WOMEN AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP:

Man and woman are complimentary to each other. They are dependent on each other for attaining the wholeness. The development of the society symbolizes this wholeness of man and woman. In this, woman contributes more than the man. Because she is not only the mother but nurturer also. So, the relationship of woman and society has been of inter-dependence. She is the centre of the society. Society gets from her love, inspiration, strength and creation. Woman has received recognition as well as condemnation from the society. On one hand, she is worshipped in the form of Goddess on the other hand she is called 'maya' and gate to hell. Society has only given honour to a woman in the form of mother.

The Indian philosophy of life is based on 'Shastras'. The social relation of woman are determined by the 'Shastras'. Different specific directions are given to her regarding her rights, religion, purity and marriage etc.

Relations which are established outside the prescribed relations by the society and 'Shastras' are prohibited. Such relationship are looked down by the society. Indian society is not a class free society where
the lover and beloved may live together on the basis of love. According to the Shastras sex relationship in the absence of marital relationship is dreadful.

The Shastras have also prescribed some principles for marriage according to which a person can marry within his religion and caste excluding his 'Gotra'. Manusmriti describe this as follows:

"Asapinda cha ya matur Sagotra cha ya pituh." ¹

In order to understand the social relations of woman, it is necessary to have knowledge about the various ways of Hindu marriage and views related to it. Manu has mentioned the status of woman after marriage. Whatever rituals are performed, are aimed at the prosperity of the bride and bride groom, but 'Vakdaana' makes the man the master of the bride.² Man is considered to be the source of happiness to a woman in her menstrual and non-menstrual period in this world or the 'paraloka'. Also the husband provides 'Sanskaras' to his wife through the 'Mantras'.

A chaste wife should always worship the husband like God even if he is characterless, adulterer and without any qualities.³ Woman is not allowed to participate in 'Yajna', and not observe fast without her
husband. She can only find a place of honour in heaven if she serves her husband. A chaste woman who desire, 'Patiloka', should not show any behaviour against her husband, alive or dead. After the death of her husband she should make herself weak by eating clean flowers, roots and fruits and should never think of the other husband.  

A woman who likes the highest duty of a chaste woman after becoming a widow should observe unfaltering principle of 'Brahmacharya'. It means that even on getting no child from the husband, she should not seek from another man. As on the strength of 'Brahmacharya' many 'Brahmins', without children have gone to heaven, so even being childless a chaste woman after the death of her husband, on the strength of her 'Brahmacharya' has gone heaven.  

A woman who leaves her husband and enjoy with other man is condemned in this world and after the death takes re-birth in the form of jackal and suffers from heavy distress derived from illness and sin. Manu has said that a chaste woman is the one who does not go against her husband in mind, words and deeds therefore attains 'patiloka' and is called patiwrata. Such woman earns great fame in this world and goes to 'patiloka' after her death --
The two types of rules and regulations for man and woman in Hindu religion and society is questionable for sociology. After the study of Manusmriti, it becomes clear that Manu has given woman a lower status as compared to man. She was allured that she would go to heaven if she committed 'Sati' after the death of her husband. Such influences were prevalent up to the time when 'Sati pratha' was banned. Now-a-days sometimes, heart-breaking incidents like 'Roop kanwar' have come to light. On one hand, there is a rule for the wife to burn herself with the husband, on the other hand, the rules for husband are different according to which after the cremation of wife and other rites, the husband is allowed to enter the 'Grihastha Ashrama' again.

Even when the customs of 'Brahma' marriage were at the time of 'Saptapadi' there are some pledges which prove the Hindu marriage as a social contract. In the beginning of a marriage ceremony the bride sits on the lap of her father and on the right side of the bridegroom. Before sitting on the left side of the bridegroom bride takes seven promises from him.
i) If you accept to keep me with you in pilgrimages, breaking of the fast, Yajna, daana etc. then I will be on your left side;

ii) If you accept to keep me with you at the time of 'Havyadaana' for the 'Devatas' and 'Kavyadaana' for 'pitras' then I will be on your left side;

iii) If you accept to give me the charges of the proper management of your house hold including your relative and your cattle then I will be on your left side;

iv) If you accept me to store the grain etc. whatever comes in the house and spend it in a proper way with my consultation then I will be on your left side;

v) When you build the temple, garden, pond, well, vawli etc. then in their ceremonial worship, promise to keep me with you then I will be on your left side;

vi) If you do trade in your own country or foreign country and accept to take my help in buying and selling, then I will be in your left side;

vii) If you promise not to go with other man's wife howsoever beautiful she may be then I will be in your left side.
In the six out of seven promises, it appears that the internal organisation of the family was under the supervision of woman but in the seventh promise, the double standard for man and woman are reflected. Because the man is only prohibited not to have relation with other's wife, but nothing is said regarding relation with other's 'Kanya'.

NIYOGA SYSTEM :

Under the system of Niyoga, if the husband of a woman died or was incapable of procreating children, she was allowed to have conjugal relationship with brother-in-law or some near relations till she got the child. This system was prevalent in ancient India. During Mahabharata and Purana age, many heros were born out of this system. We can mention the birth of 'Pandava' in this connection. Manu also mention this system. After obtaining permission from her husband, the woman could have children from her brother-in-law or any other 'Sapinda' man. Appointed by the 'Guru', a man quietly produce child from a widow after smearing 'Ghee' on his body. But he could not have another child. However if the 'Guru' found that one child was not adequate, he could allow for the second one. Mahabharata mentions the
examples of more than one child from Kunti and Madri. Kunti got three while Madri got two sons from niyoga. Manu at the same time despised such practice thinking it to be animal like.  

Later, this practice was opposed and was gradually abandoned. Swami Dayananda, the founder of Arya Samaj, however permitted such practice to his followers. 

SEXUAL PURITY:

Free sex does not find any place in Indian life. The character of woman is always viewed on the basis of her sexual purity. Woman was made dependent due to the fear of 'Varna Shankara'. Manu emphasised the protection of woman's sexual purity for the fear of pollution of the progeny.

Society gives much importance to woman's sex purity. Her magnanimity and honour in the society depend on her sexual purity and loyalty. Even the slight deviation was not acceptable to the society. Ahillya had to remain as a stone and sita had to under go the 'Agnipariksha'. Yudhisthira expressed doubt towards Droupadi, the wife of five husbands during their ascent to
heaven.

In the present age, due to the influence of psychological analysis of mind and behaviour of man, and the economic philosophy and class struggle of Karl Marx and on the other hand due to the revolt against moral restrictions, the standards regarding sex purity are undergoing change. According to Freud, if the desires are constantly repressed, many unhealthy conflicts appear in the human life and many abnormalities develop. Therefore, it is better to satisfy the sensual desires. The psycho-analytical thinking has influenced literature as well as common thinking. The standards regarding sex purity are changing. Consequently, the life-values of woman are also changing.

PROPERTY RIGHT :

The author of the shastras have discussed the various aspects of woman's life in detail. They have established her duties and loyalties regarding religion but she is not given the right to property. Chiranji Lal Parasar in his book 'Nari aur Samaj' discusses this as, "excepting some of the part in the South, in ancient India, sociologist have not considered woman to be inheritor of property in any stage. They have not given her share either in the property of the father or the husband."13 Among the North Eastern tribes Khasi and Garo, because of the matrilineal organisation, woman has got the
complete right over the property. Manu has not considered woman to have any right to property except 'Stri Dhana'. According to Yajnavalka, in the divided family, the widow could have right on her husband's property provided there were no sons, grand sons, great grand sons. According to him, wife is one half of the husband. So, after the death of the husband, his other half remains alive. According to the Vatsyayan, the woman could have right over property only during her life-time.

No change in Woman's right to property was seen during the Muslim-age.

During the British time, law regarding the right to property of the Hindu woman was passed in 1937, in which she was given the share in the husband's property along with the son and thus her limited status was terminated. In 1955, more rights were given to woman after making amendment in the property right of woman.

**STRI DHANA :**

It is very difficult to define 'Stridhana'. Because shastrakara only proceed to describe its different varieties. The term 'Stridhana' used to devote property over which women are allowed to have their own more or
According to A.S. Altekar, the origin of the 'Stridhana' was vitally connected with the custom of the bride price (Sulka). It helped for the development of 'Stridhana'. Even when no bride price was paid, the bride used to receive some wedding gift in the Vedic-age. The gifts given to bride on such occasion usually consisted of ornaments and clothes that could be worn by woman alone.

The scope of 'Stridhana' was broadened in the course of time. Now gifts given by the husband even subsequent to the marriage were included in it. But in the Vedic-literature, there is no mention about the precise scope of 'Stridhana'.

Manu has described six types of 'Stridhana'; (1-3) gifts given by father, mother and brother at any time; (4) gifts of affection given by the husband; (5-6) and presents given by anybody either at the time of marriage, or at the time when the bride is taken to her new home --

"Adhyagyanadhyavahnikam duttam cha pritikarmani bhatramatripitripripraptam Shadvidham Stridhanam Smritam."
NARI DHARMA :

In 'Shastras', we find the account of woman's 'Dharma'. Woman following such 'Dharma' were considered 'Devi' and those who did not follow 'Kulta'. Manu has clearly described the 'Dharma' of woman in his smriti. According to him, woman should never do any thing independently in all the three stages of life -- Childhood, youth and old age --

"Balya ba yuvatya ba vridhaya vapi yoshita
na swatantrayena Kartvam Kinchit Karyam grihesvapi"\(^\text{17}\)

The above saying is to keep the woman dependent through out the life.

Woman should not have the desire to live separately from father, husband, or sons, because by leaving them she condemns both the families. She should always be smiling, expert in house hold, and thrifty in the expenditure of the family and to manage the store of the house well. She should serve the man with whom she is married by her parents all through her life, and after his death, should continue his 'Shraddha'. A chaste wife should always worship the husband like God, even if he is characterless and adulterer. She should never do anything
against her husband and she has no right of 'Vrata', 'Yajna', 'Upavasa' etc. without her husband. Husband is the only one who gives her happiness in this world and the 'Paraloka'. Even after the death of her husband she should lead the life of 'Brahmcharya' and should make her body weak by taking only flower, roots, fruits etc.

Thus, a woman who live the life keeping the mind and words control and followed her 'Dharma' gets the fame in this world and gets her husband again in the next life.

WOMAN AND HER SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP IN NOVELS:

From the very beginning, the fiction-literature of Hindi has been conscious of the life of woman and her different problems. Viewing the fiction before Premchand it becomes clear that those novels presented profound belief in the ancient ideals; and the social relationship of woman were presented on these basis. It is clear that the Pre-Premchand fiction literature was influenced by reformatory movements but the effect of reformation did not completely reflect the full solution of the social problems. The freedom of woman, purda system, widow re-marriage and many other problem remained unsolved. The novels of that age presents the various problem of family life, joint family, family quarrels, widow-life and many
other problems like prostitution, woman-education, Sati system, dowry, incompatible marriage etc. Beside these problems, we also find the ideals of chaste woman.

The novelist of Premchand - Era focused their attention on the bad conditions of woman and ways of its improvements. At the same time they could not ignore the futility of traditional values and the need for new values in the changing social condition. Woman's status was lower since the beginning. Her wisdom, duties, knowledge and life were dedicated to the man. Not only this but the woman was blamed for the immoral behaviour of man.

The developments of social consciousness, brought the feeling of woman's emancipation. The need for the new standards of her conduct and life-values was felt. But the novelist of that age did not demand clearly that woman should not be judged according to the older standard. The presentation of life in those novels clearly reflected the need for changing the standard of the life-values of woman. The character of Premchand's Nirmala is something of this sort. The marriage of Nirmala to an aged person because of the inability of her mother to provide dowry, and its subsequent effect is a strong blow to institutionalism. The novel Kankal by Jai Shankar Prasad
bring to light the emptiness of society and meaninglessness of traditional moral values. On one hand, Yamuna who is rejected by the family and her lover remains pure in body and mind while staying with a prostitute, on the other hand, Kishori who is married and honourable in society did not love her husband. She stays with the scoundrel 'Mahatma' and accept him as her husband. Jai Shankar Prasad in his satirical style presented through the two contradictory characters the need for changing the values of the life of the woman. It is also clear in Chitralekha by Bhagawati Charan Verma, that true morality lies in the purity of mind and the person showing outer morality is Unworthy. Many other novels of Bhagawati Charan Verma give accounts of the immoral relations in the families. The novel 'Bhule Vesare Chitra' many be cited as an example.

The novelists of that era have tried to discuss the moral and immoral behaviour of woman not in relation to the then prevalent standards but on the basis of the basic motivation of her behaviour. Such description appears compatible with the contemporary age. It is also helpful in the progress of the woman. In the novels of Premchand-Era, woman does not appear to oppose institutionalism but the life which she leads appears to
produce revolt against the rules and regulations of the society.

The novels of Premchand-Era have mainly portrayed the problems of woman after marriage. During this age the woman was beginning to get the status of equality in the society but continued to be exploited by man. Because of the development of personality, the woman at present could no longer bear the exploitation in a natural way. So, many contradictions appear in her life. On the other hand, her interests and feelings became important, because of which, many problems to her relation with other man appeared in literature. During this age, because of relatively less developed personality, the love of woman was mainly traditional. After Premchand-Era, she felt the personal freedom for the first time, and this consciousness flowed, breaking boundaries of society. This social situation prove to be favourable to the Psycho-analyst-novelist.

Ajneya is one of such psycho analyst-novelist. His novels portrayed the changing life-values of woman in details. His women-characters rebel against the traditional values and appear conscious of their existence. They have never compromised with the social
institutionalism. Shashi of Shekhar Ek Jiwani and Rekha of Nadi Ke Dwip, not only rebel against the institutionalism but break all restriction because of the consciousness of their existence.

**PROHIBITED RELATIONSHIP**:

There are some relations in which the physical relationship is considered sinful. Actually, those relations contrary to what are described in 'Shastras' and in social rule and regulation, are prohibited, and such relations are looked down upon by the society. Although there are many prohibitions in the society because of the influence of Freudian psychology, such prohibited relations can be seen in literature.

Not only in the Hindu social order, but in the Hindu law, some relations are prohibited in which marriage is not possible. These are called 'degrees of prohibited relationship'. This condition requires that the parties to an intended marriage must not, ordinarily, be within the 'degree of prohibited relationship'. There are four categories of prohibited relationship. These are as follows:

1) Lineal ascendants and descendants;
ii) Former spouses of lineal ascendants and descendants;
iii) Former wives of one's brother, uncles (both paternal and maternal) grand uncles (also both paternal and maternal); and
iv) (a) brother - sister, (b) uncle - niece, (c) aunt-nephew and (d) all first cousins (both parallel and cross).  

According to the rules and regulation of the society there are some relations which are considered sacred in which the physical relationship is beyond imagination. The following are such relationship:-

(i) Father and daughter:

The relationship between father and daughter is considered to be sacred. In such relationship, physical relationship is not even thought of. But such pure relationship has received severe blow from Freudian View. He has proved that 'Electra complex' is found as a result of repression of love of daughter for the father.

(ii) Brother and sister:

The brother and sister relationship is also considered to be a sacred relationship. Such relations can be of many types - blood relation, relation relating to 'Dharma', relation relating to the common place of living etc. The blood relations includes besides the real brother
sister relationship, cousin of various orders. The physical relationship between brother and sister is unthinkable. There are no alternatives other than 'brother and sister' for addressing the male and female in India.

In Ajneya's novel *Shekhar Ek Jiwani*, Shekhar's sister Saraswati, while not having any physical relationship appears to be influence Psychologically in Freudian way. The dream, experienced by Shekhar, clearly shows that he has in his unconscious mind some relation with her which is different from what he has in his conscious mind.  

Ajneya has visualised the relationship between Shekhar and Saraswati, not in the light of brother-sister only, but in the form of natural innate way. Similarly, many critics have criticised this relationship between Shashi and Shekhar as attachment towards sister. But they are not real brother and sister. Their relationship is only due to living in the same place, because of which their relation have become deeper. But all this is only at the conscious level. Shashi&Shekhar uncovsciously are attracted to each other and in the end, accept the fact that they were in love with each other.
(iii) Father-in-law and daughter-in-law:

The relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is also considered a pure relationship. In this relationship physical relation is also considered sinful.

(iv) Brother-in-law and sister-in-law:

The relationship between the wife of one’s younger brother and older brother is also considered a pure relationship. In the upper caste in this relation, physical relation is not possible. But in some lower caste, one can marry the wife of one’s elder brother.

In the ancient time, under the 'Niyoga' system, woman could obtained child from the brother of her husband, younger or elder, when the husband was either dead or was not able to get the child.

For obtaining child, Manu in his smriti has also accepted the 'Niyoga' system. But in the absence of this aim, the wife of elder brother is similar to the wife of the 'Guru' and the wife of younger brother is like daughter-in-law.²¹

Although, the relationship between the woman and the younger brother of husband is the old relationship
there have been qualitative changes in this relationship.

However, with the development of civilization and culture the relationship with the younger brother of husband attained a higher level. The untented natural humour between this relationship appears in various forms in literature.

In the later ages, a new difference appeared in this relationship. A person started giving motherly regards to the wife of elder brother. Similarly, the woman has also started considering the younger brother of their husbands as their sons and worthy of motherly affection. In this context, the relation between Laxman and Sita can be cited as an ideal example.

Even, inspite of their ideal, many form of such relationship have been prevalent in the real life, according to the differences in situations and customs. Such varieties of forms are still found. In the modern age, this relation is taking the form of friendship.

Prohibited relations are despised in the eyes of social conventions. However, there are no eternal principles behind such prohibitions. The principles which are prevalent in one society may be undesirable in the
other society. We can take examples. In south India, there is a variant of this type of marriage i.e. the marriage between a man and his sister’s daughter. The same circulation of woman can also be demonstrated from ‘Dudh Lautana’ (return of milk) principle of cross-cousin marriage of the Gond of Bastar, Madhya Pradesh. In this convention, a woman moves to a family through cross-cousin marriage and similarly, her daughter comes back to house of her brother as his son’s wife. Such relations are prohibited in other society. Actually, this system has social significance. Every society has developed its own principles for its necessity and convenience.

To maintain the social order, some social rules and regulation are made and boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable are established. The acceptance of such rules is motivated by the expectancy of reward, not following such rules is associated with the fear of committing sin. So, the social relationship are validated against religion. The development of science has shaken the religious bases and the roots of social orders. The joint family of the rural civilization is marching towards the towns. In the towns, because of comparative social anonymity, the caste has lost its significance.

After analysing the social relationship of woman, one thing regarding the life-values, becomes clear
that she has different loyalty in the society. She has not been able to attain equal rights with man. But this is also true that in the context of changing time of today, there is a change in her and she becomes more conscious of her existance. She has started participating in activities with man. However, she has some weaknesses which are impediments in her way ---

i) Woman can be raped but she cannot. She is physically different from man and she has less strength;

ii) The birth of a child, out of love relation indicates physical relationship. Man contributes more but woman has to become mother alone. She is only considered responsible for the illegitimate child. She is blamed by the society. However, there is no physical and social effect visible in the case of man. Her own biological capacity became the curse for her own tragedy;

iii) It is established by genetic science that the determination of sex of the child is due to the combination of various chromosomes. The pairing of X Chromosomes of the female with X chromosomes of male results in the birth of a daughter while the pairing of X chromosomes of the female with Y chromosomes of the male,
results in the birth of male child. Since female have X chromosomes while the male have both and the sex of the child depends more on the male than female. It means that woman is not responsible for the sex of child. But it is strange that in the society the woman is considered responsible for the birth of son or daughter and man may marry many women for getting a male child;

iv) Mostly, in the society women are exploited by women.

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