CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF WOMEN WRITING IN RELEVANCE WITH INDIAN JOURNALISM IN PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA

The Role of Women in the Construction of History of Indian Journalism

The venture of women in journalism as well as other professions in India has been described as a product of the social reform and nationalist movement between 19th –20th Century. This movement was undeniably a consequence of British rule. Radha Kumar pointed out that it was because of colonial economy with its new agrarian and industrialization accompanied by administrative structure that led the western educated men in Indian bourgeois society, consisting of largely the three upper castes, sought to reform the existing Indian religion and culture of their own class.¹ Kumar’s idea is shared by Manisha Roy, she agreed that it was due to the western education and a new economy set up in Bengal that led to the birth of a middle class intelligentsia. This class led the subsequent social, religious, cultural, and political resurgence.² Consequently, women’s questions like child marriage, education, purdah, prohibition of widow remarriage, deprivation of property inheritance, temple prostitution, dowry, female infanticide, polygamy, etc. which had crept into Hindu society became the centre of debate and discussion. The concentration on aforementioned women’s issues carried by the educated Indian men had been continued, transformed and intensified according to the change of Indian socio-economic and political scenario. Women’s issues, therefore, were consistently redefined, reconstructed and reinterpreted throughout the period of pre-independent India.³

The low status of Hindu women before the British rule asserted by the mainstream historians was a product of the past socio-cultural configuration in which Indian womanhood was defined. With the exception of the Vedas period (400-1000 BC), when women extremely enjoyed their high position, the later period showed the
gradual decline in women’s condition. The status of Hindu women had reached it lowest ebb when the British started ruling India. In this social atmosphere, women were completely assigned a position subordinate to men.

The mainstream scholars agreed that in the early Vedic period, though, patriarchy was the order of society and the birth of a son was in preference to that of daughter due to the belief that a son was able to perform spiritual salvation for parents. The daughter was never a source of consternation to the family. On the contrary, the birth of scholarly daughter was specially welcomed. Being influenced by the Pre-Aryan culture, which probably was matrilineal, women in this period reached a very high standard of learning. In this account, they were initiated in Vedic studies and entitled to offer sacrifices to Gods. Thus we find two classes of women students, Brahavadinis and Sadyodhahas. The former were lifelong students of theology and philosophy, while the latter used to prosecute their studies until their marriage at the age of 15 or 16. Since the child marriage and the prohibition of inter caste marriage were not in vogue, women not only enjoyed their studentship but also freedom of moving and selecting husbands. As a result, women could move freely with their husbands or lovers, having love marriage and a number of professions. Moreover, widowhood was never a problem for them because levirate or Niyoga (intercourse with any brother or relative of the deceased husband) with the sole purpose of begetting a son for sonless widows and remarriage prevailed. In addition, in spite of polygamy being permitted and practiced by the rich and the ruling class, monogamy was the normal rule of society. However, the main disability from which women suffered in this age was the deprivation of property’s inheritance. Women could access only marriage gifts and movable property during her marriage.

During the Samhitas, Brahmanas and Upanishad age, the changes, which took place in the position of women, were gradual. The sacred initiation, education and career were still a common practice. The marriage age of the bride continued to be about 16. The widow still had the option of re-marriage either with her brother-in-law or with an outsider. There was no tonsure of widows and the sati custom was altogether unknown. Nonetheless, there was a gradual decline in female education as the period
advanced. The system of sending out girls to famous teachers or centres of education came to be discouraged and was substituted by teaching at home initiated by near relations like father, brother, or uncle. Therefore, religious and secular training became possible only in the case of the girls of rich and cultured families. As a consequence, there arose a tendency to curtail the religious rights and privileges of the average women; many functions in the sacrifice, which formerly could be performed by the wife alone now came to be assigned to male substitutes. It is worthwhile noting that though there was nothing like purdah system in this period, certain restrictions on the movement of women started taking shape.\textsuperscript{5}

Until the epic period, the status of Hindu women had not undergone critically change. In Mahabharata, sons and daughters were still treated equally. The religious ceremonies were performed gladly for both of them. Daughters were given full opportunities for education and training. Marriage was not compulsory for women and child marriage was still unknown. Widows could remarry. Interestingly, the custom of women marrying more than one husband at a time was allowed though not at all encouraged and praised. In this period, the facts showed that a large number of women excelled themselves in all spheres as queens, housewives and ascetics. They contributed to the various fields of education and culture.\textsuperscript{6}

The deteriorating position of Hindu women began in the Smriti age. Throughout this period women were considered equated to ‘Sudra’. Thus, they were prevented from studying Vedas. According to Manu, as women in general were perceived as licentious, sensuous, love for ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct, they should be protected by men at all stages of their life. Manu stated that day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families. Their father protects them in childhood, their husband protects them in youth, and their sons in old ages. Since women were not allowed to perform religious ceremony or sacrifice, the only way for them to reach the heaven was only through the service given to their husband, irrespective of his merit.

The prescription of Manu in chaining of women days and nights throughout their life in order to ensure purity of offspring, later resulted in the practice of child
marriage, female infanticide, the prohibition of widow’s remarriage including the introduction of Sati system, burning woman in the funeral of husband for his purity. To be precise, the status of women in this period was extremely low. In the families, they were inferior to their brothers, husbands, and in spite of all glorification of motherhood, in practice, they had very little decision making power in the families. Whereas outside family, they were nothing due to their lack of education and economically dependent. 7 The advent of Muslim invaders in 700 AD and its victory around 1,200 AD worsened the condition of Hindu women. The fear that the powerful Muslim would marry Hindu girls in order to convert them to Islam forced Hindu society to resort to certain social practices. Firstly, Hindu women began to embrace burning pyre called ‘Jauhar’ or ‘Sati’ instead of captivity of Muslim. Secondly, the Hindus, under the compelling circumstances started keeping women in seclusion to keep them out of the sight of the Muslim traitors. This gave rise to the baneful purdah system. Thirdly, the child marriage became prevalent. Fourthly, the female child came to be considered as burden, so it gave rise to female infanticide. Fifthly, the influence of Muslims led to polygamy in society. Sixthly, as the practice of widow remarriage, except in lower classes, disappeared, widows preferred ‘Sati’ instead of remarriage. Seventhly, the strict moral control over widows made their life miserable and turned many of them into whores. Finally, the education became beyond the reach of women in general, only elite class women were given opportunities, that too, only for religious learning and mental discipline. As a result, the ‘household’ was made the only centre of women’s activities and hopes. Amidst this darkness, however, the ‘Bhakti movement’, emphasizing on the equality among humanity in achieving the God through devotion, not ritual performing by Bhramins, to certain extent raised up the status of women. Subsequently, women were encouraged to adopt the ‘Bhakti Marg’. During ‘Bhakti Movement’, many women saints appeared as the religious leaders. It is important to note that, though the Bhakti Movement was an attempt to remove male chauvinistic society as they worshiped and pray of God (Shiva) and Goddess (Durga), it could not leave any permanent impact. The various evil practices were still being observed with great rigidity in Hindu society
throughout the medieval period. This situation continued until the establishment of British regime in India. 8

The above explanation on the status of Indian women as they occupied the respectable position in the Vedic period, and then gradually declined until it reached the lowest condition when Muslims came, has been widely accepted among the mainstream historians since 19th century until the present time. However, recently feminist scholars started challenging its romanticization of the past. According to Uma Chakravarthy and Kumkum Roy, such construction of women’s history more or less distorted the reality of Indian womanhood. They pointed out that certain tendency to romanticize the early situation of Indian women in the Vedic period as emphasizing on their capability of learning philosophy and attaining divine knowledge was rather the exceptional episode than the rule. Further, they questioned on the definition of the Indian women in the Vedic period defined by those historians. As they doubted whether the ‘Aryan women’ could be the representative of Indian women as a whole. In this matter, they argued that since the sources of this popular assumption were based on Sanskrit texts belonging to Brahminism, certainly the reality of women in other vast sections like those who serve the Aryan women had been overlooked. Considering this controversy, Vidyut Bhagwat, raised a pertinent observation in conformity with Chakravarthy and Roy. She stated that the mainstream history of women in early India not merely created the myth of women seers and sages of the golden age. But its homogenization also blurred the agency of women saints of the medieval period, who expressed the agony of Hindu women deriving from family values through their writings and renunciation. 9

It has been widely accepted among the historians that British rule in India holds the landmark for change in the status and position of women in the sub-continent. In the end of the 18th century the British witnessed the lowest point in the life of the Hindu society in Bengal. Polygamy and proliferation of ritual and ostentation went hand in hand with the utter degradation of women especially in the society of orthodox Kulin Brahmins. 10 According to the British’s view, the detrimental condition of women like the high rate of polygamy, the practice of female infanticide, the occasional practice of sati, the forbidden of remarriage for widows and the deprivation of women from

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education and right of property, etc. signified an uncivilized society. This must be the reason why the British constructed the ‘White men’s burden’ concept, viz-a-viz to rescue the Indian women from the oppression of its men and religion. The white men’s burden, the paternalistic theory emphasized that, since it was a moral duty of the ‘imperial race’ to civilize their subject, the empire was being run for the good of the governed.\(^1\) Sketching from the above argument, one has no doubt to conclude that women’s discourse had been interwoven with the political strategies.

The negative perception about Indian society viewed by the British ideologically was based on the conviction of Evangelicals, utilitarian, and liberals as well. While the missionaries of Evangelicals generally believed that as people, society and culture of India was degraded and darkness, Indian society desperately needed the light of gospel.\(^1\) James Mill, the philosopher of utilitarianism presumed that women’s position could be used as an indicator of society’s advancement. He stated “The formula was simple. Among crude people, the women are generally degraded, among civilized people they are exalted”. Having learnt about Hindu society through reading Hlhed’s Code of Gentoo laws, a translation of the Code of Manu, some religious works, and accounts written by travellers and missionaries, Mill concluded: “nothing can exceed the habitual contempt, which the Hindus entertain for their women…. They are held, accordingly in extreme degradation”.\(^1\) It is equally important to be noted that apart from claiming the right of white men burden to alleviate the miserable condition of Indian women, the British at the same time constructed the idea of manly English man and the effeminate Bengali Babu. This particular idea defined Bengali men equated to the English women as they were obsessed with climbing for money making, everything in English and their excessive concentration on studies leading to ‘brain fever’ and feeble development of muscles.\(^1\) According to Guflin, English women and Bengali men were disqualified from playing active part in politics because they both possessed ‘Feminine Traits’. Whereas feminine trait was natural to the former and made them the ‘ornament of life’, for the latter it was unnatural and made them the objects of ridicule.
Responding to the women discourse constructed by the British, claiming the right of superiority to bring civilization or in fact to rule India, the social reformers and nationalists of the receptive social reform movement, who initially were all men, adopted the certain idea of liberalism to improve the status of women and try to abolish the evil practices existing in contemporary Indian society. However, in order to prove their moral superiority they simultaneously sought to follow the idea of Hindu revivalism or neo Hinduism, which re-interpreted the ancient Hindu texts ‘Vedas’ in terms of women’s glorification. The Hindu revivalism claimed that, though the ‘Rig Vedic’ society was patriarchal as the male elder was head of the family, the Vedic period was supposed to be the ‘golden age’ of Indian women. The depressive condition of women was seen in the context of presumed degeneration of Hindu society because of its departure from Vedic ideas due to the invasion of Islam.15

The notion of ‘Golden age’ adopted by the social reformers and nationalists, nevertheless, was subject to certain criticism. In this regard, contemporary feminists felt that the concept of womanhood perceived by the Hindu revivalism considered merely ‘Aryan women’ (the progenitor of the upper class) as the sole object of historical concern, while repudiating the existence of ‘Vedic Dasi (women in servitude), captured, subjugated and enslaved by the conquering Aryan, who also represents on aspect of Indian womanhood.16

The combination of liberalism and Hindu revivalism or West and East, which the social reformers and nationalists took recourse as a means to fight the claim ‘White man burden; played a crucial role in shaping their idea towards women’s cause. They were of view that as the West was more materially progressive than the East, the Indian must learn the superior techniques of organizing material life from them. On the contrary, as the East was distinctly superior to the West spiritually and morally, and as long as the spirituality, which lay within the Indian was concerned, the social reformers and nationalists must adapt themselves to the requirements of a modern material world without losing their own identity. This particular idea later formulated the concept of dichotomy, the world and the home, the outer and the inner, the material and the spiritual, the men and women, etc. The world signified the domain of men who were
involved in the material aspect of life while the home was expected to be a place where
spiritual essence of the national culture was retained and strengthened by women.17 It
is indeed through this comprehension that the concept of new women was formed and
had been carried throughout the period of pre-independent India.

On the question of amelioration of women’s position, the social reformers and
nationalists influenced by western liberalism as well as Hindu revivalism took two
different lines — (a) social upliftment of Indian women through the abolition of
degraded customs like Sati, child marriage, female infanticide, polygamy, dowry,
purdah system, prohibition of widow remarriage, deprivation of property right, etc. (b)
Promotion of female education.18 The second line was very important because the
expansion of education by and large under the context of increased urbanization later
generated the notion of ‘new women’, which basically referred to women of middle
class whose identity was to be defined in opposition to women from lower economic
strata.19 These new women as they were called, were a part of a modernizing
movement, which sought to modify gender relations in the direction of greater equality
between women and men.20

The new women were a consequence of changes set in motion by the British
conquest of India. They were a production of the increased urbanization and the growth
of new professions associated with colonial domination. As their families moved from
the villages to the cities, increased the contact with ‘foreigners’ and witnessed the
erosion of traditional household activity, they were sent to educational institution.
Many of them were educated in their homes before joining a girl’s school for higher
education too. By the end of the 19th century, there were a number of women who were
educated, articulate, mobile, and increasingly involved in public activity.21

Generally the whole idea over the new women imposed by male social
reformers and nationalists expected educated women to be an ideal wife and mother. As
the ideal wife, the educated women was supposed to run the house in an efficient
manner as well as perform a good companionship for their husbands. As the ideal
mother, they had to cherish, protect, bring up and educate their children to be good
freedom fighters for the sake of the country. It is remarkable that though their prior
responsibility was still bounded by domestic domain, they were no longer in purdah like the generation of their mothers or grand mothers. In fact, they could venture outside the home as long as it did not threaten their femininity. Relating to this point, Aparna Basu described that the new women could go to school, college, accompany their husbands to watch public entertainment program, join women’s clubs and associations and do charitable and philanthropic works, which were natural extension of their nurturing maternal role. But in their dress, food habit, behaviour, speech, etc. they had to retain their Indianness. Beside, though they acquired knowledge of English, they should speak in their mother tongue. Moreover, they must not emulate western women’s behaviour like smoking, drinking, riding and becoming aggressive personalities. The westernized behaviour of women in the view of male social reformers and nationalists was considered to be caricature and ridicule as this behaviour showed little care for the well being of family while fondling too much of useless luxuries.22

The notion of new women was clearly shown in ‘Somprakash’, the pro-reform weekly published in 1872. The paper warned that women’s freedom must be preceded by proper education, for otherwise freedom might mean loss of chastity.23 The same notion was also evidenced in the curriculum of school for widows and women’s university founded by Karve in 1896 and 1916. It was observed that the subjects taught by older women who were widows in Karve school, still focused on childcare and home craft. Similarly the women’s university also conducted subjects concerning home science.24

Following the above discussion, we can conclude that the essence of education and other western influences must not distract Indian women in pre-independent period from femininity, chastity, obedience, docility and acquiescence.25 Women’s education, provided to new women in those days was in fact designed only for the purpose of helping them to run their family efficiently and perform their duties in an intelligent manner, not for the purpose of taking jobs and entering into the professions.26 To put it in Madhu Kishwar’s words, ‘women must be enlightened but not independent’.27
The social reform and nationalist movement in pre-independent India was not responsible only for the emergence of new women in 19th and 20th century, but throws light to the first wave of women’s movement too. Studies on nationalist movement and women’s movement showed that it was because of male social reformers and nationalists that, women’s organizations came into existence. The early women’s organizations aiming to improve the condition of Indian women was doubtlessly initiated by male activists. Their female relatives earlier were just the members of these women’s organizations. But later on, women themselves, following the footsteps of their male counterparts, established their own women’s organizations.28 Through women’s organizations, women, thus began to join public life. They mobilized the struggle for freedom of India and emancipation of Indian women via all modes of expression, action, thought, speech, writing, etc. It was nevertheless observed that in the initial time of social reform and nationalist movement, these following activities touched only a small group of the urban, middle and upper class women.29 The movement immensely attracted the attention of many women in various parts of India when the agitation against the partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi movement began. Women participated in the national movement on a large scale only when Mahatma Gandhi took a leadership.30 The advent of Mahatma Gandhi helped in developing the massive participation of women in the struggle for national freedom and freedom of women.31

With special reference to the development of women’s writing and the involvement of women in journalism, various studies on Indian literature and history indicated that though in the early years of social reform movement or what is known as ‘Renaissance era’, a few number of women were involved in writing and journalism, the nationalist sentiment of the political awaking era dramatically raised the number of women venturing into this field. The number of women writers and journalists in pre-independent India reached its highest peak when Mahatma Gandhi took his leadership in the social reform and nationalist movement. According to Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, the theme of women writing during the pre-independent India commonly associated with the reform and nationalist movement. The evil of purdah, the ideal of
compassionate marriage, the hardships of widowhood, and utopian vedic community were clearly recognizable, while some of writings displayed the complex dimension in which women’s subjectivity was being sculpted.\textsuperscript{32} To understand the role of women writers and journalists in relevance with the change of socio-economic and political factor, we can broadly divide the period of women joining journalism as under:

1. 1820 – 1870 : The formative period social reform movement
2. 1870 – 1900 : The Renaissance Era
3. 1900 – 1920 : The extremist or Militant era

This is a convenient age, rather than an absolute way of dividing the period to be covered, overlapping cannot be avoided.\textsuperscript{33}

The Relationship of the Nationalist Movement on Journalism and Women in Journalism During Pre-Independent India

The Formative Period of Social Reform Movement (1820-1870)

The campaigns for religious, social and cultural reform in pre-independent India first appeared in Bengal where the Bengali ‘bhadaloks’ or ‘respectable society’, constituted the older aristocratic elite and newer social groups from mobile caste prompted to educate and upgrade their women.\textsuperscript{34} The term ‘bhadaloks’ being used in colonial context referred to the English educated Bengali men who are primarily from the upper caste Hindu middle class gentry. They were the offshoots of the social change in colonial India resulting from the commercialization, industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, etc. introduced by the British.

The women’s questions inspired the pioneer male social reformers of this period like Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidysagar, Keshab Chandra Sen, M.G. Ranade, Dayananda Saraswati, Debendranath Tagore, Rama Krishna, Swami Vivekanada, etc., to take up the issues embodied the practice of sati, female infanticide, child marriage, purdah system, the prohibition of widow remarriage, the curtail of women’s right in property inheritance, etc. The view of these mentioned male social reformers albeit
being different in details from one to another due to their personal experience, they shared the broader idea of supporting women’s rights in general. To say in short, all of them were eager to restore women their lost identity and their position of absolute equality with men in all walks of life. 35

Rammohan Roy, known as the father of modern India and a bridge between the East and the West or tradition and modernity is regarded as the pioneer social reformer of the 19th century. In 1828, he founded the Brahma Samaj, a model of religious and social reform. The Brahma Samaj movement tried actively to free people from the bondage of caste and religious conservation. Their participants were progressive young men believing in the movement and keenly interested in the emancipation of women. 36

Aiming to propagate the idea of Brahma Samaj movement, Rammohan Roy established a school for girls and published journals. While the founding of girl’s school was the response to the fear of the evangelical intervention of missionaries to convert Hindu girls to Christianity. 37 Journals were founded as the mouthpiece of social reform, education and humanitarian service. 38 The journals promoting social reform movement in Bengal during this period were ‘Samvad Kaumudi’, ‘Bangadoot’ and ‘Gyananes Wan’. 39

The first journal launching by Rammohan Roy was ‘Samvad Kaumudi’. It was launched in 1821, and was regarded as the first Indian vernacular press. The content of journal involved social, cultural, religious and women’s issues. The practice of Sati, child marriage, human sacrifice, rigidity of the caste system, opposition to widow marriages, polygamy, sectarianism, untouchability, addiction to opium, the degraded social position of women and ostracization on account of sea voyage, which had crept into Hindu society came in this paper. 40 With special mention to women’s issues, it was evident that the journal published a series of articles supporting anti-sati and launched a vigorous campaign against female infanticide. 41

Along with Samvad Kaumudi, Bengali paper, in 1829, Rammohan Roy brought out the ‘Bangadoot’ in Hindi edition. It was the second Hindi paper from Calcutta. The first one was Hindi weekly named ‘Ordunta Martand’, edited by Jugal Kishore Sookool from Amaratala-ki-Gali of Calcutta. Bangadoot was a big step forward for Hindi
journalism. It helped in preparing the ground for a secular outlook by liquidating Hindu prejudices and showed a new trend, which served as guideline for contemporary journalists. 42

Another contemporary journal campaigning against Sati and female infanticide the hot issues of this period was ‘Samachar Darpan’. Despite Samachar Darpan published in Bengali before the emergence of ‘Samvad Kaumudi’, questioned prejudices and evil practices like Sati and female infanticide and urged people to learn about western arts and sciences, it was not considered to be the Indian press. This was due to the facts that Samachar Darpan was published by the missionaries. Its primary aim was to preach the gospel of Christ, a propitious corollary of their missionary activities. Essentially, it was a vehicle of Christian propaganda. 43

Apart from focusing on Sati and female infanticide, Samachar Darpan showed interest in other women’s issues also. The Samachar Darpan of 21st March 1835, published a letter, allegedly from some Chinsura women, demanding women’s education, widow remarriage, an end to polygamy and seclusion’s and free choice in marriage. 44

It is noteworthy that the formative period of social reform movement simultaneously witnessed the up-coming of anti-reform papers. These papers were ‘Samachar Chandrika’, ‘Smabad Prabhakar’ ‘Purnochandrododay’, ‘Sambad Timir Nasak’, etc. All of them were known as the supporters of orthodox belief. 45 In this respect, Samachar Chandrika became the mouthpiece of the reactionary Hindus. The Samachar Chandrika unleashed a ferocious attack on Rammohan Roy as well as on the missionaries and the young Derozians. The remaining papers, taking the orthodox line, also appeared to counteract the progressive views propagated by Samvad Kaumudi. 46

In 1866, the Brahmo Samaj split into the Adi Brahmo Samaj led by Debrandranth Tagore and the Brahmo Samaj of India, led by Keshab Chandra Sen. Under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen, the Brahmo Samaj of India opened a girl’s school, started a women’s magazine called ‘Bamobodini’ (1863) and founded a women’s branch, the Bramika Samaj in 1865. The purpose of the Bramika Samaj was
to teach the Brahmo religion, handicrafts and social skills to the female relatives of Brahmo Samaj members.\textsuperscript{47}

The social reform movement of the formative period in Bengal was not restricted to men folk only, but shared by women too. During this period women became vocal and came out not only with their downright depreciation of the same, but also with their constructive suggestion towards the rectification of many of them. This evidenced from the activities of women’s organization name as Stree Satwa Rakshani Sabha (Organization for the assertion of women’s rights). It published their deliberations in ‘Bangadarshan’ as early as asarh, 1280 (June, 1873), a periodical published from Kanchraparab, a mofussil town in the vicinity of Calcutta. It is notable that they also sent a copy of their deliberation to the Indian Government with a request to enact laws protecting their rights and prestige of women folks in the hands of their husbands and providing appropriate punishment for the erring husbands.\textsuperscript{48}

In mid 19\textsuperscript{th} century, in the Bombay Presidency, the reformist oriented among the elites from the communities Parsis, Maharashtrians and Gujarathi Brahmins, gathered in the Student Literary and Scientific Society. The discussion on existing social practice inspired efforts to educate women in each of the three communities.\textsuperscript{49} Besides they also took up the issues of child marriage, female infanticide, the miserable life of widows, polygamy, purdah system, etc., as the core of the social movement. The reform movement in Maharashtra became remarkable in the history of India when the group of new Brahmins advocating reform movement called ‘Young Poona’ spearheaded a fairly modest critique of Hinduism between 1830-1850. Balshastri Jambhekar, Gopal Hari Deshmukh or Lokhitwadi, Krishnashastri Chipulkar represented this trend. They criticized Brahmanical ritual practice and challenged orthodoxy’s purity. Aside from what described, they also raised the issue of widow remarriage through the papers. In this respect Balshastri Jambhekar’s Darpan in 1837 and Bhau Mahajan’s Prabha\textsuperscript{50} are argued that the widow remarriage was sanctioned by the Hindu tradition. After 1850 the new intelligentsia like Gokhale and Ranade arose in the scene of Maharashtra. While Gokhale carried on his campaign for the liberation and upliftment of women through the column of ‘Jnanprakash’.\textsuperscript{51} Ranade
opted to run an English column in ‘Induprakash’, an Anglo-Marathi daily started by Deshmukh in 1861. Through this paper, he campaigned for widow remarriage. It must be remembered that in the mean while around 1867, Prathana Samaj was formed by these Brahmans middle class. The Prathana Samaj took up the issues of reforms in religion, caste system and women status.

Similar to the new English educated intelligentsia in Calcutta, the new educated intelligentsia in Maharashtra brought in the rise of Marathi and Gujarathi journalism for creating public opinion. The year 1832, we witnessed the inauguration of Marathi press by Bal Shastri Jambhekar, an ex-professor of Elphinstone College. He started ‘Bombay Darpan’, first as an Anglo Marathi fortnightly but subsequently converted it into a weekly paper. In 1840, he started ‘Dig Darshan’, a Marathi monthly magazine and helped to start ‘Prabhakar’ a weekly in 1841. As educationist, Jambhekar was free from superstition of all kinds and preached progressive western ideas in the paper. He had trained a band of journalists who carried on the work successfully. The Prabhakar earned a reputation for independence and fearlessness under its editor Bhau Mahajan (Govid Vithal Kunte).

Another paper having the reputation of being a reform paper was the ‘Updesha Chandrika’ a Marathi monthly journal started in 1844 by Pandit Morabhat Dandekar, an ardent disciple of Jambhekar. It was launched for the purpose to defend Hinduism against the attacks of Christian missionaries. Other newspapers, which also made considerable impact were ‘Duyun Prakash’ of Poona founded in 1849, edited by K T Ranade, ‘Indu Prakash’, the Anglo-Marathi journal run by Mahadev Govind Ranade, the leader of Prathana Samiti (Bombay version of Brahmo Samaj). One of the contributors of these journals was the great social reformer, Karsondas Mulji, who himself started in 1852 a journal called, ‘Satya Prakash’. Bal Sastri Jambhekar and his associates dominated the language press from 1832 to 1853 and there after Karsondas Mulji from 1853 to 1870.

The paper launched by Christian missionaries and Brahmin orthodox shastri pandits were also founded in Maharashtra. In 1842 the Christian missionaries published
‘Dnyanodaya’ while in 1952 the Brahmin orthodox shastri pandits published ‘Vartman Deepika’ and ‘Vicharlahari’.  

The turning point in viewing religious, cultural and social reform in relation to women in Maharashtra began with the rise of Jotiba Phule in 1848. He carefully elaborated the link between caste and gender formatted by Aryan – high caste in order to prove the exploitation on native low caste people. According to Phule, the idea of golden age of Arayan was pervasive as it was based on the expense of low caste men and women. For Phule, the real golden age was the pre-Aryan realm under the benign rule of the King Bali where society was a happier idyllic. Realizing the exploitation of the caste system created by Aryan, he came to understand the question of gender. This led him to spend a great deal of his energy in the early years of his public career in setting up schools for low caste and untouchable girls. What is distinctive on Phule rational on female education in contrast to the other social reformers is that, while for the upper caste or even the middle class social reformers, educated females were regarded as the ‘help mates’ for their new class of men, for Phule it was more. Phule viewed education as a kind of third eyes, an instrument of a new mode of understanding social relation. Further more, it was for the low caste women as it was for the low caste men. 

To propagate this view, Phule and his wife, Savithribai Phule set up Satyashodhak Mandal. Through writing and activism, the Satyashodhak Mandal called for a broad alliance of Sudras, Sati-sudras, and women in the fight against Brahmin domination. In the Shetkaryaca Asud, he described the hardships experienced by labouring women when he contrasted this with the relative ease of the lives of Brahmana women. He pointed out that while Brahmana women laboured at home, and were subject only to the power of Brahmana men, women of the lower casts, laboured at home as well as in the fields, were subject to a double control, from upper-caste men and from men of their families. 

The low-caste movement initiated by Phule gave a birth to the magazine called ‘Dnyanodaya’, an Ahmednagar journal, designed for disseminate information about physics, astronomy, religion and morality. ‘Dnyanodaya’ was edited by B. P. Hivale, in
1942. It was through this magazine that the writing of Muktabai, a mang woman, an untouchable, appeared. In her brief essay about the grief of the Mangs and Mahars, she dwelled on themes which, in varying degrees, inform 19th century non-Brahmanam writing. Firstly, she pointed out an acute awareness of the Peshwai as a period of extraordinarily arbitrary power for the Brahmans and thus an unmediated time of opposition for the low castes. Their hold over the administration, especially the revenue administration (a gift of the Peshwai), had given the Brahmans a unique control over the labouring people. Secondly, she insisted that the prohibition of knowledge to the low castes was the work of Brahmans. Thirdly, she focussed on the theme of dispossessing the ancestors of the lower castes of their lands and the distribution of material assets and power between the Brahmans and others. The Brahmans as revenue officers and the other castes in degrading occupation such as the barber who had to go out shaving the heads of widows. Fourth, she was extremely insightful about the way Brahmanic ideology worked to create a complex structure of hierarchy where the low castes themselves were graded into less polluting and more polluting. Considering Muktabai’s writing Uma Chakravarti gave the precise explanation that it was only when Muktabai described the inhuman consequences of untouchability that her insights into the experience of low caste women were evident.

The social reform movement in Maharashtra at the same time was significantly guided by Gujarathi journalism. In Bombay, Gujarathi paper ‘Mumbaina Samachar’ was started as early as 1822 by the Parsis. Thereafter seven papers were established between 1830 and 1858, but a majority of them ceased publication. Other well-known papers in Maharashtra were ‘Mumbaina Chabuk’, ‘Doorbin Rast Gaflar’, ‘Chitrnan Darpan’, ‘Satya Prakash’, ‘Vartaman’, ‘Shamsher Bahadursur’, ‘Surat Samachar’. The main theme of these papers was advocacy of social reform such as widow remarriage, education of girls, stoppage of child marriage, etc. It is however notable that though the Gujarathi newspapers owned by the Parsis vehemently opposed racial antagonism preached by the Anglo-Indian Press, during the rebellion they supported the British rule. Apart from publishing newspapers, the Gujarathi reformist also brought out women’s magazine called ‘Stri bodh’ in 1857.
In north India, U. P. and Punjab, the Arya Samaj reform organization was set up by a Gujarathi ascetic, Dayanand Saraswati in 1875. Swami Shraddhanan, Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Hansraj were the products of this organization. In contrast to the reform organization in Bengal and Maharashtra, where liberalism was emphasized, the Arya Samaj salient features were highly influenced by Hindu revivalism, the preaching of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. In view of revivalism, the depressed condition of women had to be seen in the context of the degeneration of Hindu society because of its departure from the Vedic ideals. Swami Vivekananda stated that the ancient Indian women generally held the high status in the Hindu society because they were revered as ‘Mother’. As Arya Samaj was revivalist in spirit and its purpose was to promote Hindu ideals of womanhood through discussion on women in ancient Hindu society, they founded the school and a women’s magazine ‘Paricharika’. 

In the Madras presidency, the social reform movement in this period was propagated only by the Christian Missionaries, not by the native. The earliest attempts at establishing contact with the mass through the press were made by the Christian missionaries. The first Tamil periodical known as the Tamil magazine was initiated by the Christian Religious Tract Society in 1831. It was followed by the earliest Tamil weekly called the ‘Dina Vartamani’, published in Madras about the year 1856.

In comparison with Bengal and Maharashtra, the papers launched by the native in Tamil Nadu came a bit late. It was not, until 1882 that the first Tamil newspaper arose in the world of Indian journalism. The paper was called ‘Swadesamitran’ started by G. Subrahmania Iyer. Swadesamitran remained for some years and was not regular. It appeared as a weekly for a time and then as a tri weekly. Following Swadesamitran, G. Subhrahania also conducted the ‘Hindu’. In 1898, he left the Hindu and concentrated only on the Swadesamitran, which he converted into a daily in 1899.

It must be underlining that the social reform movement of this period flourished mainly in the Hindu community. Among the Muslim community, though Muslim women faced the same problems like Hindu women, except Sati, a reform movement took place much slower. However, under the leadership of Sir Syed, a few Urdu papers came into existence. Among them were the ‘Oudh Akhbar’ (1858), the Scientific
Society Magazine (Aligarh) and ‘Tehzibul-Inkhlag’ (Aligarh), of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Lahore, Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, Aligarh and Meerut were the main centres of these publications. The Oudh Akhbar, started by Munshi Newal Kishore of Lucknow, was commanded and influenced. The Tenzibul-Inkhlag dealing with a variety of subjects proved to be the most influential newspaper, fighting a number of reactionary newspapers representing conservatism and orthodoxy. By 1887, studies on the newspapers in the Indian language indicated that there were only three Urdu dailies in circulation, the Oudh Akhbar, the Rozand Akhbar and the Paisa Akhbar. But by the beginning of the 20th century, Urdu journals increased rapidly; there were about 40 Urdu journals and in 1921 the total number of Urdu newspapers was 151.  

Since women’s education was not popular among girls in this period, very few women took to writing. According to Arundhati Mukhopadhyaysay, in 1868, Jnananandini, wife of Satyendranath Tagore, was the first woman who wrote a letter to ‘Bamabodhini Patrika’, the paper edited by Umesh Chandra. Jnananandini suggested that women should wear blouse, peticoat and shoes, because this signified the decency of civilized women. Other women writers were Kai Lashbasini Devi and and Nistarini Devi. Kai Lashbasini Devi was the first generation of women who had opportunity of getting some form of education. She was the first woman who gave a graphic description of their state after realizing with a shock the depth of deterioration in the status and character of Bengali womanhood. Similarly Nistarini expressed the miserable life of women who hardly acquainted with their Kulin Brahmins husband because he had been married to over thirty women. Apart from what described above, Bamabodhini Patrika published on April 1865 and June 1883 showed that women writers compared themselves to ‘cage birds’ and learned only ‘how to please men’ and ‘how to become a slave to men’. In short, most women writers diagnosed absolute illiteracy and total confinement to the home as the most cause of their backwardness.  

In Maharashtra, though the writing of upper class / caste women in the magazines and journals during this period is not available here, we witnessed the writing of a low caste woman. The study on women writing in Maharashtra indicated that Muktabai, the Mang girl of school in Pune founded by Jotiba Phule and Savitribai
wrote the essay expressing the miserable fate of untouchable castes. She wrote this essay when she was only fourteen years old. The essay she wrote was remarkable for the passion and lucidity. It condemned the casual abuse, discrimination and racism faced by untouchable men and women at the hands of caste rulers. It was originally published in 1885 in Dnyanodaya, an Ahmednagar journal that was designed to disseminate information about such new scientific disciplines as physics and astronomy and also discussed religion and morality.  

The Renaissance Era (1870-1900)

The salient feature of renaissance era is indicated by a number of enlightened women or new women who now started establishing their own women’s organizations in different parts of the country. This development held the landmark of the first wave of women’s movement in India. Pratima Asthana stated that there was no doubt that the organizations like Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj did monumental work in the field of female education and in the eradication of social evils like purdah, child marriage, polygamy and so on. But the promise of a bright and brilliant future awaited Indian womanhood only when women leaders themselves came forward and founded various women’s organizations to evolve the true path of their own resurgence.

In Bengal, the first woman who founded a women’s organization working for the general progress and well being of women was SwarnaKumari Devi, the sister of Rabindranath Tagore. She founded The Ladies Association in 1886, under the auspices of Brahmo Samaj. Its object was to promote friendly intercourse among Indian ladies and to foster in them the spirit of service for the general welfare of the people. The association also made provision for a rescue home for imparting education to poor girls enabling them to become Zenana teacher after proper training.

In Maharashtra, Pandita Ramabai founded Sharda Sadan in 1892. Sharda Sadan was later shifted to Khedgaon. It became the centre of higher education for girls. It was a remarkable organization meant for needy and destitute women. Ramabai, later expanded the field of social service, opened an institution for orphans and included
famine relief program in the Sadan. Her greatest achievement was perhaps the foundation of Mukti Sadan in 1898 for the welfare of women and children.  

In Bombay 1903, Stree Zoroastrian Mandal was established by the Parsi women of Bombay. They formulated a scheme of visiting poor women and emphasized to them the role of constructive work. They inspired poor women to secure economic independence by working in different cottage industries, so that they might stop living on doles or charity. They also distributed medicines, food and milk among poor Parsi families. The organization also did good work in the field of education.

During this period, Maharashtra witnessed the emergence of Hindu Ladies, Social Club founded by Ramabai Ranade, the wife of Justice Ranade too. She started this women’s organization after the demise of Justice Ranade at her house in Poona. This women’s organization opened classes for illiterate women and widows. Later in 1909, Ramabai Ranade established Seva Sadan. It provided a home for women to impart education and to prepare them for social work. The Sadan started classes in industrial training for adult women, hostels, a teacher’s training college, a high school, a medical department and nurse centre.

The entry into the public world of enlightened women or new women in sharing the ideological and actual process of social reform and nationalist movement in this period resulted in the development of women writing ranging from Novel, poetry, play, short story and essay. These works appeared in the form of books, women’s magazines and women’s journals as well. In the women’s magazines and women’s journals, the women writers adopted the same trajectory of historiography originating from Mill, starting with the golden age of Aryan, moving to the dark age of Muslim rule, then to the English era of enlightenment calling for social reform. In Bengal, the magazines or journals, which women writers employed to express the morality and activities of Bhadra Mahila were ‘Bamabodhini’, ‘Bharati’, ‘Sahitya’, ‘Pradip’, ‘Mukul’ and ‘Sukha’. The long discussion aroused among writers, the educated middle class, through the mentioned magazines was a serious attempt to think through what an appropriate reformed female’s subjectivity, code as ‘Bhadra Mahila’ should be and how that should be projected as a visual moral sign. The instance of this concern was found
in the debate about the suitable attire for new Bengali women written by Sawarnakumari Devi, Saudamini, Hemantakuri Chaudhuri, Hiranmayee Devi, etc. These articles were published in women’s magazines like Sekele Katha, Bamabodhini Patrika, Antapur, Barathi between the year of 1870-1990.\textsuperscript{81} Another concern was found in the writing of Hamangini Chaudhuri published in Antapur in 1899. She advised Bengali wives to accept the abusive language and rude behaviour of their husbands silently, even if they were at the point of death.\textsuperscript{82}

The content of women’s magazines and women’s journals of this period, according to Bharati Ray, focused in 2 points. The first involved in an awareness of their inferiority viz-avia their men; the second is a yearning to improve themselves in order to become companions to or collaborators with their husbands, and ideal mothers to their sons.\textsuperscript{83} Besides, she also found that the theme of women’s writing in the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century dwelt on the value of female education for the good of the husband, the son and the family continuously. For instance, a piece of writing published in Bamabodhini Patrika, June 1881 commented that since an illiterate wife could not follow her husband’s footsteps or help him in his work how could she expect sympathy from her husband and if husband and wife were equally independent and educated, how happy our domestic lives would have been. Other than what described above, the books and articles published in contemporary journals written by Jnanadanadini Devi in 1873 and Krishnabhabhini Devi in 1885 revealed their desire to be able to step outside the home and to see the world as men did. Further, Sarat Kumari Chaudhurani in her essay ‘Kalikatar Strisamaj’ first published in 1881 discussed a new concept of husband-wife and in-law relationship as she mentioned, “these days no one asks whether a woman’s mother-in-law or sister-in-law is kind or good. Instead they ask how is your husband? Does he love you?” In addition Krishnabhabhini wrote a criticism in 1885 saying that a wife was meant to share her husband’s thought and helped him in carrying out his duties, therefore she should look upon him as her friend and lover.\textsuperscript{84}

The above delineation depicts the clear picture of how women’s writing in Renaissance era was in large extent, influenced by the thought of the male reformers. The life story of Swarna Kumari Devi, the prominent writer and journalist of Bengal
clearly proved this assumption. In her own novel, Fuler Mala, she accepted that she was a product of her father, the enlightened male reformer. She wrote, “It was my loving father, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, who had appeared for my life’s career by giving me an education unusual for Hindu girls of these days.”

Regarding this point, Mukhopadhyay commented that though the educated new women played an important role in changing the status of their sisters as they welcomed and furthered the cause of women’s education, which would bring consciousness among women, they still followed the footsteps of their male predecessors in a matter of reform. Holding the same idea like Mukhopadhyay, Bharati Ray expressed her view that women’s response to the process of social reform initiated by men was still being socialized in male defined values. They did not challenge the new prescriptions of their age-old roles.

In Maharashtra, women’s writing in Renaissance Era apparently appeared in almost all forms of expression, novel, short story, poetry and essay, etc. It was published in books, women’s magazines and women’s journals as well. According to Uma Chakravarti, since the reformist discourse on widowhood, especially on the miseries of the child widows had become widely influential by the late 19th century in western India, the body of writing in journals and pamphlets often engaged in the ‘widow remarriage’ movement.

The most eminent woman writer, who greatly contributed to Indian Literature and journalism in Maharashtra was Pandita Ramabai Saraswati. Unlike other women writers or journalists of her time, the analysis of her writings, never believed in the idea of Vedic period as the ‘Golden Age’ for women. Ramabai wrote three important books, ‘A testimony’, ‘The high caste Hindu women’ and ‘The Stri Dharma Neeti’. In her testimony, Ramabai raised the argument questioning the deprivation of women and Shudras from Sacred literature. Then she explained how she received education from her father and how the progressive view of him, later led her family life into traumatic tragedy. Another one, The High caste Hindu women discussed on the detrimental situation of Maharashtrian women, especially among the widows. While Stree-Dharma Neeti prescribed the ‘moral code’ of Hindu women. It is important to note that around this time she involved into journalism as well. The evidence showed in the letter she
wrote to the editor of the ‘Bombay Guardian’ criticizing the treatment given to people respected of plaque at the segregation camp set up by the government.⁹⁰ Along with the books and letters publishing in the newspapers, she ran a journal called ‘Mukti Prayer Bell’ too.⁹¹

Tarabai Shinde, the daughter of Bapuji Shinde, a founder member of the Satyashodhak Samaj was another outstanding woman writer in Maharashtra during renaissance period. In spite of having no record on her essays or articles published in the newspapers or journals, her book ‘Stree-Purush Tulana’ testified sufficiently her talent in literature world. The Stree-Purush Tulana written by Tarabai was published in the same year with Stree-Dharma Neeti written by Pandita Ramabai. In this book, Tarabai elaborated women subjugation in a highly polemical style criticizing patriarchal double standards. She pointed out that all the sorrow and evils arose out of the ban on widow remarriage and out of the moral luxitude of men who surround women.⁹² The text was written in reaction to a criminal case involving a young Bhraman widow, Vijayalakshmi, who was alleged in murdering her ‘illegitimate’ infant at birth.⁹³

The one, who made the name in the circle of newspapers was, Rukhmabai the woman of the Panchkalshi, sub-caste of Pathares, whose traditional occupation was in cultivator and artisan. Acquiring a good education encouraged by her step father, after her mother remarried, Rukhmabai refused to join uneducated Dadaji as his wife, although her mother married her to him since she was 11 years old. Dadaji responded to her act by sending her a legal notice and then filed a lawsuit in 1884 under the provision of the Restitution of Conjugal. The case was dissolved in 1888 when Dadaji proposed an out of court settlement and relinquished his right over her.⁹⁴

Rukhmabai’s case, however, became the controversy in various newspapers. Being supported by Henry Curwen (1845-1892), the editor of The Times of India, during those difficult days, later Rukhmabai under the pseudonym ‘A Hindu lady’ contributed two letters to The Times of India.⁹⁵ In her first letter ‘Infant Marriage’ published in The Times of India on June 1885, she described the wicked and inhuman treatment to which a young daughter-in-law was subject to in the house of her mother-
in-law and the loss of mental and physical freedom which a girl experiences the
moment she steps into the house of her husband. She also pointed out the women’s
objectification as they were considered worse than beasts, plaything, unclean animal,
etc. by shastra. In the same letter, she resolved that the women’s condition could not be
improved unless the practice of early marriage was abolished and higher female
education was largely disseminated. She stated that a girl could be sent to school by her
progressive parents until she was married, or till she joined her husband’s family after
puberty (around the age of ten). In the second one, published in September the same
year, Rukhmabai attacked ‘Enforced Widowhood’ and the double standards of the
orthodox Hindus. She wrote, “a girl or a woman who is once given in marriage cannot
be given again, while man who is not so given is free to take as many gifts (in the shape
of wives) as he has a mind to”. The reason advanced was that man is pure by nature,
and if necessary can be purified by penance but woman being by nature unclean, has
been rightly debarred from the benefit of purification in this world. It never enters the
mind (of orthodox men) that these dicta were formulated by men and (are) therefore of
necessity one-sided”. In this letter Rukhmabai even further went on to differentiate the
shades of misery experienced by child widows, young children widows and older
widows with children, all of whom society held guilty of sin for the death of their
husbands. She stated, “The Hindu Widow - unblooded of God and despised of man - a
social pariah and domestic drudge, must continue for centuries together to bear her hard
portion and pine in solitude till the pressure of legislation or the influence of foreign
civilization come to her help and restore her to the place, which god seems to have
assigned her in the scale of humanity”. Rukhmabai’s case, eventually, led to the
fraction of opinion among the social reformers or nationalists involved with journalism.
In this context, it was observed that while Tilak, the well-known nationalist and
journalist, expressed his unwillingness to recognize Rukhmabai’s need, Pandita Ramabai’s writing showed her firm position in supporting Rukhmabai. 96

In North India, it was Mai Bhagwati, the one among the pioneer women of Arya
Samaj, who paid contribution to Indian literature and journalism. She was known as the
distinct editor of ‘Sahayak’, the first Hindu magazine devoted to the cause of women’s
education in Punjab. Sahayak was a sister publication of the Regenerator of Arya Varta. Its specific aim was to propagate the idea of women’s education and call upon men to uplift the condition of women. Mai Bhagwati was respected for her learning within Arya circles. With her name as editor, the title invariably used was Fellow of the Arya Samaj.  

Savitri Devi was another woman writer who was the first Acharya of KMV (Kanya Mahavidyalaya) and the moving spirit behind the foundation of the Vidhwa Ashram or Widow’s Home in 1907. Being a teacher taking an active role in organizing various exhibitions of crafts and books written by women, she was also the first woman editor of ‘Panchal Pandita’. Panchal Pandita was a monthly magazine published from KMV in 1897. The primary goal of the magazine was to promote women’s education, in order to uplift the status of women. It contained articles not only of women’s interest where their household duties were concerned, but it also kept in touch with women’s movement in other parts of the country. The issues of Panchal Pandita were full of news of KMV, for instance, girls going out and delivering lectures that inspired other Samaj to follow the KMV model. However, Panchal Pandita lasted only a few years and was substituted by ‘Jalvid Sakha’. The contribution of Panchal Pandita came from various women. They were women workers and students of KMV.

In South India, Annie Besant, the theosophist, Irish origin, was the prominent writer, journalist and speaker of the period. Her speeches and essays during the heyday of the reviver showed its strong influence. In 1901, Annie Besant was interested in women’s education and wrote a pamphlet on this subject. Another woman writer was Pandita Visalakshi Ammal. She started the women’s journal called ‘Hitakarini’. It contained many articles and stories stressing ‘proper’ behaviour for women. After some years around 1912, Revi Thayaramma ran a journal called ‘Penn Kalvi’. The journal had the usual articles on education, early marriage and dowry.

In Muslim community, we witnessed the emergence of Urdu women novelists, poets and journalists as well. Study on Muslim women of India asserted that in 1896, Mohammedi Begum, wife of Shamsul Ulema Maulvi Muntaz Ali, edited a weekly
journal called ‘Tenzib Niswan’. This journal was started from Lahore by her husband. From the very first issue, it attracted a surprisingly large number of women writers. The other contributors, living in the remote distance of the country ardently wrote against the dowry system, superstitious, useless customs and expensive ceremonies, the problems shared by all Indian women. Notably, the readers and contributors of the journal also consisted of some Urdu speaking Hindu women, including women of Nehru family.

In the year of 1904, Sheikh Abdulla, the pioneer social reformer of Muslim Community succeeded in bringing out a monthly magazine ‘Khatoon’. It was the monthly journal aiming to popularize the idea of school for Muslim girls in Aligarh and advocated the abolition of Purdah as well. Around the same time Allama Rashidul Khairi also started publishing the famous ‘Ismat’ from Delhi.

It is noteworthy that during the renaissance period, apart from the flourishing of vernacular newspapers, women’s magazines and women’s journals, there were a number of English papers or what was known as the Anglo-Indian press too. The Anglo-Indian papers were distributed in all major cities and centres where the European Community, both official and non-official, was strong. The most outstanding among them were the ‘Englishmen’ and ‘Statesman’ of Calcutta, ‘The Times of India’ of Bombay, ‘The Madras Times’ and ‘The Madras Mail’ of Madras, ‘The Civil and Military Gazette’ of Lahore and ‘The Pioneer’ of Allahabad. Generally, the Anglo-Indian papers took a stand in serving benefit of the British rule, not the native like the vernacular papers.

It is remarkable that the emergence of The Indian National Congress in 1885, which was moderate in their demands for independence of India added the new dimension to the social reform and nationalist movement including journalism as well.
Era of Political Awakening or the Extremist Era (1900-1920)

The year which triggered the period of the political awakening or the extremist era was 1905. 1905 was a historic year in the annals of Indian nationalism, particularly that of Bengal. The partition of Bengal forced the nationalist to unite. Thus they called for boycott of foreign goods and use of Swadeshi material instead.\textsuperscript{109} The boycott of foreign goods or what is known as Swadeshi movement (the revival of indigenous) though in the beginning involved boycotting foreign goods and buying only Swadeshi goods, later on turned into the revolutionary act. Violence was preached and practiced as the only way of breaking the shackles of mother India.\textsuperscript{110} The passionate cry of the ‘extremist’ Congress leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak “Swaraj is my birth right and I will have it”, thus had been reverberated across the subcontinent.\textsuperscript{111} This was a reaction of the native to the British rule’s repressive policies towards patriots.

The political awakening era, turned the men of letters to the men of action, and turned the men of action to the men of letters as well. The emotional hymn ‘Bandemataram’ composed by Bankim, idealizing womanhood (not woman as a real figure) with nationalism became the reviving mantra of India’s awakened nationhood, first in Bengal and later all over India. During this period, along with the spread of Bandemataram, the period also witnessed the Home Rule Movement initiated by Annie Besant, the Irish theosophist and journalist, calling for self-rule government by the natives. Consequently, the Bandemataram and The Home Rule Movement of the first two decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century gave the country a period of hectic striving and heroic suffering. It is noteworthy that when Annie Besant launched the Home Rule Movement in 1916, The ‘New India’, a newspaper brought out by her helped in popularizing the Home Rule Movement.\textsuperscript{112}

The influential personalities of the extremist movement were Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Lajpat Rai, Annie Besant, etc. In Maharashtra, Tilak with the cooperation of V. K. Chiplonkar, G. G. Agarkar, M. B. Nanjoshi, Apte and Dr. G. K. Garde, launched the ‘Kesari’ and ‘Maratha’ as the mouthpiece of ‘Swaraj’ (self rule), in 1881.\textsuperscript{113} In 1906, Bengal, Aurobindo Ghosh acted as the editor of ‘Bandemataram’, the paper founded by Subodh Chandra Mallick, Chitrarjan Das and Bipin Chandra Pal.
North India Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were spearheads of the nationalist newspapers.\textsuperscript{114} In Madras 1914, Annie Besant brought ‘Madras Standard’ a daily newspaper in Madras, then she changed its name to ‘New India’. The New India was destined to rage the battle for Home Rule.\textsuperscript{115} It is remarkable that in this period Annie Besant was the first president of the Women’s Indian Association (WIA), which was founded by M. E. Cousin in 1917 too.

Unlike their predecessors, the liberal social reformers, who saw the women’s cause as the inevitable result of a gradual process in which the British would steadily devolve power as the Indian would become increasingly trained in operating the institutions of secular, parliamentary democracy at local, provincial and ultimately national level, the extremists felt that the adoption of British inspired institutions on a British imposed time table was not enough. They argued that the Indian should seize the initiative and should do so on the basis of Indian symbols, traditions and institutions.\textsuperscript{116} In short, though the extremists did not deny the necessity of the upliftment of women’s status, they did not consider the women’s cause as their first priority. On the contrary, their first priority was the attainment of Swaraj. In this respect, Tilak, like other extremists was of the considered view that ‘Social reform’ would automatically come once people are free and are able to put their house in order. He felt that the proper time to introduce social reform is only when people are willing to accept it. Moreover, he thought that the reform should be genuine and it would be possible only if these are not ‘apish imitation of western life and manner’.\textsuperscript{117}

The Swadeshi movement received the support of many new women or enlightened women through various forms of domestic roles. Studies on the contribution of women to the early nationalist movement revealed that, during the Swadeshi movement, Bengali women did not involve only boycotting foreign goods, but their activities even went further to the process of hiding weapons, sheltering the fugitives and encouraging the men revolutionists.\textsuperscript{118}

The contribution of women in Swadeshi movement did not limit itself only within the above mention activities. On the other hand, the intellectual activity like writing was also clearly shown. Rajan Mohan observed that in addition to boycotting
foreign goods, hiding weapons, sheltering the fugitives, encouraging the men revolutionists, etc., there were patriotic articles written in Bengali language published in both pamphlets and journals. He wrote, “Swadeshi attempts at involving the masses facilitated the participation of women in several ways. Patriotic pamphlets were written in the vernacular Bengali, and widely distributed. Notable among these was a pamphlet written by Ramendra Sunder Trivedi entitled, ‘A vow for Bengali women’, which tried to explain the Swadeshi movement in such simple terms that even village women could understand. It specifically called upon women to participate in the popular Swadeshi rituals of ‘Rakhi Bandhan’ and ‘Arandhan’ (not lighting, cooking fires) and to boycott foreign goods. Simultaneously, there was a flowering of nationalist poetry, prose and journalism, in particular, the patriotic songs of Rabindranath Tagore, Rajani Kant Sen, Mukunada Das and Aurbindo Ghosh verily revolutionized contemporary Bengal. In this context, it seems noteworthy that a good number of women’s writing appeared during this period and as Bharati Ray testifies, they were directly aimed at arousing all round awareness among other women. A large number of politically oriented articles appeared in women’s journals like Bambodhini Patrika, Bharat Mahila, Antapur and Jahanabi and as Ray affirms, they did help in moulding attitude and ideas. It is a justifiable influence that they contribute to the political education of the women readers and inspire them to take active part in the national movement. Inevitably, they left a deep impress upon women, indeed the extent to which they moved certain women can be gauged from the fact that Nirad Chaudhari narrates that the Swadeshi movement aroused such a strong sense of patriotism in his mother that she smashed the family’s foreign made cooking pots”.

The most prominent Indian woman journalist who actively participated in swadeshi movement was Sarala Devi, the daughter of Swarnakumari Devi, niece of Rabindranath Tagore. Imbibing the spirit of patriotism from her mother, Sarala Devi took over the editorship of ‘Bharati’ in 1894, which she edited till 1899. Through the pages of Bharati, she advocated the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, forcefully arguing that unity alone could oust the foreigners. In the pages of Bharati 1903, she wrote that Indian history had now evolved to its final phase where Hindu-Muslim unity was
called for in order to resolve the prevailing opposition between the ‘eastern’ and the ‘western’. 121

After marriage to a popular Arya Samajist and a well known nationalist leader, Ramboj Dutt Chowdhary of Lahore in 1905, Sarala Devi’s centre of nationalist activities then shifted from Bengal to Punjab where she continued to direct her activities and maintained the link between the two provinces. At Lahore, she supervised the work of the ‘Hindustan Press’. She regularly attended the office and skillfully divided the press into two parts, setting aside three machines for jobbing and three for regular work of the paper. The object of this decision was to save three machines if they were ever ordered to be confiscated. 122

Another outstanding woman journalist during this period was Kumudini Mitter, the daughter of Kristo Mitter, a renowned nationalist. She organized a group of educated Brahmin ladies for managing an effective liaison between the different revolutionary leaders who were watched by the police. The organization also helped to circulate the leaflets and literature of revolutionary. Through a Bengali magazine ‘Suprabhat’ (1908-17), the magazine of the organization, aiming to propagate the cult of revolution, Kumudini herself preached the cause of the extremists. 123

The seed of revolution during the extremist era was not sown only in the mother India, but strove in abroad also. The Indian woman journalist who actively participated in the revolutionary activities was Madam Bhikaji Rustum. K. R. Cama, the daughter of Sorabji Framji Patel and daughter-in-law of K. Rustom Cama, a Parsi reformer. Her main activity was to send to India, what the British regarded as seditious literature and assist revolutionaries financially. She started a monthly journal ‘Bandemataram’ in 1906 from Paris and opposed the press act and censorship imposed by the British in India. In fiery language, she encouraged revolutionary sentiments. 124

During the extremist movement, it is worth noticing that while women wrote in supporting Swaraj initiated by the extremists, they did not forget to consider the problems of their own. This process was carried on, continued and strengthened until the Ghandian era.
The writing contributed to the women’s movement of this period was found in ‘Stree Dharma’ the monthly journal of the Women’s Indian Association (WIA), started by Margaret Cousins, an Irish feminist and theosophist in 1917. The WIA was the first women’s organization whose aim was to gather women from all over India irrespective of their class, caste, colour, or religion distinction. It was also the first women’s organization, which aimed at creating an overall awakening among women and trained them to shoulder their responsibility in public service. The work of WIA covered broadly in four main areas – religion, education, politics, and philanthropy. In the political arena, the WIA requested the franchise for women. In the sphere of education, it set up adult classes for literacy, sewing, and first aid. The work of philanthropy involved in feeding the poor, setting up shelters for widows and providing relief for disaster victims. In the matters of religion, the organization defined women as religious ‘by nature’ and encouraged non-sectarian religious activity.

Along with WIA, women’s writing devoted to women’s movement was also found in the Self-Respect Movement (SRM), born and nurtured in Madras around the year of 1925-1936. The self-respect movement had a larger agenda than women’s rights; its goal was to establish a society free from the domination of the priestly caste, with justice and equality for all human beings. Ideologically it was more radical in its critique of existing gender relations and particularly of the role of religion in assigning women a subordinate position. The self-respect movement, however, found it difficult to fight issues of property ownership, caste privilege, and gender discrimination. The paper of self-respect movement was called ‘Kudi Arasu’.

Comparing the content of articles carried by ‘Stree Dharma’ and ‘Kudi Arasu’, the study conducted by Prabha Rani found that both papers focused on the same contemporary women’s problems such as subjugation of women to men in religion, education, chastity, divorce, etc., but ‘Kudi Arasu’ appeared a bit more radical. Nevertheless, when we consider the ideological influence, we find that both shared the same ideology directed by male nationalists. Take for example, in the matter of education, Dr. Reddi, the prominent member of WIA, emphasized on the role of education as a means to make women becoming efficient householders, intelligent
mothers and good citizens. Similarly, S. Janaki Ammal, a regular contributor to Kudi Arasu counted education amongst the price gifts that parents could give to their daughter. She appealed to men to educate women, so that they could bear intelligent and courage sons for the nation.

It must not be forgotten that, despite aforementioned ideological frame work of the male nationalists, both WIA and SRM agreed in retaining certain autonomous from them. For instance, in Stree Dharam, Sumatibai wrote that women’s freedom had been curtailed in the name of religion, the SRM suggested practical ways to undermine the ritual functions in marriage that Brahmins performed. 128

The Gandhian Era (1920-1955)

Mahatma Gandhi’s ascendancy as the leadership of the congress or the nationalist movement (1916) and as the editor of Young India (1919) and Harijan (1932) acted as an elixir to Indian journalism of this era. The nationalist presses shared the toil and sweat, the joy and agony, the trials and tribulations and the triumph and tragedy of millions of men and women who responded to the call of the Mahatma. 129 According to M. Chalapathi, Gandhi was probably the greatest journalist of all time, and the weeklies he ran and edited were probably the greatest weeklies the world has known. 130

Mahatma Gandhi started entering into the world of journalism when he was in South Africa. Over there in 1904, he took editorship of the ‘Indian Opinion’ and published it in English, Tamil and Gujarathi. 131 Coming back to India, he took over ‘Young India’ from Jamnadas Dwarkadas of Bombay in 1919. After which he started a Gujarathi weekly ‘Navjivan’. Some years later in 1932, when he was in prison, he launched the ‘Harijan’. While Young India and Navjivan proved to be the means to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it including aroused among the people certain desirable sentiment and fearlessly exposed popular defects as Gandhi expatiated. The Harijan devoted itself for the betterment of the untouchable whom he called ‘Harijan - Children of God’. It is worth to note that these papers survived only on the revenue from subscribers, not the advertisement. Other than what described above,
Mahatma also supported the ‘Independent’ at Allahabad, started by Pandit Motilal Nehru. This was clearly shown in the message he sent to Syed Hussain, the editor.

“In wishing you success, I would like to say how and hope your writings would be worthy of the title you have chosen for your journal; and may I further hope that to a robust independence you will add an equal measure of self restraint and the strictest adherence to truth. Too often in our journals, as in others, do we get fiction instead of fact and declamation in place of sober reasoning. You would make the Independent a power in the land and a means of education for the people by avoiding the errors I have drawn attention too”.  

Mahatma Gandhi’s writing whether in English or Gujarathi or Hindi was done as part of his public service. It served to mobilize the masses participating in Satyagraha (defining it as the force, which is born of truth, love and non-violence), for Swaraj (self rule) during the non-cooperation (1920) and civil disobedience movement (1930). While Gandhi made special appeals to women asking them to spin, wear khadi, boycott government schools and colleges and remove untouchability in the non-cooperation movement. In the civil disobedience movement he announced the breaking of the salt law. Study on Gandhi and women revealed that in the magazines and journals of the period, Gandhi requested women not to cooperate with the British, which he compared to Ravana. He wrote special articles for women outlining their obligations and duties in the non-cooperation movement. The special message he sent to women on 22nd August 1921 was, “Just as the destruction of articles full of plaque germs is the best action from the economic point of view, so is the destruction of foreign clothes the best of all. Your blessings can be fruitful by discarding your foreign clothes and by spinning always in your leisure hours for the benefit of the nation”. Further, he asked women to read Navjivan because, if any woman made five other women read it, she was promised a free subscription.

The non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements (1919-1944) attracted attention of women in all parts of India because Gandhi envisaged in relating Satyagraha (non-violence instrument) comprising of spinning, wearing khadi sari, picketing liquor and toddy and boycotting taxed salt with the traditional role of Indian
women. The women social reformers and journalists who influenced Mahatma Gandhi’s thoughts were Annie Besant, Oliver Schirner, Millie Graham Polack, Margaret Cousins, Muriel Lester and Madeline Slade (or Mira Behn, as Gandhi renamed her), Sarala Devi Chaudharani, Sarojini Naidu, Amrit Kaur, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Sushila Nayyar and women of the famous Nehru family. According to Gandhi, woman is the incarnation of Ahimsa; the infinite love, great courage and a capacity to suffer willingly when the occasion arises. He saw the capacity of woman for suffering especially in India, in her role as the silent worker for the well being of the family, as the partner of man in the field at the time of sowing and reaping in rain and the sun; as one who is obvious of the pain in the joy of creating new life when life has been conceived; and finally as one who has a greater power of endurance. “Without her, humanity could not be and if non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women” he concluded.

Women who were touched by Gandhi’s non-violence message during the non-cooperation movement were not only the respectable women of middle class, but the marginalized women like Devdasi in the society too. The non-violence campaign of Gandhi, received more support from the underprivileged women, particularly women of the rural poor, when he launched the disobedience movement in 1931-1932. Studies on women and Indian Nationalism showed that the main bodies of women participants during Gandhian era were from the rural area. These thousands of rural women made law breaking universal by breaking laws in forest and villages and sold the salt of freedom at every corner.

Gandhi received great enthusiasm from women everywhere during this particular period was not something surprising in the Indian history. The historical facts indicated that whereas the attempt of Gandhi in meeting and talking especially to peasant women from one village to another was responsible for rural poor women participation. The middle class women were influenced in the great extent by his writing.

Appeal to the women of India, published in Young India, 11-8-1921 he wrote, “... Let me confess to you that your spontaneous and loving response all over India has
convinced me that God is with us. No other proof of our struggle being one of self-
purification is need than that lakhs of India’s women are actively helping it…. I have
suggested to boys and men also that they should spin. Thousands of them, I know, are
spinning daily. But the main burden of spinning must, as of old, fall on your
shoulders….. For the middle class it (spinning) should supplement the income of the
family and for very poor women it is undoubtedly a means of livelihood. But for you
who will read this appeal, it is presented as a duty, as dharma…” 141

In spite of rural poor women forming the majority of the mass in campaign, it
was the middle class women who took the leadership of the movement. The most
outstanding one among them was Sarojini Naidu, the poet and orator. During the non-
cooperation movement, she joined the Satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi. On
October 4, 1921, Gandhi, Sarojini, and other leaders issued a manifesto to the nation,
indicating the purpose of non-cooperation and the program that should be carried on.
This scenario marked the real beginning of the Gandhian era in India. 142

Sarojini worked side by side with Gandhi for Indian Independence. When
Gandhi was arrested and the great trial took place in 1922 in the court of Justice
Broomfield, Sarojini stood beside the Mahatma without fear. Being faithful to Gandhi’s
philosophy, she attended the court proceeding regularly. And when Gandhi was
sentenced to six years imprisonment, he delegated the leadership of the movement to
her. He said, “I entrust the destiny of India in your hands”. At this particular time
Sarojini tirelessly toured India for promoting Hindu-Muslim unity. 143

In the well known Salt Satyagraha of civil disobedience movement launched by
Gandhi on March 1930, Sarojini joined Gandhi at Dandi and broke the salt law. Coping
with this event, the Government used ruthless methods to stop the satyagrahis from
making salt. Under this circumstance, Sarojini showed her bravery in dealing with
situation. Her chivalrous act was highly impressed by an American journalist. In his
writing, he expressed his amazement at the courage displayed by Sarojini as she pushed
her way into crowd, appealing to the Satyagrahis to remain non-violent. 144

The nationalist movement launched by Gandhi in Ghandian Era on one hand
was the struggle for freedom of the nation and called for equality of all castes; on the
other hand it demanded equality between men and women, giving birth to the first wave of women’s movement. With special reference to the women’s movement, Jawaharlal Nehru remarked that, before the advent of Gandhi the women’s movement was dominated by middle class educated women. He asked where were the women masses. The women masses joined the women’s movement only after the arising of Gandhi in political scene. According to Kamladevi Chattopadhyay, a young leftist at the time, it was Gandhi, ‘the great revolutionary’ in Nehru’s words, who brought a dramatic change among Indian women, criticized the prevailing women’s organizations as elitist, far removed and remote from the problems of the majority of Indian women peasant and rural. She furthered the point that, Gandhi not only supported social reform activities as he realized that the problems of women’s seclusion – purdah, lack of formal education and restriction on their movement were the problems of upper caste and middle class women, but he insisted other problems faced by the majority of the poor women too. According to Gandhi, problems of low caste and class women lied on the fact that despite the rights of marriage, divorce and property were given to them, these rights were bound to be dysfunctional during the movement.  

The women’s organizations emerging in Gandhian Era, were a result of Gandhi’s call. In the beginning, though the participation of women in non-cooperation movement was inspired by the men in their families. The participation later on gave them an awareness as a group and as individuals. In this matter, Uma Rao and Meera Devi pointed out that when the non-cooperation movement was suspended, women’s activities indeed did not suffer because they continued to spread the creed of Swadeshi and their own upliftment.

During this period there were many women’s organizations throughout India, but the most important women’s organization responding to Gandhi’s call for Satayagraha was the ‘All India Women’s Conference’. Sarojini Naidu, the eminent female nationalist and writer or journalist served it as the president. The ‘All India Women’s Conference’ was later joined by another outstanding female freedom fighter and writer or journalist, Aruna Asaf Ali.
The All India Women’s Conference (AIWC) was founded due to the idea of Mr. Oaten, the director of Public Instruction in Bengal. He urged women to decide what kind of education was suitable for Indian girls and then informed the government. A reply to his challenge was published in ‘Stree Dharma’ and this eventually led to plans for a conference. 148

Delegates to the conference included a large number of professional educationists, social reformers, women associated with the nationalist movement, the wealthy and titled. The delegates favoured an education system that would allow for the fullest development of the individual’s latent capacities. But at the same time, they wanted to teach all girls the ideas of motherhood, how to make the home attractive, and how to help others, though they also wanted women doctors, professors and lawyers. Their more specific resolution stressed the importance of moral and physical education, deplored child marriage, and urged special arrangement for educating purdah women. In the discussion on female education, delegates accepted the idea of ‘Golden age’, which blamed Muslims for a fall in women’s status. 149

The main concern of the AIWC began with female education, then adding social customs, which restricted female education, notably child marriage and purdah. The AIWC later continued to enlarge its purview. By mid 1930, the sub-committees concerned the issues of labour, rural reconstruction, indigenous industries, textbooks, opium and the Sarda Act. Further, they also involved in advocating film censorship and urging widespread instruction in birth control including legal disability of women. 150 These women’s issues and concerns were publicity and propaganda through the journal, ‘Roshini’ started by AIWC in 1941.

The advent of Gandhi as a political leader and a journalist calling for Swaraj, which meant not merely freedom from the Raj but also liberation from all evil passions and prejudices reflected in social maladies (such as ill-treatment of women, untouchability and Hindu-Muslim enmity), eventually sprung a number of women writers and journalists in literary scene more than any period. 151 The study on Gujarati women’s response to Gandhi 1920-1942 indicated that in 1915, soon after his arrival from South Africa. Gandhi received the cooperation from two women – Sharda Mehta
and Champaben Mehta, who helped him to set up the ashram. In 1919 Sharda Mehta, the wife of Dr. Sumant Mehta, helped Gandhi in editing ‘Navjivan’. The period also witnessed the emergence of Sarojini Naidu, whose speeches and articles were regularly published in ‘Streebodh’ and ‘Stree Dhrama’. Other than these prominent personalities, there were quite a number of women editors, writers and journalists inspired by Gandhi’s thoughts involving in several women’s magazines and journals of the period. These women wrote about freedom of India and freedom of women as well. The details of women journalists in relation to women’s magazines and women’s journals will be further discussed in the next chapter.

It must be remembered that paralleling with social reform movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, the Gandhian era, particularly from the year of 1928 witnessed the rise of women revolutionaries inspired by Subhash Chandra Bose. It was during the years 1928-1931 that Subhash was finally able to bring his sisters into the political movement. The effect of his speeches and writings such as “Today our house is on fire. When the house is on fire, even a woman observing purdah has to take courage in both hands and come out on the street.” inspired some young women to join the political movement and in some cases to commit revolutionary acts. The women revolutionaries included Kalyani, Bina Das, Shanti, Suniti of Comilla and Latika Ghosh etc. But the eminent one among them playing a role as a revolutionist and a journalist at the same time was Latika Ghosh, the founder of Mahila Rashtriya Sangha (MRS) in 1928, which aimed to achieve Swaraj and improve women’s status through political action. She wrote articles calling women to wake up and take a good look of their country. Other prominent women journalists, supporting the revolutionaries, were Lila Roy, Kamala Dasgupta and Aruna Asaf Ali. In 1939, Lila Roy edited ‘Jaysee’ and when Bose went to jail in 1940, she was nominated as the editor of the ‘Forward Block Weekly’. Around the same time Kamala Dasgupta edited ‘Mandira’. While Aruna Asaf Ali became the editor of ‘Inquilab’. It is noteworthy that when the communist party took the leadership in forming the Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti (MARS) in 1943, which sought to mobilize middle class as well as working class and peasant women, ‘Glare
Baire’, the organ of the MARS, became a popular journal. It was edited by Kanak Mukherjee. The MARS received the blessing of nationalist women 159.

The social reform or nationalist movement, which began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and carried on by other successors until Gandhiji, might have created a supportive atmosphere for the emergence of the pioneer women journalists of Colonial India. However, it was Babasaheb Ambedkar, who recognized the aspiration of the depressive class / caste and women to have equal rights and freedom as other Indian citizens in the constitution. Ambedkar, the Chairman and most outstanding figure of constitution drafting committee, was known as the political leader of the underprivileged. During the Gandhian era, he mobilized the low class / caste people to fight against injustice, received from the high class / caste and encouraged them to adopt Buddhism for religious practice. With special reference to journalism, though there was no record on women journalists, who were inspired to join the press by him, it was found that he started the newspaper called ‘Bahishkrit Bharat’ in 1927. The newspaper bought out by Ambedkar was meant to meet the need for articulating the grievances and interest of the depressed class / caste, especially in view of the impending constitutional reforms. 160.

Having discussed the background of Indian women journalists in pre-independent India, we shall now discuss the role and problems inherent in their work in the forthcoming chapter.
End Notes
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