INTRODUCTION

1. Significance of Women’s Empowerment

It is universally accepted that like all human beings, women too, have a right to freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity as their male counterparts do, all over the world. Yet the position of women has always been a subordinate one. Despite protests, movements, agitations and other means of resistance, there has been no respite from this social evil. Gender discrimination continues even in the present times. There has been a steady decline in the proportion of the female sex all over the world as well as in India. Though the number of working women is increasing, there are certain fields in which the entry of women is still barred. In the world of sports, the female players are paid less than their male counter-parts. In the higher jobs too female diplomats, female politicians, female judges and female executives have a long way to go to attain the equality in proportion. The span of longevity, the rate of mortality and the range of immunisation among the females are still the negative indicators. The slogans of equality are constantly raised but in actual practice, the situation has remained as grim as ever.

Health care, education, literacy rate, income ratio and social status are the different parameters by which the position of women is gauged to be lower than that of men. In every walk of life, women were and are still marginalised and of lower than status than men because women always have been subjugated to subordinate status by men. This problem of subordination and marginalisation of women needs a solution.

The empowerment of women is one of the solutions to the problems of inequality, subordination and marginalisation that women face in the society. However this kind of empowerment is only partial, for all though they have economic and political power, they are kept out of decision making or they are dependent on their husband, father or brother for crucial decisions. Hence in order to change this situation, it is necessary that women have to realise their own nature and understand the value of their own existence. When they realise their own nature they will have confidence and
will participate in decision making independently. This will be possible only when they will be empowered spiritually. However, this also means to bring a significant change in the social mentality. Many a time, a woman has confidence and has realised her own potential, but society prohibits and blocks her progress, her problems cannot be solved. In other words, to solve the problems of the woman, and in order to empower her it is also necessary that the society has to change its patriarchal mentality.

In a different language, the point could be explained in this way; merely making women spiritually empowered is not enough. In addition to that, it is also necessary to bring the change in the mentality of the society. It has been observed that although theoretically, it is accepted that man and woman both are equal, the factual evidences show that in many situations woman is being marginalized, subordinated and enslaved in their social and family life. It is further observed that she is treated as the private possession of her father before marriage and that of husband after marriage. The marginalization and oppression of woman has all long been legitimized by traditional norms, values, institutions, and the religious scriptures which have provided the ideological foundation to patriarchy. The patriarchal foundation of social structure is responsible for women’s inferiority, oppression, disadvantages, and threats by man in society. These problems of women have endlessly continued from ancient times. These problems have almost become perennial part of human society.

This happens because the relation between human being and society are governed by the social and ethical norms. Each person including a woman is designated a certain position in the community. Social rules stipulate a woman to be in the lowest situation, reducing participation and enforcing subordination and inferiority on women. The fact that she belongs to the other sex makes her situation blocked. She is marginalized in all the prevailing social systems. The gender bias presumes that the female has weaker position with all seriousness and sincerity. Hence, in order to change this situation, it is necessary to change the ideology that is patriarchy, on which the social structure is based.
Patriarchy here means the male dominance, the general ever-fixed mentality of the society which has been cultivated and developed among men in society right from their childhood. Man thinks that he is superior to woman and gives subordinate status to her, which in turn is reason for sex discrimination. Hence, in order to solve the problems of women and in order to make them empowered, it is necessary to change the mentality and psychology of the society. Such mentality of the society can be changed only if society and people both realise the exact and accurate knowledge of nature of woman, man and society.

Hence in order to make woman empowered it is necessary that woman as well as society both change their mentality. Here a problem arises; how will such realization of the woman and the man in the society become possible? What type of philosophy is necessary to adopt in order to change the mentality of the woman about herself and that of the society about women? There are different schools of Indian or Western philosophy that will enable us to solve these issues. Buddhism, one of the schools of Indian philosophy, is not an exception to this. It enables us to solve these issues.

Let us see how Buddhism will help us to make woman empowered.

If we take an insight into the history of Indian philosophy, we find that many attempts have been made to solve, dissolve and resolve the problems that are part of human life. Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism was not an exception to this. He also had tried to solve the problem of suffering that comes to life. While solving the problem of suffering, he had pointed out that Tṛṣṇā or uncontrolled and unlimited desire of man is the basic cause of suffering. He further said that man can make himself free from suffering by eradicating the Tṛṣṇā. Here what Gautama Buddha advocated that it is the human nature that is responsible for both suffering and also eradication of suffering. Although this is the case, Gautama Buddha was quite aware of the fact that social customs and practices are also responsible for the suffering of the individual especially, women’s suffering. That is why he said that a woman’s life is full of
suffering. When her husband dies, she becomes unhappy. When her husband marries with and other lady, she becomes unhappy, when her child dies, she becomes unhappy.¹

Understanding the social reasons behind the suffering that comes to woman’s life, the Buddha had insisted on the equality between man and woman and tried to convince the people to behave with women impartially. These thoughts of the Buddha are abundantly reflected in the Pāli literature.

It is accepted in the Buddhism as well as reflected in the Buddhist literature that there is a biological difference between women and men, but they have similar intellectual, mental as well as spiritual capabilities. The Buddhism accepts that every human being, independent of the consideration of sex, gender, class etc. is composed of five elements (Pañcakkhandhā); namely rūpa skandha, saṃjñā skandha, vedanā skandha, saṃskāra skandha and vijñānā skandha. On this basis, Buddhism has advocated the equality between man and women and thus has transcended the gender difference. It treats man and woman at par with each other. For example;

1) In the Kosala Saṃyutta the Buddha contradicts the belief that the birth of a daughter was not as much a cause of joy as that of a son.² This was a belief which the ritualistic Brahmanins had contributed in strengthening. The Enlightened One, on the others hand, says that a daughter as well as a son both are givers of joy to their parents and other members of the family. This event shows that the Buddha does not discriminate between genders.

2) His teachings have always been directed towards the removal of sorrows and sufferings in the cycle of human life.³ Ignorance poverty, ill-will and disease cause sorrows and bring sufferings like sickness, depravity, pains and ultimately death through the phases of growth from childhood, to youth and old age. The end of life is death and these phases of life are common to both men as well as women.

¹ Anne Feldhaus; Image of Women in Maharashtrian (ed), p.102.
² SN. 1.86
³ Harvey, Brian, Peter; An introduction to Buddhist ethics: foundations, values, and issues, pp. 31-33.
3) The right path of conduct is the key to understand the place of sorrows and sufferings in human life. The Buddha teaches the Eight-fold path of righteousness. Training both a boy as well as a girl to follow the path of righteousness is necessary. These events in the Buddhist literature show that the undue importance given to the male child as the redeemer of his parents does not find any relevance in the teachings of the Buddha

4) Further, the daughter is as much the source of joy as is the boy in a family. The Buddha gave high social status and respect to women. According to him, the woman had a dignified and an important role to play in the society, and he defined it with great insight, fitting her harmoniously into the social fabric. She was a lovable member of the household, held in place by numerous relationships, and respected above all, as the mother of worthy sons.

5) Further, the Buddha recognizes the fact that these duties do not constitute the whole of her life, but to serve as a complement to the good life already enjoined in his religion to all his followers, irrespective of their sex. With regard to the spiritual potentialities, her capacity to attain the religious goal is not inferior to man. According to the Buddha, woman holds the equal position

‘Such a virtuous lady who possesses religious devotion, cultivates virtue, is endowed with wisdom and learning and is given to charity makes a success of her life in this very existence.’

All these references show that Gautama Buddha accepted that men and women are equal with regard to their spiritual capacity and their personality development. This in fact he tried to convey to the people. Here a question arises; why was it necessary for the Buddha to convey this fact to the people? Answer to this question within the Buddhist philosophical framework is that people of those times were not aware either of

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4 Dhammananda, K.Sri; *What Buddhist Believe*. P. 179.
5 S.I.86. Itthi pi hi ekacciyā seyyā posa jānādhīpa medhāvinī sīlavatī sassudevā Patibbatā Tassā yo jāyati poso sūro hoti disampati evam subhagiya putto rajjam pi anusāsati. 
6 AN. IV. 265. Quoted in Dhammadīvari; *Buddhist Essays I*, p. 13.
7 SN.IV.250. Saddhāya sīlena ca yīdhā vaḍḍhati Paññāya cāgena sutena cūbhayaṃ etādiśi sīlavati upāsikā ādiyati sāram idheva attano ti.
their personality or their nature. This ignorance about one’s own nature determined their action in the society. That is why instead of understanding the equality between man and woman with regards to the personality; they gave importance to the biological difference. It is because of this ignorance, they could not make the distinction between sex and gender. Throughout his discourses related to woman and her problems, Gautama Buddha intended to expose this fact and tried to remove the ignorance of the people regarding woman. As it seems the Buddha believed that when man, woman as well as society have real knowledge about themselves, then they will be empowered to solve their problems.

In fact, the Buddha did not talk about the concept of spiritual empowerment of woman but the investigations of epistemological and metaphysical considerations behind the Buddhist thoughts enable us to understand the Buddhist concept of empowerment. This concept of empowerment will enable us, further; to solve the problems that arise in a woman’s life 2500 years ago he laid down his thoughts about women that were substantial enough to guide feminist thoughts and movements. Modern scholars of feminism have tried to study the thoughts of the Buddha on women after comprehending the significance of his views. Some of such attempts are reviewed here;

**Review of literature on ‘The Buddhist Thought on Women’:**

1) **Dhammananda K. Sri** has explained the women’s position in Buddhism in his book title “What Buddhist Believe” that the Buddha gave women full freedom to participate in a religious life. The Buddha was the first religious Teacher who gave this religious freedom to women. Before the era of the Buddha, women’s duties had been restricted to the kitchen; women were not even allowed to enter any temple or to recite any religious scripture. During the Buddha’s time, women’s position in society was very low. He was criticized by the prevailing establishment when He gave this freedom to women. He moved to allow women to enter the Holy Order was extremely radical for the times. Yet the Buddha allowed to prove them and to show that they too had the
capacity like men to attain the highest position in the religious way of life by attaining Arahatthood.\(^8\)

Dhammananda K. Sri in his book has elaborated the position of women in Pre-Buddhist society as well as her position in Buddhist society and on that background, he has pointed out the importance of the Buddha’s views towards the woman.

2) Dewaraja Lorna in his book entitled “Buddhist Women in India and Precolonial Sri Lanka” has elaborated the Buddhist doctrine of salvation in his book. According to him, this doctrine gives importance to the efforts of an individual. It says that if any individual independently of the consideration of gender, sex, caste, class etc. takes enough efforts, then he can attain the Nibbāna and thus accepts the possibility of salvation of woman and further accepts the spiritual equality of every individual including man and woman. This assertion of women’s spiritual equality is explicitly enunciated in the text. It has had a significant impact on the then society. People started to believe that women and men alike are able to attain the Buddhist goal by following the prescribed path. No external assistance in the form of a priestly intermediary or veneration of a husband is necessary. In domestic life in ancient India, religious observances and sacrifices were performed jointly by husband and wife. In Buddhism, however, all religious activities, whether meditation or worship, are acts of self-discipline created by individuals, independent of one’s partner or outside assistance.\(^9\)

3) Gross Rita M. has discussed her views in her book entitled “Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism.” She has pointed out that the position of femaleness is no barrier to the achievement of the Buddhist human ideals takes two forms in Buddhist texts. The much more common variation on this theme essentially proclaims that “the dharma is neither male nor female”. That gender is irrelevant or even non-existent when one truly understands the Buddhist teachings. One also finds some infrequent claims that in fact say for those with good motivation, femaleness is actually an advantage. Though that assessment is

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\(^8\) Dhammananda, K.Sri; Ibid, pp. 227 - 228.

not by any means common or well-known, its very existence is important for gathering the fullness of an accurate record of Buddhist attitudes towards gender.\(^{10}\)

Gross Rita M. has also explained her views on the pattern of society that evolved after Buddhism. The patriarchal pattern of society existed before the advent of Buddhism. It was a male-dominated social structure. Buddhist teachings and doctrines have emphasized the equality of gender and the removal of discrimination. “The Dhamma is neither male nor female: is the doctrine that is stressed bringing out the fact that gender difference is not applicable in the considerations of religious practices. Gross Rita M. has analyzed and reconstructed the feminist history of Buddhism elaborating the fact that Buddhism recognizes equality of men and women and has no place for differences made among individuals in a society. Her account gives the feminist understanding of the teachings of Buddhism.

4) Blackstone Kathryn R. has expressed her views on the struggle for liberation in her book entitled “Women in the Footsteps of Buddha: Struggle for Liberation in the Therigāthā” She brings out the fact that the quest for liberation begins with the renunciation of material life. It is stated that the life of renunciation is a stepping stone to the quest of liberation. Without renunciation, liberation is not possible. Blackstone Kathryn R. mentions that the life of renunciation is intrinsic to the quest for liberation. There are rare occasions in Pāli texts in which a person attains liberation prior to renouncing, but, overall, renunciation is viewed as a prerequisite to liberation. Doctrinally, the rationale for this insistence on renunciation is clear: the secular world of family, kinship, occupation, and possessions is seductively attractive. In order to realize the deceptiveness and futility of that attractiveness, women and men must separate themselves from it. It is simply too difficult to ‘see things as they really are’ while one is immersed in secular life. The process of attaining liberation itself can be viewed as the successive renunciation of the assumptions, attitudes, and evaluations that characterize the human condition. In attaining liberation, one must disentangle oneself from the emotional, intellectual, and social habits of mind that perpetuate one’s

continuing existence in the cycle of samsāra. The first step in this process is the physical act of renunciation. One must initiate the process by transforming one’s lifestyle and behavior. In the process of the transformation of one’s consciousness first comes the external change, then the internal.¹¹

5) Narasu P. Lakshmi in his book entitled “The Essence of Buddhism” has pointed that Buddhism being a matter of self-control and self-culture, it regards every individual, whether man or woman, as a complete whole. According to him the Dhamma does not concern itself with those relations between man and woman in which one sex is regarded as completing the other. But in all Buddhist countries the influence of Buddhism has been such that woman has always had fair play. She is given perfect freedom and is bound by no rigid ties.¹²

The dependence of one sex on the other is a notion that prevailed prior to the emergence of Buddhism. Man and woman are complementary to one another and one half is completed by the second half. Such notions were prevalent in Buddha time. Buddhism rejects notions of being complementary to each other. Each individual is a complete whole. Each is an absolute chip of the bloc. Therefore each individual enjoys full and equal opportunity to develop fully. This is equally true of the spiritual attainments of an individual. In this way the book by Narasu P. Lakshmi brings out the fact that there is no hierarchy between the sexes and that there is complete equality. A man and a woman – both have the same status, the same composition in personality traits, the same material attainments and the same spiritual capacities.

6) Horner I.B. in her book entitled “Women Under Primitive Buddhism; Laywomen and Almswomen” has pointed that during the Buddhist epoch there was a change. Women came to enjoy more equality, and greater respect and authority than ever hitherto accorded them. Although their activities were confined within certain spheres – principally the domestic, social and religious spheres – their position in general began to improve. The exclusive supremacy of man began to give way before the increasing emancipation of woman. It was acknowledged that they were what they

¹² Narasu, P. Lakshmi; The Essence of Buddhism. p. 93.
were silently claiming to be – responsible, rational creatures with intelligence and strong willed. It was impossible for the men, steeped as they were in the Buddhist teaching, not to respond to the constant proofs in daily life of the women’s powers of devotion, self-sacrifice, courage and endurance. They ceased to regard women as approximating in degree more nearly to animals than to themselves; and, on the contrary, became more acutely aware of the resemblances between men and women.\textsuperscript{13}

Prior to Buddhism, supremacy was assigned to a man. This notion of the superiority of the male to the female had lost its ground on account of the emphatic assertion of the equality between man and woman. Each woman, like each man, was now considered as a human being. It was accepted that reason, intelligence and will-power were equally possessed by the woman as well as the man. The position of women under Buddhism improved and equaled the position of men in the social set-up.

7) \textbf{Diana Paul} has expressed her views on the position of women in her book “Women in Buddhism: images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Traditions.” There are two views that are pursued in assessing the power of women. One view is that of sexuality and the other view is that of asexuality of women. The mere sexuality may prove to be destructive but asexuality gives power to women that are highly creative position and spiritually enlightening.\textsuperscript{14}

When we have taken the review of some of the texts related to Buddhist thought and Buddhist Literature on women, we find that:

1) Scholars have described the social status of woman in Buddhism and have tried to show that woman had higher status. However such description does not enable us to solve the problems that women are facing today.

2) Scholars have pointed out that the Buddha had accepted equality between man and woman but he had not investigated the metaphysical, epistemological, philosophico-anthropological considerations.

\textsuperscript{13} Horner, IB: \textit{Women Under Primitive Buddhism; Laywomen and Almswomen}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{14} Diana Y. Paul; \textit{Women in Buddhism: images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Traditions}, p. XXV.
3) Diana Paul has tried to expose the problem of sex with reference to Nibbāna and has tried to show that Nibbāna is possible for woman either with sex-transformation or without sex-transformation. That is sex does not create any bar in her attainment of Nibbāna. No doubt this is an important issue that is related with the right of woman for Mokṣa or liberation. However, Diana Paul has not elaborated what type of efforts woman has to take in order to get liberation. She has also not talked about metaphysical and epistemological considerations behind the attainment of Nibbāna.

4) Rita Gross has elaborated the methodology for studying the women in Buddhism. It is her contribution to feminist methodology in general and Indian feminist methodology in particular. However, she has not clearly pointed out that the concept of gender is caused by ignorance. That is she has not elaborated the role of Ṭṛṣṇā and Avidyā in the formation of concept of gender and in the process of socialization and enculturation.

In other words, looking through this kind of literature on Buddhist woman, it is found that no investigations of any epistemological and metaphysical considerations were done in Buddhist Thought on woman. Further, nobody has tried to investigate the Buddhist concept of empowerment in the Buddhist thought on woman. Hence, it is necessary to investigate the metaphysical and epistemological considerations behind the thoughts of Buddha on woman and with the help of this investigation to further, formulate the Buddhist concept of empowerment. Therefore, in this thesis, an attempt has been made to investigate and formulate the Buddhist concept of empowerment taking into view the epistemological and metaphysical considerations behind the Buddha’s thought on woman.

2. Methodology of Study

This research is an attempt to present the Buddhist perspective on empowerment of women with special reference to early Buddhism. It is an attempt at studying basically the Pāḷi Buddhist literature which is the primary source together with the
commentaries of related works. In addition to the Buddhist literature, the literature on feminism and gender studies has also been considered to understand the concept of empowerment. Whenever it is necessary to investigate the metaphysical and epistemological considerations behind the Buddhist concept of empowerment with the help of literature of Hinayāna e.g. Pāli Tripitakas, Nikāyas, and commentaries on them and Mahāyāna texts written by Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Diṇnāga and Dharmakīrti have to be duly understood. For the historical investigation and critical inquiry, a search into the Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist literary texts and theological treatises are also used. Such studies include the study of Sanskrit and Pāli texts.

3. Structural Outline of the Thesis

Introduction

The introductory part of this study deals with the significance of women’s empowerment, scope of the study, methodology of the study and structural outline of the thesis.

The first Chapter: “Empowerment of Women in Pre-Buddhist Era” deals with the empowerment of women in Pre-Buddhist era, it is necessary to discuss the general concept of empowerment, kinds of empowerment and nature of empowerment of women. Empowerment means the enhancement of an individual’s capacity to know, to act and to enjoy. It brings confidence, awareness, mobility, ability to choose and capacity to control all types of resources and possess decision-making power. Thus Empowerment can be divided into four kinds; namely individual empowerment, family empowerment, organizational empowerment and community empowerment. The nature of empowerment of women refers to the self-realization of woman and her active participation in decision-making in her social and personal life. Women’s empowerment deals with woman’s holistic development within her social, cultural, economic, political, mental and spiritual development to face challenges and overcome
the social and cultural barriers. Within this framework it has to evaluate the status of women in pre-Buddhist period. The empowerment of women in the Pre-Buddhist period has been studied by using the framework of empowerment as the criteria for setting the status of woman in the society. With the help of feminist reading of social and moral thoughts on which Pre-Buddhist society was based, one will understand the status of women in Pre-Buddhist society on the one hand and on the other hand be able to expose the patriarchal power politics in the society. To serve this purpose one has to study the social and moral thoughts that were prevalent in those days from feminist point of 1) Doctrine of Purushārtha, 2) Concept of Rūpā, 3) concept of Asharmavyawastha 4) concept of Karmasiddhāna and rebirth 5) feminist interpretation of ideal women in Hindu culture and 6) feminist interpretation of Beeja-Kṣetra-Nyāya.

This chapter has discussed the criteria for empowerment as well as feminist comprehension of concepts, doctrines and thoughts within Indian social and moral philosophical context to show that women belonging to Pre-Buddhist Era were not empowered. Although the glorification of women in different spheres show that women had high status in the society, it does not mean that they were really empowered. The feminist enquiry into the important doctrines has shown that women were marginalised. Further, if it is accepted for the sake of an argument, that they were empowered then this empowerment was not achieved through the process of self-realization. This kind of empowerment would not allow them to change their life to suit their informed choices.

The second Chapter: “Understanding the Concept of Empowerment: From Buddhist Perspective” explains the Concept of Empowerment: from the Buddhist Perspective. In order to reveal the Buddhist Concept of Empowerment, it discusses the nature of empowerment of women from the epistemological and metaphysical considerations view point and explains the reason for women not being empowered. Further, empowerment is not an external feature for her but an inbuilt one that needs detailed study. However, the possibility occurs when she has reflected and has gained self-realization of her life.
The self-realization of women is related to actualization of desires and possibilities for empowerment. This actualization is related to its application in the society where woman as well as society has an important role to play. The woman will achieve real self-realization only when there is change in the mental attitude of both women and society. Change in mental attitude of woman enables her to break social and cultural barriers and change in mental attitude of society enables the society to accept the independent existence of woman and to provide such opportunities to woman that encourages her to explore and enhance her capacities. Attempt is also made to inquire into the type of knowledge that both women and society have to acquire for this empowerment. Further, the chapter discusses the aspects of empowerment of women in social, religious, political, and economic context by which Buddhism brought equality and liberty to the empowerment of women. Buddhist concept of empowerment tells us that authentic empowerment of an individual takes place when society and individual both have realised their own nature as well as the nature of one another. The Buddhist Concept of feminist empowerment tells us that a woman who wants to empower herself should not only realise her potential and true nature but must put in efforts to achieve her goals. The society has a responsibility to support her.

The third Chapter: “Buddhist Bhikkhunī who Empowered” shows how the Buddhist Bhikkhunī were empowered and how the Buddhist women fought for liberation at the time of the Buddha. It is further argued that though the Buddha laid down a set of special rules, or Eight Heavy duties (*Atthagarudhammas*) as primary condition for the ordination of women. The nuns were required to strictly adhere to them for the rest of their lives. The Buddhist Bhikkhunī created the space for themselve and attained Nibbāna or Arhathood. In this context, the chapter deals with the contribution of nuns to the development of Buddhism. We have seen that Buddhist nuns on becoming empowered expected the Buddha as well as the members of society to accept the fact that women could attain the Nibbāna as the highest goal of life. These Buddhist nuns have not only empowered themselves but also enabled the members of the society to get empowered while attempting to free them and society from suffering, their contribution must rightly be acknowledged.
The fourth Chapter: “Understanding Empowerment of Laywomen (Upāsikā) in Buddhism” deals with the Understanding Empowerment of Laywomen (Upāsikā) in Buddhism. Laywomen (Upāsikā) refer to one who waits upon or serves (another person). Thus an Upāsikā served mendicants by supplying the items, such as food and robes that they require for their religious lives. The mendicants instructed these lay believers on the practices in Buddhism when they lived as lay devotees. A lay person became an Upāsikā by placing his faith in the Three Jewels: The Buddha, The Dhamma and The Saṅgha. Those who were particularly zealous also observed the five precepts laid down for laymen and laywomen. This refers to members of four members of Buddhist Assemblies (Cutus Parisad) who were empowered to emancipate themselves and were bestowed with beneficial powers to help the human community publicly. These powers included the ability to evaluate and suggest remedies to overcome social evils in the Age of the Buddha.

Further, this chapter throws a light on how she is empowered, how her empowerment is reflected in her behaviour. This chapter also show that the empowerment of Upāsikās contributed to the growth and development of Buddhism. Although they did not renounce the home and family, they did not have any attachments towards worldly life and their family. This was on account of the realization of their potential nature and the nature of the society. Their self-realization was reflected in the roles that they performed for their family, society, monks and for the development of Buddhism.

The fifth Chapter: “Conclusion” concludes the issues rose in the thesis. It can be concluded that the lack of self-realization and self-reliance is the main cause of the problem of the deterioration of the rights of women and her attitude to the society and in turn for the society’s attitude to women. This means that there is ignorance about themselves and the society in which they exist and of the various stages of life. They pass through as a member of society. The cause of their problems is that the society is also ignorant of their potential to affect positive change in the neighborhood. The
Buddhist Perspective on Empowerment has efficiently provided possible solutions for these problems. For example, the ambivalent attitude of women to other women and also the societal ignorance about the capacities of a woman needs to be removed. In this respect too, the teachings of the Buddha offer a handy tool of practical solutions to all housewives and nuns and also to the society of modern times. A look into Buddhism will enable the society to remove the ignorance towards women and rekindle the spirit of wisdom towards the roles and responsibilities of women.