CHAPTER – 2

STATUS OF WOMEN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The importance of a society can be evaluated by the position given to women in the society. One of the best methods to appreciate the courage of a civilization and to understand its Excellencies and understand its impact, one must study the history of the position and status of women in it. A.S. Altekar expresses that “The amount of independence given to move about in society and to take part in its public life gives a good idea of the nature of its administration and permits us to know how far it had realized the hard truth that women too have a giving of their own to make in its growth and development.”

Any evaluation of the status of women in society has to start from the social framework, social construction, and cultural standard and value systems that pressurize the social expectations concerning the behaviour of both men and women and decide women’s roles and their position in any society. A society is composed of many organizations and most important of them are the system of civilized, family and association, marriage and religious customs etc. They give the ideology and moral foundation for men and women about their rights and duties and their position and role in society.

The Indian society is full of inconsistency. On the one hand, foreigners come in groups to our country in search of spiritual consolation but on another hand, Indians are ranks among the most dishonest people in the world. India is expenditure millions and billions to send satellites in the space to show its scientific ability but at the same time the society cannot supply almost half the population with the basic necessities like food, shelter, education and healthy life.

The similar contradiction is present in the case of women too. On the one hand, the scriptures put them on a high stand. An old Sanskrit proverb is that, where the women are detained in respect there do the

gods exist in. The conventional faiths in the Indian society are that, a society cultivates if the women rise, if they contribute to of the spirit of development, for they are recognizable domestic legislators, they are the atmosphere of social life. In the Indian mythology, even God is considered as half man, half women-'ardh-narishwara'. On the other hand, according to the UNICEF's recent international report, "The Progress of Nations 1997", more than 5000 dowry deaths occur every year in India.

"Women's lives in India and the world over are restricted by what can be termed as five 'Ps' Patriarchy; Productive resources admission insufficiency, Poverty, Promotion improvement deficiency and powerlessness". It is predictable that women of two-thirds of the world's work. In replace they obtain only ten percent of all the income and own a simple one percent of the whole world's means of manufacture.

Indian transcripts essentials women as faithful and self sacrificed, yet infrequently disobedient and dangerous. Transcripts on every aspect of life like religion, law, politics and education carried different statement for men depending on caste, class, age and religious sect. In dissimilarity, women's differences were overshadowing by their biological distinctiveness and the secondary, supportive roles they were planned to play. Historians were evenly essentialist in their depictions about Indian women. Infrequently Indian transcript and historical narratives singled out one woman for special consideration but usually this was because her accomplishments were noteworthy by male standard. Topics that were intertwined with women's life's - house -hold duties and agriculture knowledge; religious customs and sentiments; fertility and family size; furnishings, jewellery and clothing; inheritance and property rights; and marriage and divorce – were mainly unnoticed,

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3 Indian Express, New Delhi, 23 July, 1997.
remarks Geraldine Forbes.\(^5\) With view to the history written from women's point of view, Woolf's remarks suitably the mocking contradiction of woman's life. "Imaginatively she is of the uppermost value, but practically she is entirely unimportant. She permeates poetry from cover to cover. She is all but absent from history".\(^6\) Women have contributed appreciably since the starting of society. The moral values and commitment in the direction of civilization from ancient era till the present era can be seen many examples of Sita Anusuiya, Ahilya, Laxmibai, Mirabai, Razia Sultan, Sarojini Naidu, Indira Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Kalpana Chawla, Kiran Bedi, Medha Patkar, Maharani Praneet Kaur, Harsimrat Kaur Badal and others. In Indian society women have been symbolized as and raised to the level of goddesses, but unluckily the patriarchal family system and other socio-historical political factors resulted in the inferior status of women. The position of women is different from religion to religion, society, environment and culture of specific states. There is no rejecting the fact that much development has been made towards humanizing women’s place in the society.

In history, women were bearded from natural and manmade handicaps and yet, in all ages, some of them capably predictable themselves and obtained the position of leadership and authority.\(^7\) However, a correct guess of the position and status of women cannot be complete without a field survey of the archives and records of Indian history. History would be a good resource to form an idea of the actualities. In the absence of a historical point of view it would not probable to give a universal view about women’s status in Indian society and culture in common and in politics in particular.

Indian women have passed through with the times for centuries and have showed to the world that the hand that rocks the support can canon the world. To make a victory of overcome is the most vital and


amazing project in the world. The status and position of women in society is the real indicator of its cultural, religious, social and spiritual ranks. It is one of the main criteria for guesstimate with accuracy the degree of society reached by a particular society in diversity period of India.

In this second chapter an attempt has been made to trace the status of women in Indian society from social and political perspectives. The social status of society represents the social spirit of the era while the political status of women represents the thought and feeling of the community with regard of women at that time. The status of women in Indian society has changed from time to time.

**Status of women in Ancient India**

The period of Ancient India could be divided into two parts: Vedic Period, Post Vedic Period and little evidence can be quoted from Budhist Period as well.

**The Vedic Period**

Vedic era was the golden era for women status in India. It is normally advocated on the basis of the examples represented in religious transcripts (e.g. Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, epics like Ramayan and Mahabharat and other Dharmasastras etc.) that in ancient India, particularly in Rigvedic period, women enjoyed equal status like men.

The Vedic period can be located between 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C. Thus the woman of ancient India would denote the women of Vedic and the Upaishad periods. The Vedic, a period of equitability with men, women treated with fair deal. The status and position of Indian women in the Vedic era was much superior to in any other ancient Indian society like that of Greece and Rome. During the early Vedic period women in India enjoyed almost an equal status with men in all spheres

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8 Hansa Mehta, “Indian Women”, Butala & company, Delhi, 1981, p.65
of life. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is also obvious proof of praying to God for blessings for the birth of a daughter, who should be a Pandita or scholar lady and in Kaushitaki Brahmin. 

Rigveda explains plentiful evidence notice the fact that women were completely the equals of men as views entrance to and capacity for the highest knowledge, even the knowledge of the complete or Brahma. Accordingly to Sarvanukramanika, where were as many as many women who composed the hymns in the Rigveda. Women thinkers were called Brahmavadadini i.e. scholar women.

In Panini’s texts (500 B.C.) several passages proves that woman had other careers open to them separately from a mere literary one. It found from Patanjali’s Mahabhashya (150 B.C.) and Kautilya’s Arthesstra (about 300 B.C.) that females were also soldiers armed with bows and arrows.

Child marriage and many more evils were unknown in Vedic period. Marriage was based on equality at any rate support of marital accountability. During this phase, woman chosen her husband’s. The Swayamvora marriages of Sita, Draupadi, Savitri, Rukmani etc. give the good examples of this practice. Husband and wife took the same marriage vows and was hurdle to fidelity.

A widow had right to remarry and even under certain situation, a woman could marry again even if her partner was alive. The remarriage of a widow to the brother of her partner was very common

11 *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (Ed.), With trans. by O. Bohlingk Leipzig, VI, 4, 17, 1889
12 Kaushitaki Brahmana: Ed. by E.B. Cowell, Asiatic society of Bengal, Kolkotas, 1861.
perform in ancient India time. The practice of the woman fetching sati after her partner was not in trend.\textsuperscript{18}

In ancient India time, worship was given to women as mothers figure, a icon of life, force and transparency with huge capacity for tolerance, sacrifice and sufferings. In the Vedic and Upanishadic times, women enjoyed believe able liberty so far as political, social and educational actions were concerned and thus enjoyed a status and status in society. In their homes, women were given higher place to that of men, as they were treated as the personification of goddess of prosperity, power and knowledge. Woman was represented as ‘shakti, and it was an accepted principle that where woman is respected, there is heavenly presence.\textsuperscript{19} According to Manu, where women are mistreated, all rites and ceremonies are fruitless and that family rapidly perishes, but where women do not mourn that family forever prospers.\textsuperscript{20}

In the Rig-Vedic time, women played a important role in the family, in the society and even in the political life.\textsuperscript{21} They enjoyed a position and status of equality and were esteemed both in the family and society as well. They were not decorative substance but co-partners in life, in its enjoyments and obstacles, in its delights and sorrows.\textsuperscript{22} They were taught education like men and enjoyed substantial freedom in their private matters. These are proofs of women aggressively participating in the political activities. They participated in the considerations of Vidhatha (the earliest folk assembly of Indo-Aryans) and Sabha along with men.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Leela Damodara Menon, “India and the International Women’s Year”, \textit{India Quarterly}, Vol.31, No. 3, July-September, 1975, p.278.
\textsuperscript{22} P.Thomas, \textit{Indian Women Through the Ages}, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964, p.49.
Hence, it can be believed that in Vedic Period the status of women was extremely elevated and they take pleasured rights in social, religious fields, limited rights in economic and political field. They enjoyed the same status as male enjoyed in society.

**POST VEDIC PERIOD**

In the Post Vedic era, the status of women was on the turn down. It was slowly dishonored in the puranic and smriti periods. This was the time when Epics, Purans, were written. This time onwards, condition of women was started failing. Rights which they had previous were not enjoying in this period. Limitations were put on social, economic, religious life too.

The statuses of women regularly get worse as the Vedic principles of harmony and equality began to vanish off as the time passes by. During smrities women grouped with the shudras. Pre teen’s marriage came to be practiced now. According to Baudhaya was confirmed “a father who did not provide his daughter in marriage before her first menstruation incurred the responsibility of one procuring abortion (a serious sin, worse than several kinds of murders) for every menstrual period in which she remained unmarried”\(^\text{24}\).

According to Manu, “Bride was one third the age of the groom thus a male of twenty four should get married a girl of eight year i.e. Nagnika”. \(^\text{25}\) In the opposing some literature were completely against of early marriage of girl child For example according to Sushuta samhita “Ancient Indian medicinal authorities states that the best children are created from mothers over sixteen and actually recognize the practice of child marriage as infrequently happen”\(^\text{26}\). But it was criticized later on.

In society, husband acceptd the status as a patiparmeshwar (God). Women were left without to education. Women were attending any lectures of Gurus hardly ever. By the time of smrities, vedic facts were only limited for male only. In Brhadaranyaka Upnishad tells of a

\(^{24}\) *Baudhayana* iv, 12 p.166.  
\(^{25}\) *Manusmriti*, iix, 94, p.166.  
\(^{26}\) *Susruta samhita* (iii), 10, 54, p.166.
scholarly lady Gargi Vacaknavi who attended the discussion of the learned Yajnavalkaya and for a time so confused him with her pointed questions that he could only jestingly answered “Gargi you not ask too much, or you head will go down”.  

Sati system also was common in this period. Widow had suffered a lot; she was to all objectives and purposes an abstinent, sleeping on the ground and eating only once a day simple meal, wearing no jewellery or colored clothes. The widow had to sustain this strict routine to the end of her days in the trust of being remarried to her earlier husband in her life.

Many veil systems came into practice. Polygamy in common conditions was not encouraged by previous Hindu literature, according to Dharmashatra (Apastairiba) “it is definitely prohibits a man to take a second wife if his first wife is of good character and has borne him sons”\(^{28}\). Polygamy became in trend for just kings and their chiefs. Narad states once put that a polygamist is unfit to give evidence in a court of law. The perfect models of Hindus marriage the hero was Rama and his faithful wife Sita.

Women were completely rejected rights e.g. property, economic areas. Most school of laws permitted a woman to have some personal property (stridhan) just in the form of jewellary and garments. According to Arthashstra, “Arthashastra allowed women also to own money up to 2000 silver panas. Any sum above this being held by her partner in faith of her behalf”.  

Education of women which was a conventional norm during the Vedic period gradually started to be ignored and later on girls were completely denied, any admission to education.\(^{30}\)

*Upanayana* or blessed thread ceremony which was achieved to prisoner a person into the Vedic studies, was forbidden in the case of

\(^{27}\) *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*, iii, 6, iii, 8, p.178.
\(^{28}\) *Apasthamba*, 11, 5, iif p.173.
\(^{29}\) A.L. Basham, *The wonder that was India*, Grove Press, New York, 1959, p.172.
\(^{30}\) *Ibid.*
women and Shudras by the Manav Codes, thus closing the doors for any official education to women.  

In this period, women were always protected by their family males. She was to be protected in by her father in her childhood, by her husband in adolescence and by her sons after the death of her husband.

During the generally socio cultural subsidiary of women, it is amazing to find that law givers documented the right of property, chiefly “that which was known as Streedhan, women’s property”. Manu describes, “Streedhan as that which was given to her before the marriage fire, in bridal procession, in symbol of love and which she has conventional from brother, mother or husband.” A woman during that huge distance not only occupied an inferior status but was made to feel that her place is secondary to men in our society.

**WOMEN AND BUDDHISM**

The religion and philosophy founded by the Buddha is recognized, in English as Buddhism. A Buddha is one who has reached Bodhi; and by Bodhi is meant knowledge or wisdom, a perfect state of rational and principled perfection which can be achieved by man through merely human means. The term Buddha accurately means the progressive one or a knower. Buddhists consider that a Buddha is born in each era of time and our Buddha- the tale Gautma who attained illumination under the banyan tree at Buddha Gaya in India was the seventh in sequence.

Mahatama Buddha originally was opposed to the admission of women into the sangha system but later on decided to the arrangement of the order of the nuns-these nuns were imparted religious and religious education.

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34 Maya Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p.213.
The education given to female novices and nuns was not different from that conversed to their male counterparts. The female lay supporter also conventional their preparation into the deepest problems of viewpoint as also into the delicate spiritual experiences possible through strong thoughtful exercises. It can be said that Buddhist days were more happy for women. Buddha’s viewpoint towards life was full of sympathy and encompassed the whole of humankind. It was mostly owing to this that the status of women was elevated.

During the Buddhist era, the status of unmarried girls was superior to that at any other in history. It gives liberal approach about women and girl child. The cases of infanticide were almost not be exist in this time. Also there is hardly ever mention about child marriage in the canonical texts. But dowry system was common during the time of Buddha also. It is hard to say anything with positively about the situation of widows.

Buddhism appeared in against of rites and ritualism of Hinduism. Status of women in this period was to some extent improved in religious ground. They had their own sanghas ‘Bhikshuni Sanghas” exercises the same policy and guideline as monks. In Gupta period, there were laws concerning about marriage, dowery, inheritance and widow remarriage was permissible. Vikramaditaya (Chandra Guptail) expressed romantic and chivalrous approach towards women. Rajyashri sister of Harshvardhan learnt rules from heuin tsang. Queen Prabhavati, the daughter of Emperor Chandra Gupta II played a important position in governing the country and on the death of her husband, she ruled for 13 years until her sons grown up and took over the charge of emperor. In the 10th century Queen Dida ruled in Kashmir, Apart from queen and princess, there were women from the common position who notable themselves in the field of literature philosophy, arts, maths etc. Bharti of mithila was well-known philosopher who had admiration from Shankarachary.
STATUS OF WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The period of 11th century to 18th century eyewitness of declined in the position of women. In 11th century Mohammad Gazanvi assault on India and occupied it. From this period to 18th century nearly 700 years, a universal decline were shown in the social institute take to pieces political, structure, economic misery in India.

The Medieval period spectator, a gradual decline in the position and status of women in India. Women were measured weak and it was the responsibility of man to protect their women. Since they were sensitive in nature, they should be treating with affection and care. They were measured needy on men throughout their lives. In childhood the father take care after her, in youth the husband and in the old age her sons protected them. Therefore, life time she had to depend on someone or the other and never enjoyed abandoned freedom.35 During this period, there remerged social evils like female infanticide, child marriage and the practice of sati in the Hindu society.36

Medieval India was measured the ‘Dark Ages” for Indian women. Medieval India saw many foreign invasions, which resulted in the decline in women position. When foreign vanquisher like the Mughals and the British entered India they also brought with them their own culture and norms which in some cases unfavorably affected the condition of women and in some cases unbound them.

Many women like Razia Begum rose to become a ruler, Chand Bibi, Tara Bai and Ahaliya Bai Holker, left their enormous track for their ruling capabilities. In Bhopal, Begums or princesses ruled many times. With the arrival of Islam, many women like Jahanara, Begum Mumtaz and Noor Jahan enjoyed respectable positions in the country. These extraordinary ladies though severe Muslims, publicly managed justice with faces covered by covering or burkas, but after that many of evils came to existence in this period:

35 Kala Rani, Role Conflict in Working Women, Chetna Publications, New Delhi, 1976, p.52.
36 A.S. Altekar, op.cit. p.16.
**Sati:** The ceremony of dying on the funeral pyre of the husband is known as ‘Sati’. According to some of the Hindu texts women dying on the funeral pyre of her partner go directly to heaven so it’s good to practice this ceremony. Originally it was not compulsory for the women but if she accomplished such a custom she was extremely respected by the society. But after medieval period, this ceremony was compulsory for every woman their husbands were died before their wife.

**Jauhar:** It is also more or less alike to Sati but it is a mass suicide by women. Jauhar was common in ancient Hindu Rajput families. In this tradition wives burn alive themselves while their husbands went to perform Saka, i.e face the larger military of the opponent knowing that they will be killed since they are outnumbered. When people of the Rajput families became certain that they were going to die at the hands of their enemy then all the women assemble a large pyre and set themselves burning, while their husband used to fight the last critical battle with the enemy. Thus, they were protected our honor and the whole family respect.

**Child Marriage:** It was a custom in medieval India to get girls married at the earlier age (8-10). They were not allowed admission to education behalf of them they were trained in household duties. Child marriage had its own split of problems such as enlarged birth rate, poor health of condition of women due to frequent child bearing and high humanity rate of women and children. “Child Marriage” means to which either of the contracting parties is a child.\(^\text{37}\)

**Restriction on Widow Remarriage:** The circumstance of widows in medieval India was very unfortunate. They were not treating as equals and were subjected to a lot of limitations. They were supposed to live religious life after their husband death and were not allowed entry in any celebration or function of society. Their company in any good work was considered to be a bad sign. Many widows also shaved their hair often as a mark of grief. Widow women were not allowed to remarry if

any woman remarrying was looked down by the society. This brutality on widows was one of the major reasons for the huge number of women committing Sati. In medieval India living as a Hindu widow was not less than short of a curse.

**Purdah system:** It came into existence during the Mughal time, by which from teens to old age women were suspiciously screened from the vision of all men but their husbands and close relatives. The veil or the ‘Purdah’ custom was widely common in medieval Indian society. It was used to protect the women folk from the eyes of foreign rulers who attacked India in Medieval period. But this system curtailed the liberty of women.

**Female Education:** The girls of medieval India and particularly Hindu society were not given official education. They were given education related to household tasks. But a well-known Indian philosopher ‘Vatsyayana’ marks that women were supposed to be perfect in sixty four arts which included cooking, spinning, grinding, and knowledge of medicine, recitation and many more.

**Devadasis:** It was a tradition common in Southern India. In this system girls were devoted to temples I the name of gods and goddesses. The girls were then beyond known a ‘Devadasi’ meaning servant of God. These Devadasis were supposed to live the life of celibacy. All the condition of Devadasis was satisfied by the funding given to the temples. In temple they used to spend their time in adoration of god and by singing and dancing for the god. Some kings used to request temple dancers to perform at their court for the pleasure of courtiers and thus some Devadasis transformed to Rajadasis (palace dancers) common in some tribes of South India like the Yellamma faction.

In short, it may be said that status of women in medieval period gradually declined. Many evils emerged in this period.

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BHAKTI MOVEMENT

In Bhakti movement, 15th century took place which introduced new trends in social and religious life of women. Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Kabir, Meera, Ramdas, Tulsi, Tukaram, and advocated women’s rights for religious worship as a result women secured certain social liberty too. Emphasis is given to ‘Grahastashrama’ did not allowed husband to sanyas without the permission of his wife. During the Bhakti movement sign were confident to educate themselves. Though this movement did not bring extreme change in the position of women in economic, political field but in social and religious field some positive changes were seen, yet some evil practices were also observed like Devdasi custom, child marriage, sati system etc.

The starting of Sikhism gave a healing touch to the degradation of women. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, wanted women to be treated by men as equals. He said,” Within women is a man conceived, from women he is give birth, he is married to a women and with her goes through life....why call her bad. She gives birth to kings. None may survive without women. Only the one true God is external to women”.  

For the followers of Sikhism purdah was surplus, widow marriage was confident, sati was destined and women stepped out of their homes to help the men folk whenever. Guru Nanak’s world rang deeply throughout India:

“How dare we deride one who mothers the best in the world?”

Bhai Gurdas beautifully said about the Sikh attitude towards women “Women is one partially of the complete personality of man and is entitled to divide secular and spiritual information equally”.

The Bhakti movement which happened during the medieval period denounces complicated ceremony and declared that God could be worshipped not only through temples and rituals but also by

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devotion. The devotional hymns collected in the languages spoken by the people transported this movement near to women, who’s ignorance of Sanskrit and frequently disadvantaged them from sharing the spiritual practices and practice of men. This movement placed God within the reach of all irrespective of caste and sex.\(^{42}\)

The history of the Bhakti movement shows that it brought great consolation to women and presented an option way of life to many individual women. Some even reached sainthood. Meerabai, Muktabai, Janabai, Vishnupriya are well known names in Bhakti Literature whose compositions are popular to this day. The Bhakti movement tried to lift the status of women. It distributes the message of equality. But the impact of the movement did not show long lasting.

**British Period**

In the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century-mid to 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century British ruled over the India. British government brought about modified in the economic and social structure of Indian society. When the British era started in India, the situation of women in India was the most horrible in the history of the country because of the child marriage and sati system and other evils are famous in Indian society. Several steps had been taken by the British rulers and social reformers, for the uplift the women. In this period remarkable attempts were made to abolish social customs like child marriage, sati and to allow widow remarriage etc.

In the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century Ram Mohan Roy was the first social reformer, who raised his voice against the existing religious and social maladies disturbing the conditions of women. He was collected a lot of matters from the Hindu religious literature in sustain of his attempts at abolishing the evil customs existing in the Hindu society. For this he also tried to activate the State for appropriate legal enactment against the tradition of sati.\(^{43}\) In 1829, the British Government finally abolished

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\(^{42}\) Anita Arya, “*Indian Women Society and Law*”, Vol. 1, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, pp.31-32.

\(^{43}\) Kalpana Shah, *op.cit.*, p.32
sati system and declared it is a crime.\textsuperscript{44} Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj supported widow remarriage. However, it was the frequent and determined effort of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar that led to the circulation of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. He quoted \textit{Parashar Samhita} to support his views on a widow remarriage.\textsuperscript{45}

Dayanand Saraswati, the creator of the Arya Samaj was not in support of widow remarriage except in the case of virgin widows and men who had no sexual experience.\textsuperscript{46} Gandhi Ji opposed dowry and asked to form a strong public views against that sick practice. He even entreated against Purdah system but stressed chastity.\textsuperscript{47} He said, “chastity cannot be confined by the surrounding barrier of the \textit{Purdah}.”\textsuperscript{48}

In order to improve the situation of women and to take out social improvements efficiently, social reformers left the need for providing education to girls. During the 1820’s, Christen missionaries in Bombay started the first school of girls in 1824.\textsuperscript{49} With the help of Bethuen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started a school for girls in Calcutta in 1849 which school later known as Bethuen College. He also started numerous primary schools for girls in the village of Bengal.\textsuperscript{50} In 1916, the Women’s University, Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Indian Women’s University was established by Dhondo Kashab Karve in Bombay.\textsuperscript{51}

Mahadev Govind Ranade also raised his voice against the ending of child marriage and in favor of widow remarriage and education of

\textsuperscript{44} M.C. Kotnala., \textit{Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Indian Awakening}, Gitanjali Prakashan, Delhi, 1975.
\textsuperscript{46} J.T.F. Jordens, \textit{Dayanand Saraswati}, Oxford University, Delhi, 1978.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{49} Heimsath Charles, \textit{op.cit.},P.124
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}
He also made efforts to attend the first widow remarriage in the western part of India.52

Through the efforts and the various movements launched by these grand social leaders of the 19th century before independence, it had been likely to get many legislations passed and public opinion mobilized in favour of some matters of social reforms.

These treads have covered the way in removing the difficulty in the growth of women. Not only this, it had helped in eliminating inequalities between men and women and giving suitable esteem to the other-half of the society.

**The most significant legislations connecting to the problems faced by the Indian (Hindu) women passed during British period were as follows:**

1. Abolition of Sati Act. 1813.
2. The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856.
3. Civil Marriage Act, 1872.

In addition these Acts, many provincial governments also passed some legislation. In the year 1779, infanticide was affirmed to be a murder by the Bengal Regulation XXI. In the year 1804, this was extended all over to the other parts of the country of India.

In the last decades of 19th century, a main change took place in the outlook men and women about the education and employment of women as teachers, nurses, police etc. This changed outlook towards women’s education also helped in rising the age of marriage and enacting legislation to ban sati. Thus, the ground prepared by the 19th century social reformers and their determined efforts led to the

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52 Heimsath Charles, *op. cit.*, 127.
liberation of women. This also helped them to take their rightful rest in society.

The great effort for the emancipation of women took place mostly in three guidelines - (1) to make essential laws for social reforms; (2) to afford utmost opportunities for women education; and (3) give them with the fundamental political rights.53 Attention was determined on the 19th and early 20th centuries whereas political rights of women got attention only during the last phase of the freedom movement.54

With the starting of the twentieth century a number of associations completely for women appeared among high - caste or elite women. The All India Women’s Conference, the National Council for Women, Women’s Indian Association of Madras etc. came into existence in this time.55

**Women in India’s Freedom Struggle**

The struggle for independence marked the launching of a political among women in India. With the organization of the Indian National Congress, membership was also open for women. The Swadeshi Movement in 1905 saw the entrance of women into freedom struggle movement. It also marked the formulation of several women’s associations. The access of Annie Besant into Indian politics in 1914 accelerates the process of women’s organizations with the independence struggle. She was the first women who ever been to be elected as president of the Indian National Congress. Sarojini Naidu too became very active in Indian National Movement.

It is M. K. Gandhi who represents large number of women into the freedom struggle. The contribution of women in India’s freedom struggle was a country wide phenomena, their contribution in large scale was linked intimately with the beginning of Gandhi on the Indian political picture from 1917 on words. In response to Gandhi’s call large number

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of women thrown into the national freedom movement. His message “when women, we call abala became sabala, all those who are helpless will became dominant”, shows the significance he gave for the strength of women.\(^{56}\)

Through his trial test with sathyagraha (nonviolent strike), Ghadhi Ji realized that women could similarly participate jointly with men. His overwhelming voice in the freedom movement and his views on women prejudiced their position in it. His brand of politics and battle, which rested mostly on the partciples like Ahimsa (non-violence), Sathyagraha and civil disobedience allowable women to participate in the political arena along with men. Gandhi was therefore able to rally large number of women, no bound of caste, creed and class lines, to play a dynamic role in the independence struggle. Gandhi’s own place on women development over time and he lastly urged women to fight development whether within the home or in the Congress Party.\(^{57}\) For Gandhi, the freedom fight was not just political; it was also an economic and social reform for our society. He believed that men and women are equal but not identical rationally, mentally and spiritually, women are equal to a male and she can partake in every activity.\(^{58}\) The main involvement of Gandhi to the reason of women put in his complete and unambiguous insistence on their personal dignity and sovereignty in the family and society. Gandhi succeeded in animated the traditional house bound women as a powerful device of political action.\(^{59}\) Women’s conventional ability to sacrifice was particularly emphasized by Gandhi in an attempt to assemble women. He strongly agreed that women’s have capacity to sacrifice her own individual interest for the family was held to extend to the community and nation and this motivated women to join the Non-Cooperation Movement.


The national freedom movement brought women to the mid of the stage. From liberal homes and conservative families, urban cities and rural districts, women solo and married, young and old came forward and united against British rule. Their participation is enormously important, women’s sharing called into question the British right to rule, legitimized the Indian National Movement and won for protestor women, at for a time the support of Indian men.60

A huge number of women participated keenly in the Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Swadeshi, And Salt Sathyagraha movements led by Gandhi. During the Non-Cooperation Movement, women in unlike every part on India joined demonstrations and spread the use of khadi (spun cotton) and charakha (spinning wheel).

Many women like Vijayalexmi Pandit, Renuka Ray, Basanti Davi, Urmila Devi and Kasturba Gandhi played an important role in the boycott of British commodities. In the Barsad Satyagraha of 1922-24, women turned out in great numbers. In Bardoli Sathyagraha of 1928, women slowly outnumbered men in political gatherings. Maniben Patel and Bakti Desai set their tents on the ground declared to be sold by the movement. In March 1930, the Salt Sathyagraha launched by Gandhi, a lot of women walked to Dandi to break the salt law. Sarojini Naidu, Muthuben Patel, Mridula Sarabai, Khurseedben, Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya and Avanthikabi, Gokhale were some of the well-known women connected with the Salt Sathyagraha. During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1940, women take part and courted arrest in great numbers. Suchetha Krapalani was the first one to do so, who 1939 had been in accused of the Women’s Department of the All India Congress Committee.

In 1942 the Quit India Movement, women took part in demonstrations holding meetings, exhibitions and organizing strikes or dharnas. Kanakaltha Barua, a girl of Assam led a parade of 500 and

60 Chatterjee Partha, The Nation and Its Fragments, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 117.
was killed in the police firing. In Bombay (Mumbai), Usha Mehta controlled an underground radio station. Aruna Asaf Ali a Muslim lady was one of the most important figures of 1942 movement, for years she stay behind underground avoiding arrest. She published bulletins and edited the newspaper 'The Inquilab' along with the Ram Manohar Lohia. Few women who did not believe in non-violence adopted the violence path. Many of young college girls joined underground societies. Kalpana Joshi, Preeti Waddadar was associated with Chittagong weapon store attack. In 1928 the Chchatri Sangh started was an important preparation and recruiting ground for future revolutionaries. In Delhi, at the age of 17 Roopvati Jain was in charge of a bomb factory under Chandrashekhar Azad.\(^{61}\) These are the only few examples of women who joined the freedom movement and actively participated equally with men. Women were connected with both in the moderate and extremist groups.

However, the number of women who obtained positions of power or membership in the representative bodies was very less compared to men. In the 1937 election, only eight women were elected from the general constituencies. Firstly, Vijayalaxmi Pandith become minister for local self government in Uttar Pradesh and later on Ansuyabi Kale and J.T Sipahimalchi were appointed Deputy Speakers in Madhya Pradesh and Sindh respectively. Hansa Mehta and Begum Shah Nawoy took office as Parliamentary Secretary in Bombay and Punjab respectively. In December 1946 Constituent Assembly, there were 14 women members.\(^{62}\) But there were no balanced increase in women as representatives or in power positions.

It has been well-known that the women who were active in politics or politically successful belonged to well-off and progressive families. They were sustained by husbands or family members who were dynamic in Congress. This is being followed even after independence. But, there were huge number known or unknown women who


participated in the freedom struggle movement. It provided a chance for great number of women to enter into active politics which was not seen earlier for them. They were willing to join demonstrations, and to go to prisons many times. Women joined active revolutionary organizations, helped in deal out newspapers and helped in the manufacturing bombs. Innumerable women provided support to freedom fighters by looking their families. Vina Mazumdar says there are situation in the reports during that period that thousands of women attended the political gatherings. Very little in known of who they were, why they came, and from where they came.\(^63\)

Geraldin Forbes notes that the contribution of women legitimized in Indian National Congress. Women’s activities legalized Indian harmony and sathyagraha. Most important, it legitimized maintain to a place in the governance of India at that time. It also created movement who fight for women’s rights. At the same time contribution of women had some clear negative aspects. Those demonstrating, claimed to represent the all Indian women, but the number of groups involved, other than upper and middle class Hindu women, was never large.\(^64\)

Participation of huge number of women in the freedom struggle strengthened freedom movement in real sense. In this movement, gender equity was not the agenda of that time. It was not the main focus of the Indian national movement. The participating of women in getting freedom for India is noteworthy. They proved that women are also capable of strengthening the political movement. The participation of women in struggle had its great impact on the society and family and on women themselves also.

**After Independence**

On achieving Independence in the year 1947, India became a Democratic Republic state. The Constitution of India adopted a parliamentary form of government. The government functions at


different stages. At the top level, there is the national government and state government.

The Constitution of India forced in the year 1950 who guarantee justice, liberty and equality to all the citizens. The Constitution of India decided to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and to worship, equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them fraternity promised the dignity of individual and the unity of nation. To reach equality, the Constitution not only grants equality of treatment to women but also calls upon the state to adopt measures favoring women counteracts the socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages which ensures equality between men and women.

In the Article 14 ensure that the state shall not refuse to any person equality before the law and give them equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

In the Article 15 discrimination is prohibited on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth. It is a guarantee against every form of discrimination.

In the article 15 (3), nothing shall avoid the state from making any special provisions for the benefit of women and children.

In the Article 16(1) guarantees gave equal of opportunity for all citizens in matter relating to employment or appointment to any office under state.

Article 16(2) no citizen shall, on grounds of religion, creed, cast, sex, place of birth residence, be eligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment or job under the state.

Directive Principles are the goals for state which achieved by state government is not compulsory. The Directive Principles of the state policy regarding women and having a special bearing on their status are:

Article 39-a) provide right to an adequate means of livelihood for the entire citizen.
Article 39-d) provides equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

39-e) that the health and strength of workers, men or women, and the tender age of children are not physically abused and that citizen are not forced by economic requirement to enter occupations unsuitable for their age.

Article 42 states provide humanitarian condition of work and maternity relief for women. This is in accordance with Article 23 and 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 51-A clause (e) says that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to promote harmony and spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India, go beyond religious, linguistic and religious or sectional diversities, to rejects practice insulting to the dignity of women.

The 73rd which deals with the Constitutional Amendment has added the following articles to the Constitution providing reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Article 243-(D) (2) states has compulsory that 1/3 of the seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to S. C or as the case may be S.T cast.

Article 243-(D) (3) enlarge s political reservation to women not less than 1/3 of the total number of seats to be plugged by direct election in every panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat.

Article 243-(D) (4) extends reservation to elected offices as well. The office of the chairpersons in the panchayats or any other level shall be set aside S.C and the S.Ts and women in such a method as legislature of a state may, by law afford.

The legal Constitutional framework in India would come into view a mixture of Communitarian view on one hand and that of liberal democracy on the other hand. In spite of such conditions in the Constitution, the decades following independence observed a refuse in
the women’s participation in politics. These rights emerge illusionary as there was a transfer from the tray of the Constitution. Gap started widening in all political fields. Article 325 and 326 are gave political equality, equal right to participate in political activity and right to vote, respectively. While the latter has been admission and enjoyed by large number of women, the right to equal participation is still a remote vision. The lack of space for participation in political bodies has resulted in their attendance in not enough numbers in this decision making bodies.

**Legal Provisions**

To support the Constitutional permission, the State has enacted assorted legislative measures planned to ensure equal rights, to counter social bias and various forms of violence and slaughter and to give hold services particularly to working women. Although women may be victims of any of the offenses such as ‘Murder’, heating, torching etc, the offenses, which are directed particularly against women, are characterized as ‘Crime against Women’. These are broadly classified under two categories these are:

1. **The Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**
   i. Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)
   ii. Kidnapping and Abduction for diverse reasons (Sec. 363-373)
   iii. Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their efforts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
   iv. Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
   v. Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)
   vi. Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
   vii. import of girls (up to 21 years of age)

2. **The Crimes identified under the Special Laws (SLL)**

   Even though all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women considerably have been assessment occasionally and amendments carried out to remain pace with the emerging conditions.
Some acts which have special conditions to defend women and their interests are:

i. The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948
ii. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
iii. The Family Courts Act, 1954
iv. The Special Marriage Act, 1954
v. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
vi. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005
vii. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
ix. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
x. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
xi. The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
xii. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
xiii. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
xiv. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
xv. The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
xvi. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
xvii. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
xviii. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

**Special Initiatives for Women**

**(1) National Commission for Women**

In January 1992, the Government set-up this constitutional body with a specific permission to study and monitor all matters connecting to the constitutional and legal defends provided for women review the obtainable legislation to suggest amendments wherever if it is necessary. It’s focused on:

a) Women weaker segment
b) Widows of vrindavan
c) Project Mangalam
d) Problems about prostitution
e) Study of mentally disables
f) Agenda of political empowerment

Focus areas of Commission in 1999 were:

a) Launched Dehej Mukhti Abhiyan
b) Prison improvements for women under tracks
c) Gender sensitization workshops for police, judiciary, doctors through preparation components
d) To study women and disabilities

(2) Reservation for Women in Local Self-Government

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Acts passed in 1992 and Parliament ensure one-third of the total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas.


The plan of Action is to make sure endurance, protection and expansion of the girl child with the final objective of structure up a improved future for the girl child.

(4) National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001

The Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development has ready a “National Policy for the Empowerment of Women” in the year of 2001. The goal of this policy is to carry about the advancement, development and empowerment of women.

To strengthen the status of women, many legislations be relevant to women were enacted after independence. These were mainly related to marriage, divorce, inheritance of property and employment.

Women Development in Five Year Plans:

First Five Year Plan (1951-56)

1) Organization of the Central social Welfare Board.
2) Organization of Mahila Mandals.
3) Community Development Programme.

Second Five Year Plan (1956-61)

Welfare measures for women continued during this plan period.
Third Five Year Plan (1961-66)

1) Maintain female education.
2) Rural welfare services and condensed courses of education had main concern alongside provisions of examine for material and child welfare, health, education, nutrition and family planning.

Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74)

The outlay for family planning was stepped up and maximum main concern was accorded to immunization and additional Feeding programmes etc.

Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1979)

1) Highlight the requirement to teach women to need of income and defense.
2) Practical literacy programme got the top priority.
3) Women welfare and Development bureau were set up in 1976 under the Ministry of Social Welfare for the development of women.

Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985)

1) It was a specific move from welfare to growth.
2) It documented women’s lack of admission to resources as a dangerous factor impending their growth.
3) A programme for joint pattas to men and women was start.

Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990)

1) Concern for equity and Empowerment.
2) Emphasis was on qualitative aspects such as inculcation of confidence generation of awareness in skills for better employment of women.
3) Emphasized the required to open new opportunity of work for women.
4) Recognition was also given to require for organize women Safeguard for their rights.
Eight Five Year Plan (1990-1995)

It focused on authorizing women especially at the grass root level through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)

In the ninth fifth year plan came into effect from 1 April, 1997. In this the main focus on empowerment of women and people’s participation in planning and implementation of strategies. An important objective in the approach paper is the empowerment of women. The ninth fifth year plan is an attempt to bring in women’s issues within the policy making spare.

Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007)

In the tenth five year plan emphasis upon social, economic and environment during this time.

In these targets, women and children related issues are:
1) Reduction of gender gaps in literacy and wages rates by at least 50%.
2) Reduction of infant mortality rate to 45 per 1000 live births.
3) Reduction of maternal mortality ratio two per 1000 live births.
4) All children to complete five years of schooling by 2007.

Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

1) Raise the sex ratio for age group 0 - 6 to 935 by 2011 - 12 and to 950 by 2016 - 17.
2) Ensure that at least 33 percent of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are Women and Girl Children.
3) Ensure that all children enjoy a safe childhood, without any compulsion to work.

Twelfth Five Year Plan (Fyp-12) (2012-17)

Twelfth five years implemented on 27 july,2013. The chairman of this commission is Dr. Manmohan singh. In this focused on environment isssues but at the same time Women and children heath and education issues were considerable:
1) Must aim raising the grass Enrolment Ratio(GEN) in higher education to 20 percent by 2017 and 25 percent by 2022.

2) Must focus on quality of education.

3) Must aim at significant reduction in social, gender and regional gaps in education.

4) Focus on women and children; ICDS need to be revamped.

5) Focused to increase seats in Medical colleges, nursing colleges and other licensed professionals.

No doubt, since the independence there are many laws and committee are made for the improvement of women as above mentioned. But it is fact that women are still struggling for their rights. In this situation, it can be said that even after seventy years of independence of India, the level of women’s participation in higher political bodies stays very low. This trend needs serious concentration as the times command active participation of women in political fields. Nehru was concerned at the perseverance of the gender imbalance reflected in the poor representation of women in the Lok Sabha.65

The below tables shows the women participation in parliament and their turnout in election times which show the picture of women representation in Parliament and Punjab State assembly:

### Table no: 2.1

**Representation of women in Lok Sabha**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Seats</th>
<th>No. of Women Members</th>
<th>Percentage of Women Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>11.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Commission of India.

The above table evidently reveals the share of women in the highest legislative body of the country from the 1952 to 2014. This table clearly shows that women’s representation failed to reach even ten percent of the total seats till the fourteenth general election to Lok Sabha that the number of women crossed ten percent. Even in the 15th and the 16th Lok Sabhas the percentage is slightly above 10 percent.
### Table no. 2:2

**Representation of Women in Rajya Sabha**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Women Members</th>
<th>Percentage of Women Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Commission of India.
The above table establishes that the scenario in the Rajya Sabha is not different to Lok Sabha. The membership of women is consistently low and far from acceptable. The in general picture, however, appears to be improved than the lower house.

**Table no: 2.3**

**Participation of Women in the General Election since 1952**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Poll Percentage of Men</th>
<th>Poll Percentage of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>37.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>39.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>46.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>54.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>57.69</td>
<td>51.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>63.61</td>
<td>68.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>66.13</td>
<td>57.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>52.65</td>
<td>44.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>65.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Election Commission of India.

The table no. 2.3 presents shows, in terms of percentage, of the participation of men and women in India as voters in General Elections. This table clearly proves that women voters used their right and cast
their vote with continuity. Their percentage as voters is quite positive in comparison with their representation in Parliament as is revealed in Table no 2.1 and 2.2. The table reveals a significant socio-political reality. It establishes the clarity and vibrant nature of democracy where women come out to use their right to vote in good numbers. That their numbers in both the houses of the Parliament have remained low, on the other hand, is evidence of the patriarchal nature of Indian politics which denies admission to power on ground of gender.

In the end it can be said that although the status of women changed time by time. After independence Indian state guarantee that social and political inequalities come to end. This can be made possible, most of all, through creating social awareness and realization raising exercise directed at all segment of the society in arrange to sensitize people about the significance of gender equality. It is the primary duty of women legislators to donate to the uplift of women and to make concentrated efforts for addition of women in democratic progress.