

STATUS AND CONDITION OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT INDIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Understanding the position of women in ancient Indian society is the primary objective of this piece of study, which will be presented as a paper. In ages past, women were accorded the same level of respect and dignity as their male counterparts. There were female rishis who lived throughout this time period, and they were held in the highest regard. In royal families, women were shown respect, and they even played a key role in the deliberation process and the administration of various duties. They were educated in all aspects, and they also played a vital role in political affairs. whereas in the more economically disadvantaged parts of society, the birth of a girl child was looked down upon, and male infants were given priority. The concept of female infanticide and female foeticide in ancient India, male ratio adverse female ratio, ancient women and education, and ancient women and politics are some of the primary topics that are discussed in this research paper. Other important topics include women's position in ancient India, position of women in the Hindu dharma, women's position in ancient India, and position of women in the Hindu dharma.

Keywords: *Ancient India, Education, Family, Politics, Society, Women*

INTRODUCTION

In ancient India, women were held in high esteem and were recognised for making major contributions to the health and happiness of their families and communities. Within the society, the ladies were accorded a high standing, which contributed to their feelings of gratification and contentment. They were given the chance to achieve high intellectual and spiritual standards, which was made available to them. During this time period, there were a significant number of female rishis. The more affluent groups held the belief in polygamy, while the majority of people practised monogamy. Both the sati practise and child marriage were uncommon during this time period. In the society of the Rig Veda, women were held in high esteem and valued; but, throughout the later Vedic period, discrimination against women became more prevalent. The incidence of prejudice was largely noted with regard to the acquisition of educational opportunities as well as other rights and facilities. The practise of child marriage, sati, polygamy, and the purdah system all contribute to the degrading of the status of women, which has been further exacerbated by the predominance of these practises. In both the epics and the puranas, women are largely associated with the concept of property (Rout, 2016).

Even during the time of the Mauryans, the position of women continued to decline to an even more deplorable level. Despite this, the kings had female bodyguards and spies working for them. It was expected of the women who belonged to higher castes that they would comply with the purdah regime. During this time period, males practised polygamy, and sati was seen to be a perfectly acceptable form of sexual

expression. Women were not authorised to go anywhere without the consent of their husbands, and they were not permitted to make decisions on their own own. These are only a couple of the additional stigmas that were placed upon them by Arthashastra. Their standing continued to deteriorate during the Gupta period, which is when it happened. They were subjected to cruelty and indignity at the hands of the Smritishastras. Manusmriti commanded that they should be reliant on their fathers while they were children, on their spouses when they were younger, and on their sons when they were older. In addition to the customs of child marriage and sati, other factors, such as the Devadasi system and prostitution, were responsible for the degrading consequences that were imposed upon the position of women in society. These systems eventually became all-encompassing (Rout, 2016).

The Indian civilization, like many other ancient societies, might be described as having a patriarchal structure. Within the context of the patriarchal society, the most important factors that were considered were sexuality, reproduction, and the development of social relationships. The prominence provided to the women was due to the fact that their participation in the performance of these responsibilities was regarded as being significant. On the other hand, there were regulations and policies that were developed that prevented women from exercising certain rights and opportunities and regarded them to be subordinate to males. These rules and policies were formulated. The more covert manifestation of patriarchy was seen in the form of symbols that sent signals about the subordinated position of women. The stories that emphasised self-sacrifice were the means by which this message was conveyed. Women were given significance because they were involved in the performance of two significant duties, namely the role of the wife and the role of the mother. This significance was achieved by women voluntarily relinquishing the image of a pure woman and by the presence of rituals and customs (Status of Women in India, n.d.).

OBJECTIVE

1. study on Women In Ancient Indian Society.
2. The main purpose of this research paper is to acquire an understanding of the status of women in ancient India.

Women's Position in Ancient India

After the conclusion of the Vedic period, women gradually lost their social and religious privileges as a result of discrimination. They were barred from participating in any social, religious, or cultural activities whatsoever. The status of women steadily deteriorated over the course of history to the point that the arrival of a female offspring into a household was considered to be a cause for regret and an unfortunate turn of events. It was often believed that the birth of female children, particularly daughters, would pose a significant challenge to the process of bringing about the prosperity of the family and the society. However, the male offspring were considered to be assets by their parents. There was a widespread belief among the people that men would be beneficial to their families and the community as a whole because they would raise their families' social standing and advance their own wellbeing (Mohapatra, 2015).

A multitude of elements, including social structure, cultural norms, the value system, and societal expectations, all played a part in determining the status and position of women in ancient India. Changes do not come about as quickly in a society's norms, values, principles, and standards as the changes that come about within the social structure as a result of the development of technology, modernization, and globalisation. This is because the norms, values, principles, and standards of a society are more intangible.

Practices such as giving away daughters in marriage and sending them to their marital homes after marriage are some of the most frequent features that are associated to women in Indian society. This is one of the most common aspects that are related to women. Because they are the ones who keep the tradition and carry on the lineage, the male members of the community are also considered to have a prominent place. Women are considered to have a lower social position than males since they are expected to bear children and participate in childbirth.

As far as Manu is concerned, a woman's sole purpose in life is to fulfil the responsibilities of a mother and a wife. In her role as a mother, she is accountable for carrying out the activities and responsibilities that are essential to the growth and development of her kid. On the other hand, as a wife, she is obligated to carry out all of the duties and obligations that are assigned to her. Widows were not held in high regard. They were disregarded in a number of important regards, and they were not permitted to play an important role in any of the societal, cultural, or religious activities that took place. It was also thought that the sight of the widow would be an obstacle in the way of accomplishing one's goals and aims. On the other side, a man who has been widowed is exempt from these kinds of constraints. Women are not permitted to hold the role of priest in the Islamic faith, and they are also barred from performing the tasks associated with the priesthood, such as presiding over prayers. It is forbidden for the women to take part in any religious groups. Also within the Buddhist religion, the rank of a male monk is elevated above that of a nun (Mohapatra, 2015).

Position of Women in the Hindu Dharma

The patriarchal Aryan civilization is where the Hindu religion got its start, and it's also where it's still practised today. It was understood that the family unit was the most important one. The concept of extended families living together under one roof was common in ancient times. The term "joint family system" refers to the type of family arrangement that occurs when two or more independent families live together under the same roof. Grandparents, parents, children, grandkids, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins are all members of this familial network. A significant amount of joy and happiness was felt throughout the Aryan household at the arrival of the newborn boy. The participants had the belief that male children would effectively contribute to enhancing the family's and community's well-being if they were given the opportunity to do so. On the other side, women were given the opportunity for independence. The notion that a man and a woman are only two parts of the same person is widely held within the context of Hinduism, which is known as the Dharma. According to the scriptures, Lord Shiva's body is split into two halves: one represents the male gender, while the other represents the feminine gender. It is commonly held that women are more powerful than men, and they are sometimes referred to as the Goddess of Shakti (power). The community functioned according to a predetermined set of established conventions and standards.

The ancient Indians placed a significant emphasis on their religious practises. Additionally, the educational system placed a significant emphasis on various religious texts. It was a commonly held belief that individuals may improve the quality of their lives by cultivating more moral and ethical tendencies in themselves. The society acknowledged women's contributions and welcomed them to take part in all of its pursuits and activities on equal footing with men. In the realm of spirituality, women were not looked down upon in comparison to males, they were not subjected to any form of discrimination, and they were given equal opportunity. Maitrey had been given divine knowledge by Yajunvalykyia, and it was revealed that she not only has the ability to grasp lofty philosophy, but that she also possessed divine knowledge. In addition

to this, women were responsible for a variety of tasks in their places of employment. They were even purchased into slavery by getting her responsibilities established; they were employed as servants in palaces and inside the mansions of affluent classes and were also involved in activities of ministers. Those who were able to afford to do so were able to fix her duties. At the same time, women were shielded from danger by their dads before they got married, by their husbands when they were married, and by their sons after they became older.

Women were denied the ability to own property, which was the primary factor that contributed to their dependency on their fathers, husbands, and sons. In addition, women were not permitted to vote. They were no longer able to maintain their independence and instead became reliant on the male-dominated society. The patriarchal system underpins not just the social, cultural, and religious aspects of Indian culture, but also the structure of the society itself. Women were relegated to a subordinate position within the patriarchal society. It was expected of the female members of the family to comply with the directives and standards established by the male members of the household. The idea behind the patriarchal family is that the male line is the only one that advances along the family tree. This idea forms the basis of the patriarchal family ideology. Because of this, he is able to achieve prominence within the family and get protection from them. Another essential component of this worldview is the institution of marriage, which perpetuates the submissive position of women. Women are expected to endure a greater amount of disadvantages due to the low position they have in society. They are not permitted to speak out about their rights in any capacity, and there has been a widespread prevalence of practises that involve the killing of female infants and foetuses.

Concept of Female Infanticide and Female Foeticide in Ancient India

Since ancient times, planning one's family has been seen as a vital component of one's life. Most of the boys and girls got married when they were still quite young, oftentimes before they became 18 years old. As a consequence of this, there was a high rate of child marriage. Women suffered adverse impacts as a direct consequence of being married off at a young age. They decided to get married, and then they went to live with their new spouses' families. When they were living in marital houses, the primary focus of their life was on tending to the wants and needs of other members of the family as well as taking care of the obligations of running the household. They continued to be robbed of the opportunity to obtain an education as well as any and all activities that are typical of childhood because of this. In other instances, girls and women were subjected to violence and other forms of cruelty at the hands of their spouses or in-laws. Family planning was considered an important component, but the most significant challenge that was faced was the pervasiveness of the practises of female foeticide and female infanticide.

Another common practise in ancient India was the killing of female foetuses. In the vast majority of instances, the folks yearn for the male child; thus, as a result of this perspective, there were practises of female infanticide and female foeticide. The families experimented with a variety of methods to terminate the pregnancy, and this practise was widespread throughout the indigenous societies. A harsh penalty was inflicted upon the lady who had an abortion against her will because she was coerced into doing so. Unlike the lady of a higher caste who had the abortion with the aid of her slave, who was also punished for her participation in the crime, the slave was not spared the consequences of her actions. At that time, those who did not support abortion were often those who adhered to religious or communal norms. They were of the opinion that people who participated in abortions need to engage in some form of self-flagellation as a form of retribution for their actions. The termination of pregnancies was legalised in several ancient societies

through the use of specific methods. The people employed a variety of strategies, such as the utilisation of medicinal plants, the production of abdominal pressure, and the utilisation of a dangerous weapon.

During the 19th century, the British identified a certain region as one that had a high incidence of infanticide. In the year 1805, researchers discovered that the Rajputs of Saurashtra practised female infanticide to a significant degree. This practise was common among the Rajputs. There was a hamlet in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh that was completely devoid of girls. In the year 1808, Alexander Walker, who was the most powerful authority in Baroda at the time, called a meeting of the chiefs of all of the villages to investigate the murder of young women and girls. The Prevention of Murder of Female Infants Act was passed into law by the British government in the year 1870. In the beginning, it was only going to be implemented in the provinces of Punjab and Oudh, which are located in the northwestern part of the country. After it was determined from the census data that women accounted for 40 percent of the population in 1872, some regions were labelled as having a high risk of committing infanticide. In the year 1898, female infanticide was officially labelled a crime, and a government decree was subsequently made to designate it as a cognizable offence. However, within eight years, in 1906, the prevention of Female Infanticide Act was repealed because the government stated that infanticide was no longer practised within the communities. This happened despite the fact that the law had only been in effect for four years.

According to the census completed in 1901, there were only 832 girls living in Punjab, but there were 1000 males. Because of a number of different political factors, the measure was rescinded. Consequently, the practise of female foeticide was widespread in ancient times and carried out in this manner. It is possible that there were no medical facilities available at the time, or that medical knowledge simply had not yet gained widespread acceptance. Therefore, in the event that the folks were going to engage in these practises, they were obliged to make use of traditional procedures, all of which featured a number of drawbacks and deficiencies. At the same time, the killing of female foetuses was considered a crime, and those who committed the act faced disciplinary measures. As a result, we might reach the conclusion that this idea has been deeply ingrained in our culture ever since our ancestors.

Ancient Women and Education

In ancient India, the educational system placed a significant amount of emphasis on the religious atmosphere of the classroom. The Aryan mentality was the primary contributor to the development of the educational system in India. In addition, the aesthetic and occupational components were principally driven by the Dravidians' emotional and material natures, which contributed significantly to their overall development. During the ancient time, the education of women and girls acknowledged a transition from the Vedic (2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.) to the post-Vedic (1000 B.C. to 200 B.C.) periods. The Vedic period lasted from 2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C. During the time of the Vedic culture, women enjoyed a privileged position in society. During the ancient time, education was considered to be an important factor that would make a substantial contribution toward sustaining one's living conditions in a better manner. The participants, in general, had the idea that education would make it possible for the individuals to accomplish the desired goals of living an enhanced life (Roy, 2017). It is essential for individuals to produce awareness in terms of a variety of characteristics in order to improve their living situations. These aspects include morality, ethics, academic concepts, culture, religion, norms, values, standards, and principles.

Because women were the primary caretakers of their families and communities, educational opportunities for them were prioritised. This was done with the understanding that more educated women would better serve their communities. They made a significant contribution in a variety of areas, such as the execution of household responsibilities, the provision of medical care, the promotion of the child's development, the meeting of the needs and requirements of senior members of the family, the protection of the environment, and many other areas. The persons were entrusted to the care of the ladies, who were charged with the job of educating them in matters pertaining to morality and ethics. Therefore, in order for women to carry out all of these jobs and functions in a well-organized way, it is very necessary for women to gain information and update their skills and capabilities. The completion of an education has made it possible for women to lead lives worthy of respect and dignity. Women who were respected for their intelligence and expertise received admiration and admiration from other members of society. Women who had had an education were able to build up their sense of self-confidence and, as a result, were better equipped to defend themselves against any kind of mistreatment or abuse that they might have been subjected to.

At no other time in history did women enjoy the same level of social and economic advancement as they did during the Vedic period. If any women want to further their education but did not indicate that they were interested in getting married, they were free to do so without any impediments being placed in their way. The majority of the girls, whose families were financially secure, were able to pursue their educations, which was a privilege. The Upanayana, also known as the initiation ritual, was planned for both the young women and the young men. It is possible, and accurate, to assert that throughout the Aryan period, which is often referred to as the poetical age, there was recognition given to the education of women. Regarding the schooling opportunities available to women, there was no discrimination. The folks were worried about the moral standing of women inside the established social order. According to the Vedas, the entire Aryan race worked together to establish rules and standards of conduct, as well as to improve the status of women. This was one of the many areas in which they were cooperatively conscious. It made a significant contribution, relative to other factors, to the creative potential of the general populace as a whole. The Aryans were not only aware of the female power dynamics and conflicts that were occurring throughout their historical period. The reason for this is because at that historical period, society was still in the process of forming (Roy, 2017).

During the Vedic period, there were a significant number of women academics. They were equipped with sufficient information with reference to the writings and the Vedas. Not only did these ladies write hymns, but they also became skilled in music and dance. Spinning, weaving, embroidery, and stitching were additional talents that were learned by the women who belonged to lower social strata or castes. During the time of the Vedas, there were a significant number of female poets and thinkers. During the time of the Vedas, there were many talented women, such as Apala, Ghosha, and Visvavara, who worked as composers of mantras and ascended up the ranks to become sages or rishis. Some of these women's names include: It is thought that Lopamudra, one of the female instructors who lived during this time period, collaborated with the sage Agasthya in the delivery of 179 hymns that are included in the first book of the Rig Veda. Therefore, it is possible to say that women and male instructors were provided with equal chances in education so that each group could demonstrate their respective qualities. This was true not just in the realm of education, but also in the practises of social conventions and rites (Roy, 2017).

During the time before the Vedas, it was common practise for women to participate alongside their husbands in religious rituals and sacrifices. When girls and women first received a formal education, one of

the first things they were taught to do was repeat the mantras and scriptures in an accurate and proficient manner. During the Vedic time, there were many female intellectuals who triumphed over numerous obstacles. During the time of the Vedic civilization, they enjoyed equal rights, notably with regard to the possibility of obtaining an education. Apala, Atreyiand, and Ghosha are three of the most notable women academics who lived during this time period. Some of the teachers have been hired by the more well-off families to instruct the children in a variety of arts and crafts, including but not limited to dancing, singing, making garlands, painting, mending, sewing, magic, composing poems, and preparing playthings. In some of the houses with a high level of education, the girls were also able to learn information by listening to the lessons that were being taught to the younger children. As a result, it is possible to draw the conclusion that there existed authority in society, and that women were shown deference. Together with their spouses, they took part in the organising of any religious, social, or cultural events that took place. The social morality was of a very high degree, and social connections were kept up with a generous spirit of cooperation and cordiality (Roy, 2017).

Women in ancient India were given the opportunity to receive an education, and as a result, their collective level of knowledge and information was very high. The wise women were divided into two categories: the Brahnavadinis and the women who did not marry and continued to learn from the Vedas throughout their lives. Both of these groups were considered to be scholars. The Brahnavadins were the students of both philosophy and theology throughout their whole lives. The second group were the Sadyodvahas. These individuals continued their study of the Vedas till they were married. These ladies continued their educations right up until the time of their weddings, which occurred when they were either 15 or 16 years old. Paninis was the term that was given to the women who studied the Vedas. The names given to the female instructors were either upadhyaya or upadhyi. These Buddhist hymns were written by Buddhist nuns. Sanskrit plays and poetry were written by women, and women achieved success in a variety of other fields as well, including the performing arts, music, and painting. It was proved to a significant degree that rulers and monarchs were aware of the importance of women receiving an education and made sure that all of their offspring, regardless of whether they were male or female, received an education (Rout, 2016).

Ancient Women and Politics

Women played an important part in the political arena. Megasthenes recalled the Pandya women serving in administrative roles during his time there. The time period known as Ancient India extends from 2500 B.C. to 250 B.C. Archaeology, the study of old writings, and the discovery of artefacts are all being utilised in the process of reconstructing the lives of women. The worship of goddesses is discussed in the oldest materials that were discovered as a result of the archaeological investigations. In the earliest religious texts ever recorded, which date back to 1500 B.C., the life-giving force of the goddesses is invoked in order to give life, as well as to nurture and nourish it in an effective manner. Following the arrival of the Aryans and the subsequent development of Hinduism and Buddhism, India's surviving written books contributed significantly to the general population's overall level of knowledge. Women who belonged to the aristocratic classes were given the chance to improve their scholastic skills and capabilities, in addition to taking delight in a variety of other activities and possibilities. On the other hand, the women of the common classes were the ones who were subjected to deprivation, ignominy, and obstacles (Rout, 2016).

Between 2500 and 1500 B.C., the Indus valley served as the epicentre of India's earliest known civilisation, which dates back to that region. As a result of Pakistan's independence and the partition that took place in

1947, the majority of these cities, which are of archaeological importance, are now located in Pakistan. This is the case in the present day. Despite the fact that the ancient city-state of Lothal may be found in Gujarat, it was. The extensive ruins found at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and Lothal point to an affluent and well-organized civilization in ancient India. The majority of the people were involved in agriculture as their primary occupation. The people were engaged in business transactions with many other organisations in the region of the middle east. The most well-known representation of a historical figure is that of a young woman of little build who is striking an assertive pose. The discovery of several toys suggested that society acknowledged the importance of family life to a considerable degree at the time. despite the fact that the true meanings of their inscriptions on their seals have not yet been decoded. The discovery of several depictions of women lends credence to the idea that goddesses played a significant part. The gods and goddesses who play a key role in fostering increased levels of production are referred to as fertility gods and goddesses.

It would appear that this ancient civilisation was subjected to natural calamities, which resulted in alterations to the flow of the river Indus. It was believed that the Aryans who invaded the land conquered the native inhabitants, but in reality, the Indus civilisation was already in a condition of decline when the Aryans arrived. In particular, around the time when nomads arrived from the Hindu Kush. These Aryans kept the indigenous people as slaves over a long period of time and exerted authority over them, which eventually resulted in the development of a caste system. The caste system has a long history in India, dating back to prehistoric times. The Brahmins were at the top of the social hierarchy, and their primary occupations were those of teachers and priests. Next came the Kshatriyas, who held the positions of kings and warriors. The Vaishyas came in third, and their occupations were those of merchants and traders. Finally, the Shudras were those who were responsible for cleaning and sweeping. Women who were members of the ruling classes were largely involved in political and administrative activities for the state. They not only held sufficient information but also took part in the deliberation and decision-making processes.

A brief reference was made through the satisfactory system, which was conveyed through the caste system, with the primary objective of evaluating the part that women played in politics and their place in the ancient society. This was done through the varna system. According to the varna principle, the members of society can be divided into one of four groups: brahmans, vaishyas, kshatriyas, and shudras. In both a ritualistic and an intellectual sense, the highest positions of power and authority were held by Brahmins. The idea of social stratification came to have normative meaning, which helped legitimise the Brahmins' position as overlords. The varna system was demonstrated factually through the many different caste groupings. The adaptation of the system to the requirements of the society may be seen in these several groupings. The beginning of the caste system is the subject of a significant amount of debate due to its complex nature. Regarding the beginning of the system of social stratification, academics have a variety of opinions and points of view, which has resulted in a split among them. This structure has had an impact on the religious practises as well as the secular pursuits that have always been an essential component of Indian civilization. The theory that refers to the origin of the Aryan invasion in India and forms a link to the process by which the invaders were able to subordinate the indigenous inhabitants and integrate them as peasants and slaves within the stratified society is the one that has garnered the most support and is currently the most widely held belief. This theory is also the most popular and widely prevalent. As a result, the twice-born castes are considered to be descendants of people who were not of the Aryan race.

When one possesses the necessary knowledge with regard to a variety of facets, the political functions may be carried out in a manner that is both well-organized and effective. [Citation needed] These abilities include the ability to make decisions, to exercise leadership, to manage, to control, to organise, and to coordinate. Those who were held in particularly high respect were women who belonged to rich classes and nations that were ruled by princes. A significant amount of veneration was shown toward the mothers and spouses of the ruling families. Men were the ones who were in charge of carrying out politics and performing administrative responsibilities in an acceptable manner. They were also the ones who played a significant role. On the other hand, their spouses and moms can provide them with ideas and pointers. For instance, when it came to making critical decisions or when it came to putting the tactics and methods into effect, women also participated considerably. They were not only permitted to provide their thoughts and comments, but they also put the procedures into practise. When it came to the execution of administrative and political responsibilities, it was sometimes thought that women were superior to males in terms of both their level of expertise and their level of wisdom.

The depictions of a maiden and a bride in the Rig Veda can tell us a great deal about the ideal role that women should play in society. Appreciation was shown to the daughters as well as the maidens for the qualities of brilliance and the alluring ornamentation that they possessed. This term hints at an interest in sensuality associated with femininity as well as the young child's potential to carry children. When young women attend events and festivals that are organised, they have the opportunity to meet eligible males. Then, after some time had passed, the arrangement of wedding ceremonies took place, with the consent of the couple's parents. When the ladies were married, their parents counselled them that within their marital homes, they needed to demonstrate the qualities of morals and ethics and should not become angry at anybody. This counselling was offered to them after the wedding (Rout, 2016). Therefore, it was essential for women to render a significant contribution towards promoting the welfare of the community and nation when it came to the implementation of political functions. This could be done by making the appropriate decisions and carrying out the administrative functions in an appropriate manner.

The ancient Indian society placed a high value on the contributions made by women to the economy. During earlier eras, most people's primary source of income came from farming and other agricultural activities. Women provided assistance to the menfolk as they carried out the various seasonal duties. Women's participation in a variety of professions and their contribution to the creation of revenue is recognised as one of the critical factors in the maintenance of their way of life and is seen as one of the most essential parts of this. It has been reported that more than 70 percent of the people living in the country are dwelling in areas that are considered to be rural at the present time. It was believed that the family was the most important social unit, and in addition to participating in vocations or political activities, it was believed that the essential employment obligations of women were ensuring the health of their families and the growth of their children. The ladies need to have the appropriate skills and capacities in order for them to be able to carry out the obligations of the work in terms of all of the different areas and activities. It was essential for them to have sufficient knowledge and information in a variety of areas, such as health care, the preservation of the environment, the management of household responsibilities, child development, and attending to the needs and requirements of other members of the family, particularly the elderly. These areas include leadership skills, decision making skills, managerial functions of planning, organising, directing, and controlling; health care; decision making skills; managerial functions of planning, organising, directing, and controlling; and managerial functions of planning, organising, directing, and controlling

Status of women in the Medieval India:

The era of time known as the Middle Ages (which lasted from 500 to 1500 A.D.) proved to be extremely discouraging for Indian women due to the fact that their position continued to deteriorate during this time. Women in India should have been considered "dim aged" when they were considered to be of middle age. Whenever foreign warriors such as Muslims attacked India, they brought with them their very own culture and way of life. They believed that women were the sole property of their fathers, siblings, or spouses, and that women had no independent will. This kind of thinking also crept into the personality of indigenous people in India, and as a result, they began to treat their own women in a similar manner. A further rationale for the fall in women's position and opportunities was the unique Indians' desire to defend their woman society from the primitive Muslim intruders. This was an additional justification for the decrease in women's opportunities. Because polygamy was the norm for these intruders, whenever they had a desire for a woman, they would acquire her and add her to their "collection of mistresses." In order to protect their bodies, Indian women started wearing 'Purdahs,' which are similar to shrouds and cover the entire body. Because of this, their opportunity was also damaged in a negative way. They were restricted in their movement, which accelerated the decline in their position and led to the loss of their freedom. These problems that were brought up in relation to women had a significant influence on the perspectives of persons. They came to see a young woman as a lost cause and a burden, something that needed to be hidden from the prying eyes of others and required greater care and protection. Despite the fact that a child won't require such additional attention, one should keep in mind that a child might be helpful as an acquiring hand. In this fashion, a never-ending cycle was initiated in which women were in a precarious position. This resulted in a number of new forms of injustice, including child marriage, sati, jauhar, and restrictions on the education of young women.

Sati

It is called as "Sati" or "Sahagaman" when the custom of kicking the bucket during the burial service fire of the spouse is carried out. According to a section of the ancient teachings of the Hindu religion, ladies who pass away while attending the funeral pyre of their spouse are sent straight to paradise, which highlights the importance of doing this rite. At first, it was not obligatory of the ladies; yet, if she practised such a ritual, she was accorded an extremely high level of respect by society. It was believed that committing suicide by sati was preferable to the alternative of living as a widow in Hindu culture, which regarded widowhood as a far more difficult situation. Some of the ancient books, such as 'Medhatiti,' presented a variety of viewpoints. One of these opinions suggests that one should steer clear of Sati since it is analogous to taking their own life.

Jauhar:

It is also quite similar to Sati, except instead it involves the annihilation of oneself by a large number of people. In the Rajput social hierarchies, jauhar was a typical practise. Under this tradition, couples would set themselves on fire and commit suicide while their partner was still alive. When the people of the Rajput tribe became certain that they were going to die because of their enemy, all of the women of the tribe would start a large fire and set themselves ablaze while their husbands engaged in the final decisive battle, known as "Shaka," against their adversary. As a result, protecting the sanctity of the family as a whole as well as the women inside it.

Child Marriage:

In India throughout the middle period, this was the norm. Young females between the ages of 8 and 10 were made available. They were not allowed entry into educational institutions and were treated as if they were made of stuff. In one of the shlokas written by Tulsidas, he says, "Dhol, gawar, shudra, pashu, nari, ye sab tadankeadhikari." This can be interpreted as meaning that all women are in the same precarious position. Insinuating that animals, the uneducated, those in lesser ranks, and especially women should be subjected to beatings. In this way, comparisons were drawn between women and animals, and they were given away at a young age. Along with it came a number of other problems, such as an increased birth rate, chronic weakness in women as a result of repeated child carrying, and a high mortality rate among both women and children.

Restriction on Widow Remarriage:

It was said that the situation of widows in India during the middle age was appalling. They were not recognised as unique people and were subjected to a significant number of restrictions. They shouldn't let the death of their significant other stop them from living a religious life, even though they won't be allowed to participate in any festivals. It was considered a very bad omen for any outstanding work to contain any of their contributions. In certain instances, the heads of widows were also shaved down. They were not allowed to marry again under any circumstances. Any lady who remarried was subject to scrutiny from various members of society. This barbaric treatment of widows was one of the key motivating factors that drove an extremely high percentage of women to succumb to Sati. Living as a Hindu widow in India throughout the middle age was considered something of a social stigma.

Purdah System:

The framework of the veil, also known as the "Purdah," was mainly prevalent in traditional Indian civilization. Its primary function was to conceal Indian society's ladies from the gaze of foreign kings and queens who ruled India throughout its ancient period of history. However, this structure reduced the opportunities available to women.

Girl Education:

In mediaeval India, particularly within Hindu society, there was no such thing as a formal education for young women. They received instruction on responsibilities associated with running a home. However, the well-known Indian philosopher known as "Vatsyayana" said that women were expected to be perfect in sixty-four different skills. These arts included things like cooking, spinning, grinding, knowledge of medicine, reciting, and a variety of other things.

Conclusion

Women in ancient India were accorded prominence and significance, but they were also required to adhere to certain expectations and restrictions. The women who came from upper castes and rich households made a substantial contribution to the overall improvement of the welfare of both their families and the community as a whole. They were given the opportunity to further their education, many of them entered the field of education, and many of them worked in administrative or political capacities, which allowed

them to hone their talents and improve their capabilities in those areas. The commonplace acts of female infanticide and female foeticide were one of the primary contributors to the precipitous drop in the proportion of females in the population. In the course of time, these acts came to be viewed as illegal practises, and as a result, procedures and programmes were developed to prevent them from occurring. Women were subjected to a variety of variables that had a negative impact on the well-being of these individuals. Illiteracy, the purdah system, forced child marriage, polygamy, and sati are some examples of these practises. They were not allowed to make any decisions on their own and were forced to rely on the male members of the household for all of their needs. There were some beneficial consequences on the status of women in ancient India, but there were also some bad repercussions. They were subjected to discrimination, despite the fact that opportunities were made available to them. There was a relationship between the status of women and the economic position that they had in society. This, in turn, is contingent on their being rights and chances for effectively contributing to economic activity. In India, agriculture was the primary source of income for the vast majority of the country's inhabitants. Additionally, both men and women participated in the labour market by holding vocations like as weaving, handicrafts, pottery manufacturing, and other similar occupations. Because of this, women were typically married off at a young age, they were denied the opportunity to get an education, and they were expected to carry out the obligations of running the home while also tending to the wants and requirements of the members of the family.

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