to know if Draupadi used any drugs or charms for the purpose. She asked such a question because while Draupadi had been successful in managing five husbands with she herself found it extremely difficult to deal with one. Draupadi then replied:

"She never uses drugs or charms. She always serves her husband with devotion and kindness. . . . When any of her husbands comes home from the field, forest or the

* Kamadhenu, the fabulous cow that grants the fulfilment of all wishes.


deliberations in the assembly, she hastens to receive
him, brings water to bathe his feet, leads him to the
house. She keeps the whole house and the utensils clean,
she cooks food for the family and serves them food
punctually at the proper time. She never indulges in
angry or frightful speech and never follows the ways of
wicked women ... she obeys the behests of the mother-
in-law and faithfully carries out all her instructions;
she never speaks ill of her, nor even in thought offends
her.

Inspite of these meritorious roles played by the
women it was due to the quarrel of the ladies in a
family that the division of a joint family took place.
So the newly married daughters-in-law have been advised
to behave with all her in-laws decently and rightly. The
wife has also been instructed to behave nicely with her
guru, servant and sister-in-law.

Furthermore a Vedic woman used to keep herself
occupied most of the time in cooking as she had to prepare

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68 Batsayana, Kamasutra, (Bombay, Samvat 1919),
2nd 4, 1,5.
food for her husband. As mentioned earlier, Draupadi, inspite of being the chief queen, had to cook the meals for her husbands. The Vedic wife had to control her husband's earning. She was the paymistress in her house. According to Manu, she had to go through minute details of the collection and expenditure of money and used to spend it economically with great care. Draupadi was said to have looked after the income and expenditure of the King Yudhistira when he ruled in Indraprastha. She also superintended his vast treasury. Draupadi discharged much more onerous duties and responsibilities, such as managing the number of slave-girls in the harem; general supervision over palace establishments, and the like.

It is mentioned in the Śāstras that a wife had to advise her husband in money matters and calculate the annual income, besides keeping strict accounts of all the expenses. The wife used to advise her husband wherever necessary and to assist him to fulfil his desire: Gandhari was known to have advised Dhrutarastra, her husband, not to give indulgence to their sons. It is mentioned in


* Gandhari was the queen of Dhrutarastra, the Kaurava King of Mahābhārata who was blind. She was the mother of hundred sons.

70 Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Sabha Parva, 75, 8-10.
the Brahmanda Purana that queen Kirtida used to advise King Vrisabhanu. Bhanumati, the wife of mighty Duryodhana used to give good advice to her husband. She advised him to give five villages to the Pandavas as proposed by Srikrishna, because legally the brothers were entitled to get their own shares.

It is further stated in the Mahabharata that the wife used to help her husband always in all fields of life. The help rendered by Parvati to Shiva can be cited as an example. When Shiva desired to kill Kirti and Krutivasa, the two demons, Parvati, disguised as a cowherd’s wife, charmed the demons, showed them Viswarūpa and ultimately pressed them to the Pātāla. Similarly one Hidambika gave her power to Bhima and helped him kill the demon Hidamvaka.

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71 Bhattacharjya, N. K., Brahmanda Purana, (Bengali), pp.6-25.
72 Sarala Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, p.56.
* Parvati, wife of Lord Shiva.
** Hidamvika, a female demon who married Bhima.
*** Bhima, the second son of Kunti and Pandu of Mahabharata, who had great physical strength.
**** Hidamvaka, a demon and brother of Hidamvika.
74 Sarala Mahabharata, Adya Parva, p.185.
Shashisena Kavya by Pratap Ray also refers to the power of a wife. There was one Shashisena who killed her husband's enemy. Disguised as a man, she killed a rhinoceros and finally utilising her intelligence she could release her husband from Gyanadei Maluṇī.

Furthermore, women were also found to have helped their husbands in earning a livelihood. This was mostly to be found among the lower castes. Women were employed as weavers. The art of sewing was also known to them. They knew the use of 'sūchī'. They could plait mats and convert the wool of sheep into clothing as well as coverings for animals. It is known from the Yajur Veda that there was considerable development in industry and occupations in the later Vedic period. Women figured as dyers in indigo (rajayitri), embroiderers (pesa-skari), workers in thorns (Kantakikari) and basket makers (bidalakari). They also played a very important part in farming, like transplanting the weeding.

Women also used to teach their children. The Markandeya Purana reveals that one Madālasā imparted the

For details see Chapter VII of this thesis.

76 Ibid., p.101.

knowledge of Brahma' to her sons from their childhood. She taught politics to her last child.

Women even joined with their husbands in wars. One Mugdalani was said to have pursued robbers along with her husband. One Vishpala lost her leg in a battle while helping her husband.

The status of the women in the society was determined in terms of their nature and accomplishments and the situation in which they were employed. Women were to be found in the company of their husbands both at secular and at religious gatherings. The ancient Indian sculptures testify to their active participation in social activities. It is stated that unless both the husband and the wife, are religious-minded, their conjugal life will not be successful and happy. A Hindu woman should, from her childhood till her death, in all her thoughts and activities, cherish the religious faith. She visits the temple and offers flowers to the deity. In the Vedic period she was known to have enjoyed the right to perform religious rites. She used to prepare fire for the sacrifice, chant Vedic mantras and offer animal sacrifices.

Their names have been recorded in the inscriptions as donors of religious grants. Some of them, actively took part in administration as regents on behalf of their minor sons. Mention may be made of the names of Prabhavati Gupta, Naganika and Balasri. There are also references to highly educated and talented ladies serving as distinguished teachers (Upādhyāyī).

Yet women in certain cases were found to have been treated as inferior, because of which girls were often denied minor rituals like upanayana, nāmakarana and Chudākarana ceremonies. Kautilya, however, suggests divorce under certain circumstances. These are long absence from the husband, loose character, social or moral depravity and loss of virility. Great emphasis was laid on a woman's chastity and devotion to husband. In those days married women used to seek emancipation by satisfying their husbands through their service and devotion and that was the ideal of the age. Married women in high families did not usually appear in public unveiled.

82 Sarala Mahabharata, Vana Parva, p.241.

"Bhāvare sevā kariṇā bhajanti
je pati
Patibhaktā stirīṅkara hua
sadgati."
Female figures found in the sculptures, however, do not show any sign of covering their faces. The Chinese Pilgrims are silent on this point. But Abu-Zaid, a Muslim chronicler states that most of the Indian princes allowed their women to be seen unveiled in their courts. In this context reference may be made to a class of female courtesans, noted for their beauty and accomplishments, who enjoyed a certain social standing. Amrapali of Buddha's time, and Vasantasena, Ragamanjari and Chandrasena of ancient times were some of the examples of distinguished ladies of the town called nagaravadhūs.

The ancient Buddhist literature of the time of Buddha mentions that courtesans occupied a very high position in Indian society. Their profession was not looked down upon at the time. On the contrary, it was considered useful and desirable. Some of these courtesans were very wealthy and influential. Amrapali of Buddha's time can be cited as an example. An event connected with Buddha's life is as follows:

At the age of eighty, Buddha one day went to the city of Vaisali where Amrapali was staying. At the approach to the city he received an invitation from Amrapali to stay with her as her guest. Her offer was

accepted by Buddha. By that time Buddha had acquired a reputation of a distinguished teacher. So the Lichhavi Chieftains who were the rulers of the city expected Buddha to be their guest. So they requested him to cancel his appointment with Amrapali and accept their invitation. But Buddha refused. Then the rulers requested Amrapali to cancel her invitation to Buddha and request him to accept theirs. Amrapali did not concede their request. She entertained Buddha and gave him an extensive mango-grove as a gift to the Buddhist order. Buddha accepted the invitation of Amrapali as if it had come from a respectable citizen. Buddha had not preached on the evils of prostitution although he personally considered it as an evil. According to the Buddhist principles, a missionary should not be in a hurry to convert others; if the sinner is reluctant to accept the faith then he or she may be won over to accept it in the next life or in some other life to come. And it was for this reason that Buddha did not preach any sermon to Amrapali. Her invitation was the proof of her earnest desire to meet the religious teacher. So she was on the right track. Subsequently she joined the order of the nuns and became a Theri.

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The high position enjoyed by courtesans in ancient India is corroborated by the Jataka stories which form a part of the Buddhist canon. They enjoyed the patronage of the society in general and of the aristocracy in particular. Some of them gathered fabulous fortunes. It is mentioned in one of the Jatakas that a courtesan used to charge one thousand gold coins for one night. Taranga Katha refers to another courtesan demanding five hundred elephants for a single hour. Some prostitutes were so wealthy that they were found to have helped fallen kings in raising armies for recovering their fortunes. More wonderful is the story of a courtesan narrated in the Milinda Panha. One Bindumati had the power to make the Ganga flow backwards. When Asoka questioned her about the source of her spiritual strength, she replied thus, "Whosoever gave her gold, whether a Kshatriya, a Brahmana, a Vaisya or a Sudra, she treated them all alike." This gold was a great leveller. It cut across the caste system, something which Buddhism also rejected.

Ancient Jaina literature too shows that the courtesans were held in great honour and high position in society. According to a reference in Nayadhammakaha the

celebrated courtesan Champa was one such courtesan who was well versed in the sixty-four arts and sciences. She was also a linguist who knew many dialects. She was an accomplished singer and dancer. She had received from the king the privilege of riding in chariots and of using ceremonial umbrellas and fans. She had an army of a thousand slave-girls.

Kosa was another courtesan of Pataliputra. Falling in love with Sthulabhadra, she married him and lived with him for twelve years. Then Sthulabhadra renounced the world and permitted her to continue her old profession. But she continued to lead a virtuous life. Later on Sthulabhadra came to Pataliputra as a Jaina teacher, Kosa became his disciple. Subsequently she renounced the world and became a nun.

Jaina monks were supposed to remain celibate. Yet the Jaina text Vavahara Bhasya refers to the sexual indulgence permitted to the monks in exceptional cases. A monk who could not control himself was allowed to have relations with a courtesan on payment of her prescribed fees.

Kautilya also refers to the appointment of a superintendent of prostitutes by the state on a salary of

1000 papas per annum. He also made rules for these women. They were required to contribute two days' earnings every month to the State as tax. Their services were also utilised at the court for holding the umbrella, the golden pitcher and the fan. Besides these courtesans, some great temples in the south used to maintain girls or female attendants for the Gods. They were called Devadasis. Both Kālidāsa and Hiuen-Tsang have mentioned this fact.

On the whole the standard of female morality was fairly high in ancient India. Of course, certain features like polygamy naturally led to the loss of affection and attention for the neglected wife. This state of affairs also led to the custom of Sati. Greek writers have referred to prevalence of this custom of Sati in ancient India. Even the co-wives used to vie with one another to avail themselves of this privilege. A few queens and other ladies of high families of ancient India who immolated themselves were the queens of King Yasakara and of his successor Kshemagupta of Kashmir, a lady during the reign of the Chola King Parantaka I and a queen of Sundara Chola of the same Chola dynasty.

However, the position of women was not as bad as Chopra, P. N., and others, Op. cit., p.101.
has been depicted in the earlier *smritis*. No doubt they had to attend to their husbands and cater to their physical and emotional needs. Yet the husbands had to look after their wives and correct them when necessary. They were also expected to be righteous and faithful to their spouses. Medhatithi, the commentator on Manu, rightly suggests that the husbands and the wives differ only in physique, but are entirely united in function. The wife has to be maintained by the husband even when she was found to have committed certain lapses. So Medhatithi opines that a woman, being the mother to her son, never becomes an outcaste.

With the establishment of caste system and the priestly oligarchy, the status of women deteriorated. The Vedic custom of a husband and wife taking part jointly in religious functions was gradually but firmly rejected by later law givers. The woman's right depended entirely on her husband and she was not treated as man's equal in vindication of her own right.

It was during Buddha's reign and the benevolent rule of Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka and other benign emperors that the status of women was raised. They regained a part of their lost freedom. They were once more allowed

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to enjoy the facility of learning. They were also allowed to renounce the world and devote their lives to the propagation of Buddhism. Buddha's step-mother, Queen Mahaprajapati and her followers were the first group of women disciples of Gautama Buddha. A separate order was established for them and the nuns were called Bhikkhunis. They were initiated into the deep problems of philosophy and mystical experiences. Despite all these privileges, the nuns were treated lower to the monks in the monastery. A Bhikkhuni had to bow before a Bhikkhu. Of course all these strict rules of celibacy and mental discipline did not deter women from joining the order in large numbers. Kshema, who was the chief Queen of Bimbisara and extremely beautiful renounced the vanities of her life and became the follower of Buddha when she heard him preaching in the garden of Velubana. The King of course gave his consent to her proposed course of action. She was then taken to the nunnery in a golden palanquin. Buddha allotted her a high place in the order.

Similarly Sumana was another woman who became a nun. She was the sister of the King of Kosala. One day she heard Buddha preaching to the King. She was so impressed that she wanted to renounce the world. But she could not

do so at once as she used to look after her grandmother. It was after the death of her grandmother that she accompanied her royal brother to the vihāra and requested for ordination. Buddhist Therigatha reveals that Sumana was an enlightened nun.

In all ages, even during the worst periods of the subjugation of women in India, there were found spirited women who could exert their individuality and rise over their hen-pecked husbands. Draupadi, though legally the property of her five husbands, virtually ruled over them. Confident of her own strength of mind and will, she was the most forceful and consistent personality of the epic age. On many occasions while her husbands appeared to have lost all hope of winning back their kingdom through war and preferred a peaceful life even under humiliating terms, Draupadi was ever fearless in her determination and refused to compromise with evil-doers. She never wavered in her determination to bring about the defeat and destruction of the foes. No amount of suffering, nor even exile, starvation, public humiliation, and kicking in an open court by an infatuated sadist could break her unyielding will. Often it was she alone who whipped up the fagging spirits of her husbands when relentless

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misfortune had almost broken them down. Similarly there were Hindu queens throughout the history of India who influenced their husbands. The names of some of them appearing jointly with those of their husbands on coins and charters testify to this fact. Mention may be made of 'Kumaridevi', the wife of Chandragupta, the founder of the illustrious Gupta dynasty. She was termed as Mahadevi, the great queen and coins were struck in her name, a privilege generally accorded only to the kings.

There were also certain champions of women's rights who openly protested against the ill-treatment of women in India. Of them Varahamihira, an astronomer of the 6th century A.D., was the most illustrious and ancient. His bitter criticism of the ill-treatment of women in his time has shown that the spirit of chivalry towards women was never dead in India. In the Brihad Samhita, he says: It is women who adorn jewels, not women who are adorned by jewels. In fact, women are the jewels; there are no greater jewels created by God than the jewel that is woman, that is capable of giving delight to man

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by sight, by hearing, by speech, by thought and touch. With her Dharma, Artha and Kama are possible, the son is also possible only through her. Hence the fair sex should be considered the main-stay of society, the home of the goddess of prosperity, and should be held in honour and respect.

Poet Bana, the minister of War and Peace (Sandhi-Vigrahika) of Harshavardhan, was another outstanding advocate of women's rights. Condemning the system of Sati he writes: "To die after one's beloved does not help him in ascending to heaven nor prevent him from falling into hell. It does not ensure union with the departed; the person who has died goes to the place determined by his own actions, and the person who immolates herself on the funeral pyre goes to the hell reserved for those who are guilty of the sin of suicide. On the other hand, by surviving the deceased, one can do much good to oneself as well as the departed, by offering prescribed oblations for his happiness in the other world. By dying with him one can do good to neither.

Medhatithi, the commentator on Manu, was also an opponent of the system of Sati, found in the Angiras

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Smriti. The custom of Sāti was opposed by a Vedic text. Virata pointed out that if the widow survives her husband, she can offer prescribed oblations for his happiness in the other world. Enlightened Hindus of ancient India, condemned the institution of Sāti.

Thus it is to be observed that the position of women in ancient India was by and large one of dignity and honour. Despite the lapses that they committed at times they were supposed to be the mistresses of the family. Such was also the condition of the women in Orissa through the ages.
CHAPTER I

WOMEN OF KALINGA FROM THE EARLIEST TIME TILL ADVENT OF THE AGE OF THE MAURYAS
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WOMEN OF KALINGA FROM THE EARLIEST TIME TILL ADVENT OF THE AGE OF THE MAURYAS

The role of the women of Kalinga in the earliest times is reflected in the epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Mahabharata reveals the glory of Kalinga's royal family even before the Kurukshetra battle. It is further revealed therein that the Aryan royal families of Northern India during that time were eager to have matrimonial relations with the royal house of Kalinga. A few examples can be cited. The Adi Parva records that the Paurava prince Akrodhana married Karambha, the princess of Kalinga and she became the mother of the King Devatithi. The son of this Devatithi was Matinara who is said to have married Saraswati, the river goddess. She gave birth to Tamsu, the father of Dushyanta. The Adi

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* Kurukshetra was the battle field where the famous Mahabharata war was fought between the Pandavas and the Kauravas for their share in the Kingdom.

1 Ayutoṇāyo Khalu pruthusravaso duhitaramupayeme
(Kaṃṭhāma tasya-mastāya teṣe ētuḥ
Akrodhanā)
Sa khalu Kālingā Karambhāga
nāmopayeme
Tasyāmasya teṣe devatīthā
Adi Parva, 3775.

** Dushyanta was the father of the famous Puru King Bharata, after whom the country was named as Bharatavarsa in later times.
Parva also mentions that Tamsu, after becoming King, married a princess of the Kalinga royal family.

In the Santi Parva of the Mahabharata there is a description of the Swayamvara ceremony organised by Chitrangada, the King of Kalinga, for the marriage of his daughter. Many important Kings of Southern, Northern and Western India attended the ceremony. Mention may be made of Vakra, Sisupala, Bhismaka, Asoka, Nila, Satadhanva, Kapataroma, Bhoja and others. Besides, the Kaurava prince Durjyodhana accompanied by his friend Karna also attended the ceremony to win the Kalinga princess. He was known to have appeared in the arena with her female attendants. But she was indifferent to Durjyodhana and by-passed him completely. The proud Durjyodhana was mortified at this and felt humiliated. So he forcibly abducted the Kalinga princess from the place of Swayamvara ceremony and married her some time later.

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2 Tamsu sarasvati putra matsinaradajijanat
Ilinang janayamasa kaliningadhatma tansuratmajamp.

Adi Parva 3780

Sorenson, Index to the names in the Mahabharata, London, 1904.

3 Canto IV.

Durjyodhana, in the company of the King of Kalinga, was also known to have attended the Swayamvara ceremony of Draupadi, the princess of Panchala. And this Kalinga king could be no other than Srutayudha, the son of Chitrangada, the illustrious hero of the Mahabharata war.

All these facts bear a significance and that was the establishment of matrimonial relations of the Aryan royal family with the non-Aryan royal house of Kalinga. Very likely the Aryan rulers attempted to seek the friendship and alliance of the powerful Kalinga on political considerations. However, these political and matrimonial alliances led to the fusion of the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures of India.

In the Kurukshetra war 'Srutayudha, the King of Kalinga, was killed by Bhimasena along with three of his war-like sons, namely Sakradeva, Ketuman and Bhanuman. Thus the old royal dynasty of Kalinga came to an end. Then a new Kshatriya dynasty, probably of Aryan blood, appeared in Kalinga. According to the Puranic traditions,

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5 Adi Parva, 7020 and also Udyoga Parva, 3403.

6 Bhishma Parva, Liv.

7 Drona Parva IV, 122; X, 15
Udyoga Parva, XL VII, 70
Banerji, R. D., History of Orissa, Vol. I,
(Calcutta, 1930), p.47.
as many as thirty-two Kshatriya Kings ruled over Kalinga during the post Kurukshetra war. And the last King of this series was killed by Mahapadmananda. The King Sattabhu described in the Mahagovinda Suttanta of Digha Nikaya was probably one of the early Kings of Kalinga after the Kurukshetra war. During his time, Kalinga, recovering from the losses incurred in the Kurukshetra war, had become one of the foremost states in Northern India. Other contemporary rulers of Sattabhu in India were Brahmadatta, King of Assaka, Vessabhu of Avanti, Bharata of Sovira, Renu of Videha, Dhatarattha of Anga and Dhatarattha of Kasi. Beyond mentioning these names, Mahagovinda Suttanta is silent about the activities of these rulers. However, the capital of Kalinga during this time was Dantapura.

Regarding the naming of Dantapura as the capital of Kalinga, an interesting anecdote is narrated in the Sutra Krtanga, a Jaina work. This was all about a woman. Although this work belonged to the medieval period, it records an early tradition relating to this fact. Once

9 Digha Nikaya (P.T.S.) ii, p. 205.
the queen of Dantavaktra, the King of Kalinga, while in her period of confinement, developed a peculiar longing for a palace of ivory. So King Dantavaktra engaged his people and officers for the collection of elephant tusks. Exactly at that time the wife of Dhanamitra, a reputed merchant of Kalinga, who was also pregnant, developed a similar desire for residing in an Ivory Palace. And to fulfil her desire, Dhanamitra and his merchant friend Drdhamitra collected ivory pieces from different parts of Kalinga. They were then asked to hand over the pieces to the King of Kalinga. But they refused to do so. So they were arrested by the King of Kalinga. Subsequently they were released when they came to know that the wife of Dhanamitra had a longing similar to that of his own queen. Thereafter, the palaces of the King of Kalinga and that of the famous merchant Dhanamitra were constructed in ivory. As such the capital city was named Dantapura.

After Sattabhu, the next important King of Kalinga was Karakandu. According to the Kumbhakara Jataka and

10 Uttaradhyayana Sutra, XVIII, 45-46
Sutra Krtanga, 1, 6, 22
Abhidhana Rajendra, V, p.186.

11 J. III, p.376f.
the Jaina Uttaradhyayana Sutra, he was the contemporary of the Kings Dummukha (Durmukha or Dvimukha) of Panchala, Nimi of Videha and Naggaji (Nagnajit) of Gandhara. These four rulers have been described in Uttaradhyayana Sutra as "bulls among the Kings". They were all disciples of Parsvanath, who propounded the 'Chaturyama' from Jainism.

An account of queen Padmavati, the mother of Karakandu needs, discussion. She was the queen of King Dadhivahana of Champa. The Jaina tradition reveals that during her pregnancy she entertained a desire for the enjoyment of elephant ride in the forest. The King took her into the forest for the purpose. Meanwhile the elephant carrying her and the King suddenly became excited by the sweet breeze and started defying the master. The elephant took them deep into forest. Meanwhile the King could save himself somehow by holding on to the bough of a tree. Thus the queen Padmavati was left alone. She was carried away by the defiant elephant into the territory of Kalinga. There she was rescued. Then she took shelter in the house of a Brahmin. There she gave birth to a son.

12 S. B. E. XLV, p.87, Lecture XViii, 45-47.
13 Ibid.
14 Karakandu Chariu, Abhidhana Rajendra, Vol. III.
who was named Karakandu or Karandu. Meanwhile the boy attained youth. Anarchy was then prevailing in Kalinga. At about this time a rite for the selection of a new King was performed in the traditional manner. According to the prevailing custom the chief elephant was to be let loose with a pitcher (pûrṇaghata) of water and the person on whose head the elephant poured water, was to be made the new King. The elephant poured the water on the head of Karakandu. Accordingly he was made the King of Kalinga and accepted by her people. Thus, he became the King of Kalinga by popular support. Some time after Karakandu's accession to the throne, a quarrel started between Champa and Kalinga. Consequently it led to a war between the two kingdoms of which Dadhivahana and Karakandu were respectively kings. But they did not know that they were father and son. It was only queen Padmavati who was then living in cognito, knew of this fact. Naturally she was extremely shocked to learn about the conflict between her husband and her son. As there was no other way out, she got between Dadhivahana and Karakandu when they stood facing each other in the battle field and asked them not to fight with each other. Meanwhile the King Dadhivahana could recognise his own queen and came to learn from her that Karakandu, the King of Kalinga, was no other than his own son. Padmavati then brought about a reconciliation between them. In due time Dadhivahana died. Karakandu
then became the ruler of both Champa and Kalinga. He subsequently abdicated the throne on account of the transformation that took place in him. He realised that worldly prosperity was the cause of sorrow and unhappiness. Then he accepted the teachings of Parsvanath to get spiritual bliss. Yet Karakandu was respected both by the Jainas and the Buddhists. While the Jaina literatures describes him as a *Rajarshi*, an ascetic King, the Buddhists regard him as a Paccheka Buddha.

It was after Karakandu that a new political power raised its head in the Deccan. That was the Dandaka empire which extended from the river Narmada to the river Krishna with its capital at Kumbhavati which can be identified with modern Nasik. Its emperor was Dandaki. The Sarabhangha Jataka refers to certain feudatories of his such as Bhimaratha, King of Vidarbha.

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16 Kumbhakara Jataka, J. III, p.376 f.

Atthaka (Sanskrit Astaka) the King of Assaka (Asmaka) and Kalinga I, the king of Kalinga. The Dandaka empire collapsed when it was at the height of its power. This was because of the lust of the emperor Dandaki. The Sarabhanga Jataka states that he ill-treated a holy sage named Kisavaccha whose curse led to the destruction of his empire by a shower of fine sands. But, the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Arthasastra of Kautilya and Jaina Trisastisalaka purusa Charita of Hemachandra unanimously give a different story. Once Dandaki made a lascivious attempt on a Brahmana girl on account of which Dandaki had to face a popular revolt. As a result he perished along with his relations. His empire perished, too. After the death of Dandaki, his feudatory kings, Bhimaratha, Atthaka and Kalinga I, met an ascetic Sarabhanga at his hermitage, located on the banks of Godavari. All the three kings abdicated their throne under the inspiration of his teachings, and accepted asceticism.

Thus it is to be observed that the position of

18 J. V., pp. 127 f.
19 Anusasana Parva, Cl iii 11, Sabha Parva, XXX, 16-17.
20 Ramayana, vii, 81, 7-19.
women in Kalinga as well as in other regions of India during the Buddhist era was not one of great respect and adoration. After the death of Kalinga I, Mahakalinga, his eldest son ascended the throne of Kalinga. He was a judicious and benevolent ruler. He was respectful towards women. His younger brother Chullakalinga was not as respectful as his eldest brother was. So trouble cropped up in the kingdom. As he could not be corrected he was banished from the kingdom by his elder brother. Chullakalinga wandered in various places in the guise of an ascetic.

At this time the king of Madra came with his family to stay for some time in the same forest region. He had a beautiful daughter. The Jataka states that according to the prediction of a fortune teller, the Madra princess was destined to give birth to a son who would be a Ākāṅkṣī. So several powerful kings sought her hand. The matter roused so much of passion that a war among them on the question of the marriage of the princess became imminent. In order to avoid bloodshed and enmity with those kings, the Madra king decided to retreat to the forest with his family and to remain there in disguise.

23 J. IV, pp.228 f.
Meanwhile Chullakalinga who was then a pseudo-ascetic was entangled in a love affair with the same Madra princess. One day while taking bath in a mountain stream he saw a long hair floating down the water. From it he could guess that a lady with long hair resided somewhere near the upper reaches of the stream. So out of curiosity he went towards the upper course of the stream and met the Madra princess. Both fell in love with each other at first sight and their marriage was subsequently performed without much ado in the Himalayan forest. This finds mention in the Kalingabodhi Jataka. It further mentions that this princess Madra Devi gave birth to a son who was named Kalinga II. After the death of Mahakalinga, Kalinga II was brought to the capital, Dantapura, and installed as the King of Kalinga. The activities of Kalinga II have been described both in Chullakalinga Jataka and Kalingabodhi Jataka. When pieced together, the narratives given in these two Jatakas give a continuous and eventful history of this kingdom during the pre-Buddha period. The Chullakalinga Jataka gives an account of Mahakalinga and Chullakalinga's romantic proclivities leading to his marriage with the Madra

24 J. IV, pp.228-36.
25 J. III, pp.3 f.
princess, a simple and innocent girl with an exquisite beauty, and of the eventual succession of their son Kalinga II to the throne of Dantapura.

The King Kalinga described as a Cakravarti monarch in the Kalingabodhi Jataka is taken to be no other than Kalinga II, the son of Chullakalinga and Madra Devi. Kalinga Bharadvaja, the royal Chaplain of Kalinga II, is said to have taught him the duties of a Cakravarti. Kalinga II turned out to be a very ambitious and war-like king largely because of the influence of his mother as well as this royal chaplain. He maintained a very strong army which struck terror into the hearts of the Kings of neighbouring states. The kingdom of Assaka to the South-West of Kalinga was then under the rule of the King Aruna, whose crafty minister Nandisena was jealous and intolerant of the glory of Kalinga.

Thus in Kalinga a woman in the role of a mother was found to have influenced the character of her son to a considerable extent. Battles were also fought concerning women in Kalinga in the pre-Buddhist era. One such battle was as follows. The King Kalinga II had four beautiful daughters as is known from the Chullakalinga Jataka. Once he announced that the King who defeated him in battle

26 J. IV, p.232.
would marry all his four daughters. They were then taken through different territories in well decorated chariots escorted by the army of Kalinga. No King obstructed their passage. But when they entered Potana, the capital of Assaka, the minister Nandisena got them arrested even against the wishes of the King Aruna. This led to the Kalinga-Assaka war. The army of Assaka fought bravely but when they were about to be defeated Nandisena succeeded in turning the defeat into a victory by resorting to a subtle ruse. He ordered his army to attack the white bull of Kalinga, kept in the battle field. This was considered to be the deity of Kalinga. When the bull was stabbed, the King Kalinga stopped the war and surrendered himself to the King of Assaka. His four daughters were then given in marriage with a rich dowry to the King Aruna of Assaka. This war took place towards the end of the 7th century B.C. The defeat of Kalinga proved to be a great set-back to her rising power. It was very likely for this reason that in the sixth century B.C. Kalinga did not figure as an important state in the early literature.

27 J. III, pp.3-8.
The Mahavamsa depicts the activities of another princess of Kalinga named Susima. She was the grandmother of the King Vijaya of Banga who visited Ceylon in the year Buddha attained parinirvana. Thus Susima can be dated to the sixth century B.C. It is said that Susima left the palace while very young. While passing through the territory of Ladha (Radha) in the company of a band of merchants she was attacked by a lion in one of the forests of this country. The lion abducted her. Subsequently, she gave birth to a son whose two arms (Vāhu) were like the fore legs of the lion. As such he was named Simhavahu. King Vijaya who colonised Ceylon was the son of this Simhavahu.

Thus the aforesaid facts give an account of the activities of the women in Kalinga from the earliest times till about the sixth century B.C. These facts are derived entirely from literary sources as no archaeological relics depicting social life of the period under review are available. Thus the evidence is more traditional than historical and also too scanty to give us an authentic account of the role of women. Besides, these facts are mere cursory references to some royal ladies only. There is no description of a common woman. It may

30 Geiger, W., Mahavamsa, vi, p.1.
Oldenburg, H., Ed. and Trans, Dipavamsa, p.ix, 2f.
be further seen that women were given in marriage for political considerations and Kings usually used to marry more than one woman. The girl was, however, given the freedom to choose her husband, for which Svayamvara ceremonies were organised. Yet there were exceptions. It was in the case of the daughter of Chitrangada that the girl had to submit to force for her marriage. This form of marriage is known as Asura marriage. Simultaneously, there prevailed another form of marriage based on mutual love. This is called the Gandharva form of marriage. The marriage between Chullakalinga and the Madra princess may be said to be of that type. The promise of King Kalinga II that he would give his four daughters in marriage to whosever would defeat him in battle indicates that women did not enjoy a high position in the society. The Jatakas mention several places where the position of women in society was low. There was also the joint family system dominated by the patriarchal principle and as polygamy was prevalent, the position of

31 J. IV, p.320, G. 107-8, Sixteen thousand was a conventional number of co-wives in the harem.
the wife was subservient to that of the husband. Child marriage was unknown in the society and normally the marriageable age of a girl was sixteen. The system of purdā was prevalent to a very limited extent. The custom of Sati did not exist at all. Widowhood was considered a terrible ordeal. So instances of widow remarriage were not rare. The common belief that the wife was meant for the increase of progeny alone was there in the society. There are instances in the Jatakas to show that women prayed for sons. Much care was taken of pregnant women. Her longings during pregnancy were usually fulfilled by the husband at any cost. The Jatakas also openly speak of the profligacy of women, and present

37 J. V., p. 439, Probably only royal maidens and laides of noble families were going veiled.
38 J. VI., p. 508, G. 2869–76.
39 J. I., p. 225; J. VI., p. 159.
40 J. VI., p. 150, G. 694–97.
41 J. I., p. 288, G. 60.

Itthiyo sasrata name. (Profligacy is the name of women)
J. V., p. 94, G. 295. Thinatā thāvo durājāno maccahasēbodake gatan
(Impossible is to know the ways of women, they are as unsteady as the course of fish in water).
unbeseeming pictures of their moral depravity. But there were many instances of chaste wives and happy conjugal life which contributed to the healthy development of the society.

There were also instances of women, along with the men, cultivating fine arts like music, dancing and painting. Usually gifted women artists used to receive royal patronage. Both boys and girls attended Pāṭhasālās (schools) which were meant for elementary education, i.e., for inculcation of reading, writing and arithmetic with slates (phālakam).

Thus the position of women in Kalinga from the earliest times till the advent of the Mauryas was one of mixed blessings.

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42 J. I., pp.286-89.
   J. II, pp.115-18 etc.

43 J. II, pp.121-25.
   J. V. pp.88-98.