

WOMEN IN COLONIAL PUNJAB (1901-47)

A

THESIS

submitted to the

PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

HISTORY

Supervisor:

Submitted by:

Jaspal Kaur Dhanju
Professor,

Parneet Hayer



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA
NOVEMBER, 2010

WOMEN IN COLONIAL PUNJAB
(1901-47)

ABSTRACT

Submitted to
Punjabi University, Patiala
in Partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY
In
HISTORY

Supervised by :

Jaspal Kaur Dhanju
Professor

Submitted by :

Parneet Hayer



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

WOMEN IN COLONIAL PUNJAB (1901-47)

Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he.¹ She is the foundation of all that is beautiful and desirable and leads to power. The mothers of the race are its makers and unless their condition is healthy, the race cannot be expected to be anything better. Healthy here includes all that makes life enjoyable, progressive and potent. The efficiency and prosperity of a social or political unit must eventually be a reflex of the efficiency and prosperity of its women.² Thus, the future of India largely depends on the education and welfare of the women and this view is widely shared by both the men and women in the country.³ Hence, a woman is a vital part of a society and to have indepth knowledge about the social structure of any civilization, exploration and investigation of woman is a must.

Thus, to realise the importance of women in Punjab, the topic *Women in Colonial Punjab (1901-47)* for the dissertation has been selected. *Women in Colonial Punjab (1901-47)* discusses the women in general and is not based on any specific class, caste, creed or religion. The present study makes an attempt to critically analyse the

1 Kiran Devendra, *Status and Position of Women in India : With Special Reference to Women in Contemporary India*, New Delhi, Shakti Books, 1985, p. 20.

2 *The People*, Lahore, 5 December, 1925, p. 10.

3 Foreword of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur in Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Women and Social Injustice*, Ahmedabad, Navjivan Press, 1942, p. IV.

emancipation, development and enlightenment of the women during the colonial rule of the Britishers in Punjab. How the women got affected during the colonial rule under the Britishers? is the main question which is raised and tried to answer in the dissertation. These forty seven years from 1901-47 were not only important for the history of Punjab but the history of women also got transformed in these years.

The sources used in completing the dissertation are divided into two types-primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are comprised of the census reports of India and Punjab (1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1941); Punjab District Gazetteers of Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, Gujranwala, Lahore, Multan and others. The Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908); Education reports of India (1907 onwards); Report on the Administration of Punjab and its dependencies (1849 onwards); Towards Equality : Report on the Status of Women in India; Indian Quarterly and Annual Registers (1919 onwards); Report of the Commissioners of the Indian National Congress (1920); Punjab Disturbances Report (1920); Disorders Inquiry Committee Report (1920) and other relevant reports.

The Gurmukhi sources like vernacular print media of the Punjab have also been consulted like Istri, Istri Rattan, Istri Sudhar, Istri Samachar, Istri Satsang, Azad Bhain, Punjabi Bhain, Punjab, Bhujangan Pattar, Pritam-Masik Pattar, Ranjit Nagara and others. The

Reports of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Central Khalsa Yateem Khanna, Sikh Educational Conferences and others are also taken into account. Newspaper *The Tribune* and weekly magazine *The People* both in English published from Lahore have been consulted.

In the secondary sources all the books relevant to the topic are explored. The above mentioned sources and some other sources have been thoroughly sifted and analysed in this work. To make the study effective and meaningful every effort has been made to go through the relevant and important sources available in English and Punjabi. Besides, the works of modern historians have also been consulted and a comparative analysis has been made.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is 'Historical Background' deals with women in Punjab when the Britishers annexed the province in 1849. A brief idea about the condition and status of women in Punjab is given from 1849-1901. Various questions are raised and answered in this chapter like – what was the condition of women at the advent of Britishers? Which were the social evil customs prevalent in the society pertaining to women? Which were the socio-religious reform movements were working for women's cause? and many more.

All the social evil customs prevalent in the society mainly pertaining to women are discussed. Female infanticide, child marriage, mismatched marriages, enforced widowhood, polygamy, sati

system, purdah system, women trafficking and others are thoroughly studied. All these evils were retarding the growth of the women in society and efforts of the Britishers to make society rid of these evils are also mentioned. Like John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of Punjab from 1853-59 promulgated three new commandments :

**"Bewa mat jalao,
Beti mat maro,
Korhi mat dabao."**⁴

(It means not to burn widow, not to kill daughter and not to bury alive the leper.)

To elaborate and make work more interesting even the illustrations are also added in the chapter from a magazine *Phulwari – Masik Pattar* of 1930s. Pictures of mismatched marriages of old man and young girl, educated man and uneducated girl and vice-versa are given in the chapter.

Apart from the efforts of Britishers, various socio-religious reform movements are mentioned like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, the Ninankari movement, the Namdhari movement, the Singh Sabha movement and others. Male reformers of the province alongwith the government tried to help the women. The reformers worked on the Victorian construct of woman as a helpmate of the man and an educated woman, free from the shackles of purdah, accomplished in

⁴ Harkishan Kaul, *Census of India, 1911, vol. XIV, Punjab, Part-I, Report*, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1912, p. 215.

domestic skills, devoted to the husband and family, an intelligent companion, an ideal mother, producer and nurturer of a strong masculine race and custodian of tradition.

In the end of the chapter three kind of approaches are discussed to study the women in Punjab. The Nationalist school developed the idea that nationalism was a unified and collective opposition of the Indian nation against the common enemy represented by the British rule. The emancipation of women was due to the efforts of the Indian leaders not of the Britishers.⁵ The Cambridge school narrated the civilizing mission of the British as rescuing Indian women from their own culture and society.⁶ The subaltern studies looked into the efforts of women themselves. They re-read and re-wrote history from women's point of view.⁷

The second chapter of dissertation entitled, 'Women Awareness and Vernacular Press', discusses the contribution of nine vernacular journals and newspapers in creating consciousness and awareness amongst the women of Punjab. *Azad Bhain* (published from Rawalpindi), *Istri*, *Istri Sudhar*, *Istri Satsang*, *Phuleran*, *Sughar Saheli* (all from Amritsar), *Istri Rattan* (Layalpur), *Istri Samachar* (Quetta) and *Punjabi Bhain* (Ferozepur) were the journals and newspapers whose main aims and objectives are discussed thoroughly. Information about

5 Suruchi Thapar – Bjorkert, *Women in The National Movement : Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices*, 1930-42, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2006, p. 41.

6 *Ibid*, p. 41.

7 *Ibid*, p. 42.

their publication, subscription and editors is given in the chapter. All of them in one or the other way played a pivotal role in recasting and redefining the image of women in Punjab. Most of these were edited by the males but sometimes they had co-opted their wives as editors like of *Punjabi Bhain* (Bhai Takhat Singh of Ferozepur co-opted his wife Bibi Harnam Kaur as the editor). In mid of 1920s even some of the ladies started their own magazines and became their editors like Sardarni Bhagwan Kaur of *Istri* and Bibi Kartar Kaur of *Istri Sudhar*.

Alongwith aims and objectives, all the major issues and themes depicted by the vernacular print media are also discussed. Female infanticide, purdah, sati, enforced widowhood, child marriage and other issues are debated in the work. Thus, all the social conditions discussed in the print media are elaborated in the chapter. But with the passage of time, when the country was facing the struggle for independence, then the editorials, tales, stories and news related to politics were regularly published.

Some issues like of female education was always debated in almost all the magazines. The print media in early twentieth century launched a fierce campaign for creating awareness among the people about the need of female education. Like 'Istri Vidya Par Vichar'⁸ article in *Istri* tried to mobilize people about the education of girls and suggestions were given about kind of education which was needed- domestic, art and craft and religious.

8 *Istri*, Amritsar, April, 1932, p. 8.

Various matrimonial advertisements were also published under the heading of 'Purushan Layi Vidhwa Istriyan Di Lor'.⁹ This made women aware about the existence of widow remarriages in different parts of the Punjab.

Contemporary news of importance from social, economic and political fields were regularly published in these journals. The print media threw light on varied aspects pertaining to women and had a great impact on them. This later also made them aware about the political events happening in the other parts of India.

The third chapter 'Women : From Education to Occupation' is concerned with the journey of women as students to the working ladies. Before the advent of Britishers, the stress laid on the education of girls was limited to religious knowledge only. But after the Britishers, people with the efforts of colonial rulers tried to widen the scope of education for girls.

In 1856, Department of Public instruction in the Punjab was instituted with Mr. W. Arnold as the first Director.¹⁰ The department then scrutinized all the major obstacles in the way of female education-conservatism, prejudice reinforced by purdah system, the custom of early marriage and others. After that various schools were opened by the government and people of the province. Like

9 *Istri Satsang*, Amritsar, 25 July, 1909, p. 6.

10 *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its dependencies for 1901-02*, Lahore, Punjab Government Press, 1902, p. 164.

Government High schools of Ambala, Gujranwala, Moga, Hissar; Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Ferozepur (by Bhai Takhat Singh in 1894), Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Jalandhar and many more.

These schools imparted both skilled and non-skilled education among the women and later the women who got educated took further steps to improve the condition of their sisters. The education efforts of the Britishers, the male reformers and the educated women of Punjab made females aware and they adopted new professions in teaching, law, medicine and others. It can be seen from the research done that women in the profession of teaching, law and medicine from 1901 to 1941 increased by 12.52%, 2.4% and 11.01% respectively. Thus, a journey of women from education to occupation is discussed in the chapter.

The fourth chapter 'The Emergence of Organisations and Associations for Women Emancipation' had been devoted to the various organisations and associations which were either formed by the men or women for the welfare of women. The social reformers of the Punjab has formed different association to fight against social evils and for the spread of female education. And between 1900 and 1920s, "New Women", that is women who were the beneficiaries of the social reforms and educational efforts of the nineteenth century, stepped forward and formed their own organisations and associations.¹¹

11 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 54.

The male reformers of the Punjab and India formed many organisations like the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Youngmen Sikh Association, The Khalsa Tract Society, Indian National Congress, The National Social conference and others. These associations mainly dealt with female education and always propagated against the social evil customs prevalent in the society. These organisations also organised various conferences relating to women issues.

The Bhujangan Council of Kairon in Amritsar, Bharat Stree Mahamandal with headquarters at Lahore, All India Women Conference, and others were some organisations which were formed due to the efforts of women. These organisations either formed by the males or females had one common goal – emancipation of women by eradicating social evil customs and propagating education among the girls.

The fifth chapter 'Women in Public Life (1901-47) deals with the discussion of the participation of women of Punjab in almost all the regional, national and international conferences during the colonial rule. The women used these conferences as an important platform to speak for themselves.

The Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan of Amritsar started conducting The Sikh Educational Conference from 1908 in the Punjab.¹² From 1908-47 there were thirty there sessions

12 *The Report of the Proceedings of the First Sikh Educational Conference at Gujranwala, April, 1908*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1908, p. 14.

of the conference and in these sessions women started participating as mere visitors, then became fellows (that means they got registered) and presented papers and finally proposed various resolutions. Sikh Women Conferences were organised by the Bhujangan Ashram of Kairon from 1916¹³ onwards also witnessed the participation of large number of women of the province.

All India Women's Conference was established in 1927.¹⁴ Many women of Punjab like Begum Shah Nawaz (of Lahore), Lady Abdul Qadir (Lahore), Pritam Kaur (Ambala) Sushila Sethi, S.K. Dutta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (Kapurthala) and others actively participated in this national level organisation. The women in 1930s became so active that they even started to preside the all India level conferences. 'Like Shrimati Shano Devi of Jalandhar was the president of the All India Arya Women's Conference at Ajmer held on 19-20 October, 1933'.¹⁵

Hence, this chapter elaborates the involvement of women in the public affairs of the province through the participation of women in all the regional and other conferences. This led them to communicate with the women of the other parts of India.

The sixth chapter is 'Women in the Nationalist Movement', it highlights the participation of women in the struggle for freedom in Punjab. The participation has been divided into five different phases – 1901-10, 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40 and 1941-47. In the first two

13 *Bhujangan Pattar*, Kairon, 1 September, 1917, p. 17.

14 *The Indian Annual Register*, January-June, 1935, vol. I, p. 377.

15 *Ibid*, July-December, 1933, vol.II, p. 286.

phases, the women were not much inclined to the politics but if there was any political event occurred in the other parts of India then the women of Punjab got affected. And sometimes they arranged meetings and published their articles in the vernacular press. Hence it was not a direct participation in the freedom struggle.

The active participation of women in the freedom struggle was mainly started after the passing of Rowlatt Act. The act included the emergency powers exercisable by the government for the purpose of dealing with anarchical and revolutionary movements.¹⁶ The government could arrest and detain suspected persons without showing any cause and warrant. To repeal the act various hartals and meetings were organized in Punjab in which women also participated. Such a meeting was held on 13 April, 1919 at Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar.¹⁷ Here occurred the blood shed in which thousands of people died and after that martial law¹⁸ was implemented. During the martial law, ladies in almost all the districts of Punjab were humiliated by the British officials. They got infuriated and this led to the active participation of women in the struggle.

Thus, in the last three phases from 1920-47, there was a direct involvement of women in the Non Cooperation Movement (1920-22), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34) and Quit India Movement

16 *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*, Lahore, Punjab Government Press, 1920, p. 26.

17 *Ibid*, p. 35.

18 *Selections from the Report on the Punjab Disturbances, April, 1919*, Delhi, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1920, p. 71.

(1942-44) in the national struggle for freedom. They courted arrests; did picketing and hartals; led processions and even propagated about the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi

The last chapter is 'Conclusion', it tries to give a clear picture about the women in colonial Punjab from 1901-47. Various conclusions are drawn in the chapter regarding 'How the women got affected due to the efforts of three main groups - the Britishers (that is the colonial rule), the male reformers of the society and the 'New Educated Women'?

The print media started by the Britishers then utilized by the male reformers in the form of vernacular press led the women to start their own journals and magazines in the second decade of the twentieth century. The women contributors regularly sent their articles stories, analysis, tales, experiences for publishing to the print media. This proves that the women who were earlier busy in their household activities and family got aware and they tried to share their life experiences with everyone in the society.

Education was one of the Central means by which the male reformers modified the prevailing understanding on women and also defined, constructed and then actively enshrined the new ideology into society.¹⁹ Education was simultaneously used for sculpting the "new women" and also for defining the limits of her modernity. The

¹⁹ Anshu Malhotra, *Gender Caste and Religious Identities : Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 144-146.

education initiatives taken by the colonial rulers and the male reformers led the women to get education and even helped them to choose new professions like medicine, law, teaching and others. As the awareness was coming in the society, so organisations and associations got emerged which made women to get involved in the public meeting of these organisations. And eventually, these active ladies during the years of nationalist struggle openly participated in the freedom movement.

Thus, it can be seen that women in colonial Punjab (1901-47) got affected by three main groups of the society – the Britishers, the male reformers and the educated women of the Punjab. These three groups tried to enlighten the women and wielded a tremendous influence on them to become a strong and powerful section of the society. They made them capable to fight for a more respectable status in the society. They developed the personality and rationality of the females which accorded them a high and equivalent status to the men in the social structure. They spearheaded the reform movement and urged to create a rational society based on equality and justice which are the hallmarks of any perspective and value system coming under modernity. The male reformers visualized a partial modification in the ideas, values and attitudes of the people which constitute modernity. Women's own initiatives and clamouring for public roles by the end of the nineteenth century also led changes in the status of women of

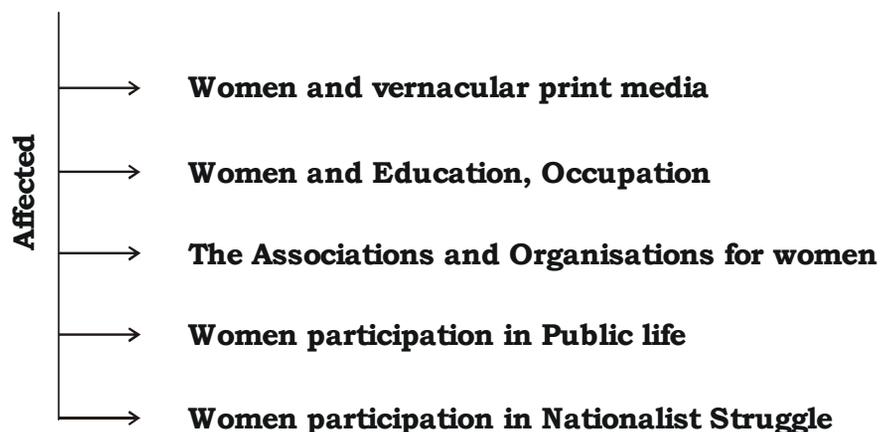
Punjab. This change is a never ending process which can also be seen in today's Punjab. Examples of many prominent women of Punjab can be seen which are enjoying a higher status in today's twenty first century. Like Maharani Praneet Kaur, Bibi Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Bibi Bhathal and others.

Hence, the dissertation includes the journey of women from journalism to education then to occupation. Occupation made them to form new organisations and led them to participate in the public affairs. These active ladies then jumped into the nationalist movement for the struggle and attained independence in 1947.

The following chart is drawn to summarize the dissertation.

Women in Colonial Punjab (1901-47)

3 main groups : The Britishers, the male reformers and the educated women.



Thus, the chart depicts the three groups which were the main force behind the change in women's conditions, status and role in the society of Punjab.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been complete but for the encouragement and support of many people and organisations. During the writing of this thesis, my most pleasant and fruitful experience was the guidance, suggestions and encouragement I received from my guide Dr. Jaspal Kaur Dhanju. I am indebted to her for her insight, involvement and time. Her patience and penchant of accuracy has enriched my understanding of the subject.

I am really thankful to Dr. Sukhninder Kaur Dhillon, Professor and Head of the Department of History and Dr. Kulbir Singh Dhillon, Professor for their constant motivation and constructive suggestions.

One redeemable debt that would always remain towards my father S. Ajai Singh Mukhmailpura, Ex-Minister, Punjab and uncle Dr. Gurmel Singh, Professor, Department of Physics, Punjabi University, Patiala, who inspite of odds always helped and encouraged me to complete this work. My husband, Simarjot Singh Dhillon is the main force behind this work. He lovingly monitored my progress and at times ticked me off for what he considered as avoidable waste to time like watching T.V. and reading fictions.

I feel pleasure in acknowledging the support of my sister Harneet Kaur Tohra, who willingly cooperated and answered my queries. I am also grateful to my mother, brother and in-laws family who always encouraged and supported me to complete this thesis.

In the collection of source material and relevant data, I express my sincerest thanks to the librarians of the various libraries, specially Punjabi University, Patiala; National Archives of Delhi; Dwarka Das Library, Chandigarh; Punjab State Archives, Patiala; Department of Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala; Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi; and Teen Murti Bhawan (NMML) Library New Delhi, who allowed me free access to the relevant documents, and rare books in their possession.

I am thankful to S. Paramjeet Singh, Office Incharge for his cooperation in the process of this work and to Mr. Dheeraj Kumar (Universal Photostat, Opp. Punjabi University, Patiala) for neat, meticulous and efficient typing of this manuscript.

(Parmeet Hayer)

CONTENTS

| |
|------------------------------|
| Certificate |
| Declaration |
| Acknowledgements |
| List of Tables |
| List of Illustrations |

| Chapters | | Page no. |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1-35 |
| 2 | Women Awareness and Vernacular Press | 36-79 |
| 3 | Women : From Education to Occupation | 80-114 |
| 4 | The Emergence of Organisations and Associations for Women Emancipation | 115-145 |
| 5 | Women in Public Life | 146-191 |
| 6 | Women in the Nationalist Movement | 192-230 |
| 7 | Conclusion | 231-248 |
| | Bibliography | 249-261 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page No. |
|--|-----------------|
| Table - 1 Sex Ratio in Punjab (1901-41) | 11 |
| Table - 2 Number of Converts into Christianity | 24 |
| Table - 3 Women in Profession | 103 |
| Table - 4 Number of Convictions (Women) | 220 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- I. ਮੈਂ ਰਤਾ ਗੁਡੀਆਂ ਪਟੋਲੇ ਖੇਡ ਲਵਾਂ
 Let me play with my dolls
- II. ਨਾ ਬਾਪੂ ਜੀ; ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨ ਛੋੜੋ
 Oh! father don't trouble me
- III. ਵਿਆਹਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ
 Married male student
- IV. ਦਫਤਰੋਂ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਪਤੀ
 Husband coming from the Office
- V. ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਪਤਨੀ
 An Educated wife

Illustration - I



ਮੈਂ ਰਤਾ ਗੁਡੀਆਂ ਪਟੋਲੇ ਖੇਡ ਲਵਾਂ

(Source : *Phulwari* 1932)

Illustration - II



ਨਾ ਬਾਪੂ ਜੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨ ਛੇੜੋ

(Source : *Phulwari* 1932)

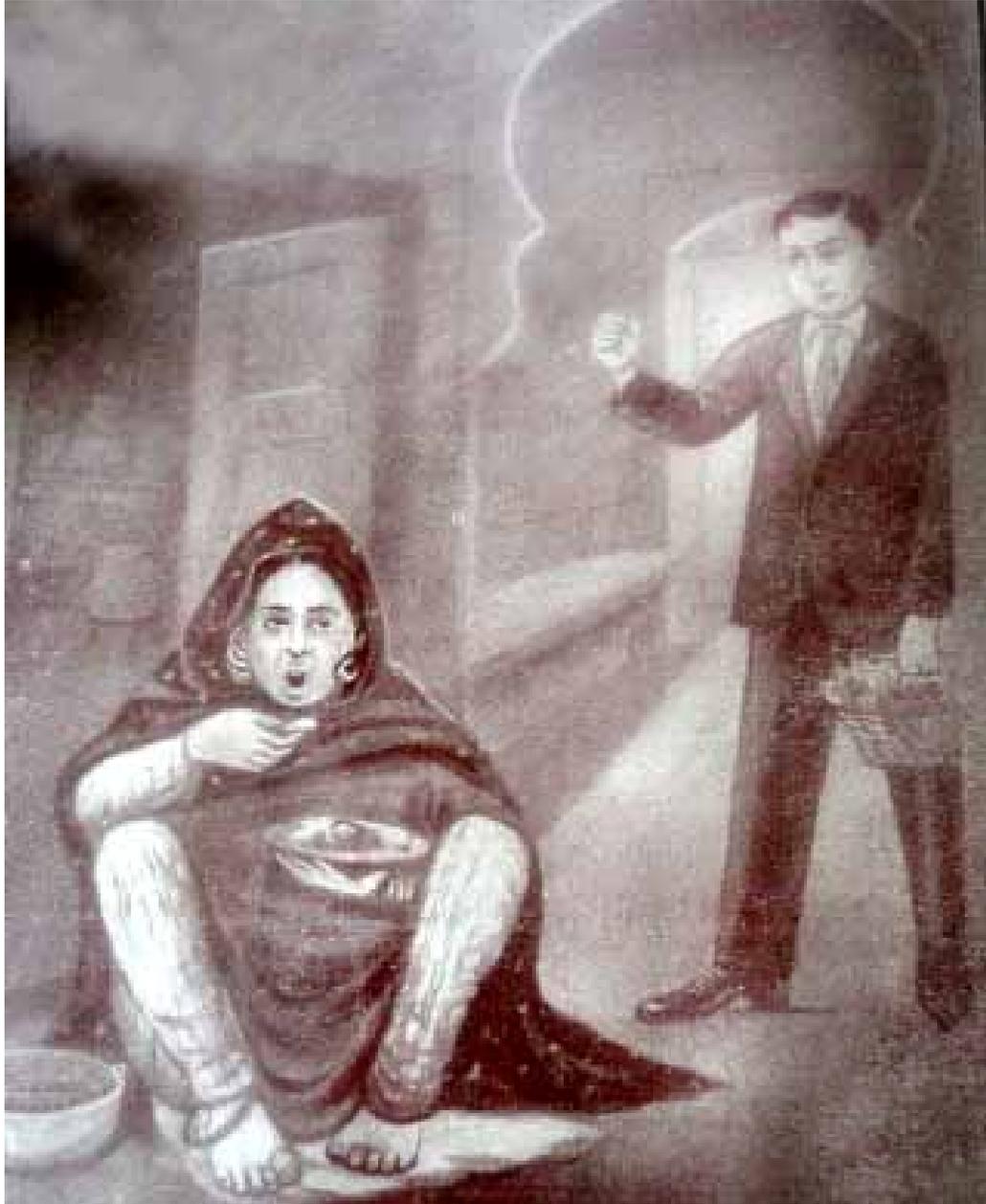
Illustration - III



ਵਿਆਹਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ

(Source : *Phulwari* 1932)

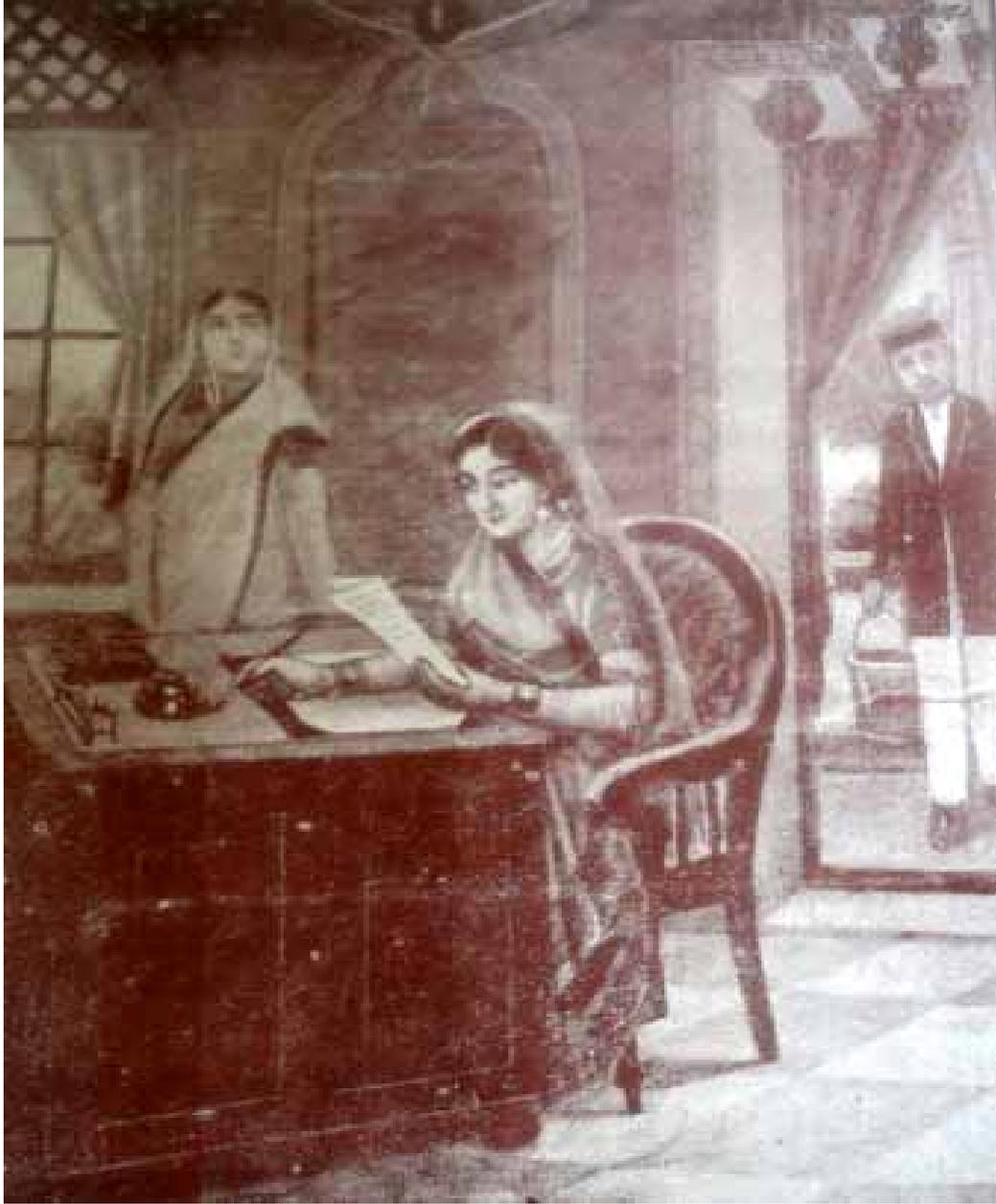
Illustration - IV



ਦਫਤਰੋਂ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਪਤੀ

(Source : *Phulwari* 1932)

Illustration - V



ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਪਤਨੀ

(Source : *Phulwari* 1932)

Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the best ways to understand the spirit of a civilization and to appreciate its excellencies and realise its limitations is to study the history of the position and status of women in it. A.S. Altekar expresses that “The degree of freedom 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 enables us to know how far it had realised the difficult truth that women too have a contribution of their own to make in its development and progress.”¹

Indian texts essentialized women as devoted and self sacrificed, yet occasionally rebellious and dangerous. Texts on religion, law, politics and education carried different pronouncements for men depending on caste, class, age and religious sect. In contrast, women's differences were overshadowed by their biological characteristics and the subordinate, supportive roles they were destined to play. Historians were equally essentialist in their portrayal of Indian women. Occasionally Indian text and historical narratives singled out one woman for special attention but usually this was because her accomplishments were significant by male standards. Topics that were interwoven with women's lives - house - hold and agriculture technology; religious rituals and sentiments;

1 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization - From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1959, p. 2.

fertility and family size; furnishings, jewellery and clothing; inheritance and property rights; and marriage and divorce - were largely overlooked, remarks Geraldine Forbes.²

With regard to the history written from women's point of view, Virginia Woolf's remarks appropriately the ironical paradox of woman's life. "Imaginatively she is of the highest importance, practically she is completely insignificant. She prevades poetry from cover to cover. She is all but absent from history."³

Women have contributed significantly since the beginning of civilization. The moral values and dedication towards humanity from ancient times till the present era can be seen in 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 culture women have been represented as and raised to the level of goddesses, but unfortunately the patriarchal family system and other socio-historical factors resulted in the subordination of women. The position varies from religion to religion, society, environment and culture of specific region. There is no denying the fact that much progress has been made towards improving women's place in the society.

2 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 1.

3 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, London, Penguin, 1945, p. 3.

Women in India have not been given their due place, though they are given a great deal of respect and status as mother, daughter and sister. Under the influence of democratic liberal ideas of the nineteenth century, many social reform movements were launched in India. Many journals for women dealing with backwardness of women and pleading for change in their status in society through education were published. As a consequence a few brave women came forward and the early years of the twentieth century saw a Muslim woman barrister practising in the Punjab High Court. Zarina Bhatti in her article, "Women's Movement and Women's Studies in India : A Historical Perspective"⁴ writes that in 1936, Hijab Imtiaz Ali, a Muslim poet and writer also had the honour of being the first woman pilot in India. Despite such bold ventures by some women, the primary aim of girl's education was to prepare them as good mothers, as motherhood remained the cherished goal for women. Society did not question the existing division of labour.

History, has ignored and submerged the contribution of women, their work has been underestimated as concerned with the limited world of experience, that is, the domestic sphere to which they are forced to remain confined by societal norms. Women have long been pushed to the seams of history.

4 Zarina Bhatti, "Women's Movement and Women's Studies in India : A Historical Perspective," in Malashri Lal and Sukrita Paul Kumar (eds.), *Women's Studies in India : Contours of Change*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2002, pp. 52-53.

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times, through the low points of the medieval period to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In Modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime Minister and speaker of the Lok Sabha and others. Similar pattern of change can be discerned in the status and position of women in the colonial Punjab.

Annexation of Punjab

Punjab, etymologically the land of five rivers, was generally believed to be the tract situated between the rivers Indus and the Jamuna and bounded by the Himalayan mountains towards the North and North-East.⁵ The Province derives its name from its rivers (Punjab, meaning five rivers), namely Sutlej, Beas, Chenab, Ravi and Jhelum; which transverse its length from north east to south-west and join up with the Indus at Mithan Kot (in the Dera Ghazi Khan District) and thus along with it pour their waters into the Arabian Sea near Karachi.⁶ The undivided Punjab consisted of – The Punjab, Native states dependent on Punjab Government, Kashmir, North-West Frontier Province and Tribal territory under the political control of

5 V.S. Suri, *Punjab Through The Ages : Historical Survey of Political, Territorial and Administrative Changes in North-Western India from the Earliest Times upto 1966*, Chandigarh, Panjab Itihas Prakashan, 1971, p. 1.

6 Khan Ahmad Hasan, *Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report*, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933, p. 2.

North-West Frontier Province.⁷ The United Province of Punjab was divided into four natural divisions – Indo Gangetic Plain West, the Himalayan, the Sub-Himayalan and the North-West Dry area. All these four divisions mainly referred to the physical and climatic features of the Punjab.⁸ After the advent of Britishers, the undivided Province was partitioned in 1901 and again in 1911 due to administrative and other reasons. In 1901, it was partitioned and a new province, namely North Western Frontier Province was carved out of it. Another slice was taken off in 1912, when the capital of the British Indian Empire was shifted to Delhi, and the city of Delhi and a part of the surrounding territory were constituted into a distinct province.⁹

On 29 March, 1849, Britishers proclaimed the annexation of Punjab and all the terms were settled with Maharaja Duleep Singh.¹⁰ Sir Henry Elliot, the Foreign Secretary, held a Darbar at Lahore for making known the decision of the Government of India about the annexation.¹¹ The motives for the annexation had their economic as well as political aspects. Cotton of the Panjab was one of the chief attractions to the British, while Amritsar offered the prospect of an

7 Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *History of the United Panjab, Vol. I*, New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers, 1996, pp. 1, 2.

8 *Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVII, Punjab, Part I*, p. 3.

9 *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*, Lahore, 1920, p. 3.

10 Major Evans Bell, *The Annexation of the Punjaub and the Maharaja Duleep Singh*, 1882, Delhi, Shree Publishing House, 1983, p. 105.

11 Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *History of the United Panjab*, p. 24.

enterport for the Panjab and the hill territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar promised to become advanced depots for the British trade in Afghanistan and in the region beyond the Oxus. The Punjab also offered vast opportunities of employment for a large number of British civilians and officials with handsome salaries, allowances, furloughs and pensions.¹²

After the annexation of Punjab in 1849, for the proper administration of the province a Board of Administration was set up under Sir Henry Lawrence as President, Mr. John Lawrence and Mr. Charles Mansel as the heads of Revenue and Financial, and Judicial Department respectively.¹³ During the four working years of the Board of Administration, it did commendable job in the field of education and eradicating female infanticide particularly. 'Female Infanticide was brought within the pale of law.¹⁴ Many places in the Punjab where the crime of female infanticide was most suspected, had been declared under the Female Infanticide Act (VIII of 1870) in 1884.¹⁵ The expenses involved in the marriage of a girl was one of the causes of this evil custom.¹⁶ So, the Britishers ordered that expenses be reduced by inviting only few guests to the wedding party. In the

12 *Ibid*, pp. 26,27.

13 G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Ludhiana, Prakash Brothers Publishers, 1973, p. 362.

14 *Ibid*, p. 369.

15 G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1849-1901)*, Jalandhar, 1962, p. 82.

16 G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, vol. II, p. 369.

field of education, an enquiry was also made and the best scheme recommended was to improve the indigenous schools for girls and boys.

After the dissolution of the Board in 1853, the Punjab came under John Lawrence (1853-59). He divided Punjab into seven divisions which were further divided into small districts and then into tehsils. This was done for the proper administration of Punjab.¹⁷ Sir Robert Montgomery was appointed as the Lieutenant Governor on 26 February, 1859 to 1865. Then came Sir Donald McLeod (1865-1870), Sir Henry Marion Durand (1870-71), Sir Robert Henry Davies (1871-77), Sir Robert Eyles Egerton (1877-1882), Sir Charles Atchison (1882-1887), Sir James Broadwood Lyall (1887-1892), Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick (1892-1897) and Sir William Macworth Young (1897-1902).

From 1849-1900, these Lieutenant Governors of the Punjab were either busy in political upheavals in the province or were trying to clean the society and eradicating the social evils present.

Social Customs

To study the status and position of women in Punjab province, there is an imperative need to analyse the social conditions first. Many social evils were prevalent which restricted the overall development of the women. To remove these evils the British government passed various laws from time to time. A regulation for

17 Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *History of the United Panjab*, pp. 60-61.

declaring the practice of Sati, or of burning or burying alive the widows of Hindus, illegal, and punishable by the criminal courts was passed on 4 December, 1829 known as Regulation Act of XVII of 1829.¹⁸ The Government of India also legalized the remarriage of widows (especially of Hindus) by passing an Act known as Act XV of 1856.¹⁹ To curb the evil custom of female infanticide, the Female Infanticide Act VIII was passed in 1870.²⁰ On 25 June 1928, the government of India also appointed a committee to examine the state of the law relating to the Age of Consent as contained in Section 375 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Act 1925 (XXIX of 1925).²¹ Some socio-religious reform movements also came forward in the nineteenth century to help the government in removing these evils and tried to implement these laws in their respective regions.

Female infanticide was quite common in the province 'The birth of a boy is an occasion for a great rejoicing; a girl causes less enthusiasm'.²² The birth of female child was regarded as an inauspicious event while that of a male child was given a blatantly preferential treatment within the family. The female child was killed immediately after her birth. The strict caste limitation in choice of a

18 Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing : An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism 1800-1990*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1993, p. 10.

19 *Ibid*, p. 95.

20 G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab 1849-1901*, p.82.

21 *Report of the Age of Consent Committee 1928-1929*, Calcutta, Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1929, pp. 1-2.

22 *Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XXX-A : Lahore District* with maps, 1916, Punjab Government, p. 38.

wife and puberty consummation – both these turned the birth of daughters into a veritable calamity in all but the most well-to-do families.²³ Even the marriage expenses, particularly dowry were also the reason for selectively killing infant daughters.²⁴ This practice was widely prevalent in the United Province, the Punjab and Rajputana, and amongst various sections of the population, especially Khatri, Rajputs, Jats and all classes of the Sikhs.²⁵

The subject of female infanticide was one of the first matters that attracted John Lawrence's attention after he became the Commissioner. He promulgated three new commandments :

‘Bewa Mat Jalao;

Beti Mat Maro;

Korhi Mat dabao.

(Thou shall not burn thy widow;

Thou shall not kill thy daughter;

Thou shall not bury alive thy lepor.)²⁶

The Bedis were generally known as Kurimar (daughter-slayer) and they were well known for committing female infanticide.²⁷ Almost in every district - Nabha, Multan, Gujranwala, Jhelum, Ferozepur this evil custom was practiced by every caste.

23 S. Das, *Purdah – The Status of Indian Woman*, New Delhi, Ess Ess Publications, 1979, p. 79.

24 Avril A. Powell and Siobhan Lambert Hurley (eds.), *Rhetoric and Reality : Gender and Colonial Experience in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 115.

25 Harikishan Kaul, *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab Part I, Report.*, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1912, pp. 215-216.

26 *Ibid*, p. 243.

27 *Punjab District Gazetteer, vol. XIVA : Jullundar District, 1904*, Lahore, Civil and Military Press, p. 59.

Various methods were adopted to kill the new born baby girl. Firstly, The baby was throttled by pressing the thumb gently against her throat continuously for several minutes; secondly, a little juice of akk (calatropis procera) was administered internally; thirdly, an overdose of opium was mixed in the first potion (ghutti); fourthly, the device of pouring icy-cold water on the baby used to be a familiar device in the chilly winter nights. But the most favourite method was the fifth one of "Starvation" – not feeding the baby at all or giving her totally insufficient nourishment, which reduced her to death in few days.²⁸ Sometimes the poor new born girls were put to death by putting them into a ghara (an earthen pot) and buried alive in the ground. Another way was to take her to a jungle where she was put in a sitting position under a tree, gur (brown sugar) was put into her mouth and a batti (corded roll of cotton) was placed between her fingers and then, the mother used to sing in Punjabi.²⁹

‘Gur Khayee; puni katteen

Ap na aayee, bira nu ghateen’.

(Eat gur; Spin the cotton, do not come back yourself but send a brother)

This evil practice of female infanticide affected the sex ratio (number of females per thousand males) and there was an increasing

28 *Census of India, 1911, vol. XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, p. 258.

29 *Punjab District Gazeteer, vol. XIII A : Hoshiarpur District, 1904*, Lahore, Civil and Military Press, p. 31.

disparity between number of females and males between 1901 to 1947. This can be seen from the following table :

Table - 1
Sex Ratio in Punjab (1901-1941)³⁰

| Census Year | Sex Ratio (females per 1000 males) |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1901 | 832 |
| 1911 | 780 |
| 1921 | 799 |
| 1931 | 815 |
| 1941 | 836 |

The girls who escaped infanticide were married at a very early age. Early marriage was the only vocation left for them due to absence of female education. ‘The custom of early or infant marriage arose due to caste restrictions and elaborate customs regarding marriage which made the parents anxious to marry their daughters at the earliest opportunity.’³¹ Among the people, girls were generally married between the ages of seven and twelve years – the shastras laying great stress upon the necessity to marry a girl before or immediately upon attaining puberty, after which, it is, of course a great disgrace for her to remain in her father's house.³²

³⁰ www.punjabgovt.nic.in/Economy/HumanResources.htm.

³¹ *Census of India, 1911, Vol.XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, p. 263.

³² *Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XIV, A : Jullandhar District*, p. 57.

Girls were married at that age when they even did not know the meaning of the marriage. They were unaware of all the burdens of marriage. Girls were married at that delicate and tender age when they used to play with their dolls and other toys. This can be seen from the illustration number I in which the wife is playing with her dolls while her husband is looking at her.

Later her poor immature body was generally subjected to the burden of pregnancy before it had the strength to carry it to a successful end. Several miscarriages and still births before the birth of the first living child were usual.³³ And finally, the result was an abnormally high mortality rate of mothers and infants in child birth, the prevalence of female disorders and children's diseases.³⁴

Child marriages affected the health of ladies as well as the children born of these marriages. Immature mothers were not able to bear, nurse or rear to physical perfection to the new generation, and large sections of the society showed the signs of ever increasing devitalization and physical deterioration.

Further examples of mismatched marriages may be cited. For instance, the wedding ceremony of a young girl and an old man and vice-a-versa or wedding of an illiterate girl and an educated boy and vice-a-versa, in all the four cases, the condition of the woman was deplorable and used to suffer either at the hands of her husband or

33 S. Das, *Purdah : The Status of Indian Women*, p. 82.

34 *Ibid*, p. 83.

husband's family members. The condition of women can be easily seen from the illustrations. Illustration II shows a young woman married to an old husband. Both are sitting on a cot and the old husband is pulling her dupatta (a cloth used to cover the head by women) and she is saying “ਨਾ ਬਾਪੂ ਜੀ; ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨ ਛੋੜੋ” (Oh! father don't trouble me). It can be seen that there is such a age difference between both that a woman is not able to accept her marriage and is not happy.

In the illustration I an example of child marriage is given. A young girl of age ten to twelve is married to a thirty to thirty five year old man. The young wife is busy in playing with her dolls and husband is calling her. She replies ‘ਮੈਂ ਰਤਾ ਗੁਡੀਆਂ ਪਟੋਲੇ ਖੇਡ ਲਵਾਂ’ (Let me play with my dolls). It can be seen that the girl is unaware of her all marriage duties due to her young age.

Illustration III with the caption ‘ਵਿਆਹਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ’ (Married male student) depicts the difficult situation of the husband who is a student first. He is not able to bear the burden of his marriage along with his studies. It is shown that his wife along with his books is sitting on his back which depicts miserable condition of the husband.

When either of the partner was not educated, the result again was a mismatched marriage. In the illustration IV with the caption ‘ਦਫਤਰੋਂ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਪਤੀ’ (Husband coming from the Office) an educated

husband comes from the office and his wife is least bothered about him and is busy in eating. The husband is shouting at her and again the consequence is an unsuccessful marriage.

In the illustration V with the caption ‘ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਪਤਨੀ’ (an educated wife) an example of a well educated woman is given. The wife is sitting on a table and reading some paper where as her illiterate husband is doing household activities. These type of mismatched marriages were very common in the province. These marriages were based on the compromises by either of the partner. There was a difference of age and intellectual level between the couple.

An important negative effect of these marriages was widowhood. Whenever the old husband died, then his wife became a widow. And compulsory widowhood was enforced on either young or child wives.

According to shastras and the old customs a widow duly observing the vows of widowhood was to be respected even by elders, was usually given the management of the household and every effort was made to mitigate her unfortunate position.³⁵ But in the early nineteenth century, a widow was looked upon as an unproductive encumbrance and even a scourge to the family. It was also believed that if widow remarries then she loses her chastity and the gravity of the sins affects the following generations of the family.³⁶ A young

35 *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, p. 234.

36 Nabaneeta Dev Sen, “The Wind Beneath My Wings” in Leela Gulati and Jasodhara Bagchi (eds.), *A Space of Her Own : Personal narratives of twelve women*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2005, p. 23.

widow was seen as 'bad luck' bride who had caused her husband's death.³⁷ Due to these reasons, the widow's pretty jewels and clothes were forcibly taken back by her husband's relatives. She was often made the drudge of the household. This was considered to be the just and deserved punishment for some unknown sin committed by her supposedly in an earlier incarnation. She was regarded by the society as an unfortunate, unauspicious and a condemned women. As the relation between husband and wife was considered sacred and indissoluble, even after the death of the husband, the wife was supposed to live a life of asceticism, self denial, unflinching devotion to her husband's memory, self sacrifice and self effacement.³⁸ She was not allowed to wear nose-ring and coloured clothes of any kind. She was not allowed to join a singing party at marriages. She was given a soiled chadar (sheet) to wear. She was not given rich food to eat, rather she was to observe fast from two to six days in a month on different sacred days. She was warned to observe all these customs strictly. In case of any violation her image was lowered.³⁹ The custom of compulsory widowhood made the condition of women worse.

Besides enforced widowhood, the custom of widow remarriage was also prevalent in some classes of the society. Remarriage of widows was common among some castes and was recognised among

37 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

38 Census of India, 1901, Vol. XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, p. 218.

39 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, Delhi, Abhijeet Publications, 2003, p. 8.

all the villages. On the death of a husband his widow was bound to marry one of her deceased husband's collaterals who would succeed to the property on her death. Such a marriage was made by the simple form of chadar dali or sheet throwing.⁴⁰ If for any reason there was no brother of her deceased husband, then she was allowed to marry any other person in the brotherhood. This was called as Karewa or Chandar Andezi. But she was to abandon her claim on her deceased husband's property and live far away from his relations.⁴¹ Karewa, as a rule, was primarily a levirate marriage in which the widow was accepted a wife by one of the younger brothers of the deceased husband. Although the widow was not compelled to remarry but she was not free to marry without the consent of her late husband's family.⁴²

This type of remarriage led to irregular and ill organised matches. In case of chadar dalna or chadar urhana, sometimes a widow of a higher age was married to a boy of much lower age. Sometimes, the poor unfortunate young widow was married to an old man. All these are examples of unequal marriages which often led to unhappiness and moral degradation of the woman in the society.

40 *Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XXX-A : Lahore District*, 1916, p. 42.

41 Edward H. Lincoln, *Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. XXIV-A, Gujranwala District, Part A*, 1935, Lahore, Punjab Government, 1936, p. 72.

42 Bharati Ray (ed), *From the Seams of History : Essays on Indian Women*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 51.

Polygamy was another custom prevalent in the Punjab among the classes which allowed remarriages. In the levirate form of marriage, sometimes a married man who was the brother of the deceased was asked to marry the widow. This usually caused polygamy - meaning a man having more than one wife. Further, if the wife did not bear an issue, especially male within a few years of her marriage, the husband was forced by his relations to remarry. In such cases both the wives used to live together in the same house and the wife bearing children was given preferential treatment, while the issueless wife was totally ignored.

The custom of sati was also prevalent in some classes of the society of the Punjab. When a woman's husband died, then she was asked to ascend the funeral pyre of her dead husband to burn herself. 'This was done for two main motives - spiritual glamour and material gain. On its spiritual side, the woman reached in immolation the highest peak of the old Sita-Rama glamour - matchood faithful through life and after death. Secondly, there was a lot of material gain to the family after becoming a sati. So she was asked to sacrifice her life for the sake of the welfare of the family.'⁴³

Purdah or ghunghat or veil was known in the region. Married women used to observe it in the presence of their husband's kin as well as before their husbands in the presence of others. They also

43 S. Das, *Purdah : the Status of Indian Woman*, p. 75.

extended purdah to all classificatory and 'courtesy' affines - to most of the senior men of the village as well as towards certain female affines, notably the mother-in-law or classificatory mother-in-law.⁴⁴

It was observed as a mark of respectability and mannerism by all communities in the whole of Northern India and Punjab was no exception.⁴⁵

In Punjab, it was said :

“ਅੰਦਰ ਬੈਠੀ ਲੱਖ ਦੀ,
ਬਾਹਰ ਗਈ ਕੱਖ ਦੀ।”⁴⁶

(The one who stays indoor is worth lakhs but she, who wanders out, is worth a straw).

The custom was a great hindrance in the progress of women. The seclusion of women prevented the development of social life. They were cut off from other members of the society and developed much more marked separate ideological groups. Sometimes the women also suffered from health problems like weakness of eyesight, asthma and others due to purdah.

These were some of the social evil customs and practices prevalent in the society of Punjab and acted as hindrances in the development of women. When the Britishers came to Punjab, they tried to eradicate these evils beginning with female infanticide. Later

44 Prem Chowdhry, *The Veiled Women : Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana 1880-1990*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 284.

45 *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, p. 295.

46 *Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XIX-A, Multan District, 1901-02*, p. 98.

the enlightened leaders of the society also launched their reform movements to help the government. Reformers were working at the India level as a whole as well at the regional level, including Punjab, who also launched their own social reform movements.

Social Reform Movements

When the strong hand of the British had settled itself upon the country the only possible outlet was the organisation of peaceful movements aiming at the social and cultural development of the people. Many movements were thus organised, some of which originated in the province itself while others traveled into it from other parts of India. Generally speaking, these movements had a programme of reconstruction in the social and religious spheres.⁴⁷

Among the various movements which originated and traveled into the province, the first was the Brahmo Samaj. The phrase "Brahmo Samaj" literally means the society of the worshippers of the one True God. This movement was started on the 20 August 1828, by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal.⁴⁸ The Samaj introduced itself into the Punjab after the Mutiny of 1857. A branch of the Samaj was established at Lahore in 1864, and by 1872 it had its own temple in Anarkali.⁴⁹

47 G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 421.

48 Sivanath Sastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, Vol. I, Calcutta, R. Chatterji Publishers, 1911, p. 1.

49 G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 422.

The cardinal principles of the Samaj were belief in one God, the universal brotherhood, the equal rights of both sexes, the disregard of all social restrictions in the matter of interdinning and intermarriage, the cultivation of a high standard of morality and respect for sacred books and holy men as aids to spiritual development.⁵⁰ It also denounced widow burning, polygamy and pleaded for a return to earlier practice in the matter of the rights of women according to the Hindu law of inheritance. It also struggled to put down child marriage.⁵¹

The movement, however, could not find much success in the Punjab. It was mainly confined to the educated classes of the headquarter towns of some districts. Lahore, Shimla, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Mianwali, Bhera, Amritsar and Delhi had a few number of followers of this sect.⁵²

Arya Samaj came to the rescue of women and became the reservoir of reformist channels against the prevailing social evils during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was the founder of the movement on 10 April' 1875 and established the first Arya Samaj at Bombay.⁵³ On 1 January' 1877, Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in a magnificent durbar held by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton at Delhi. Dayanand went there and on the invitation of some hindus of Lahore, he visited the

50 *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, pp. 132-133.

51 J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1915, p. 33.

52 *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, p. 138.

53 *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908, p. 51.

city of Lahore. And later in 1877, he founded the Arya Samaj at Lahore and it became the headquarters of the movement.⁵⁴

There were also other branches of Arya Samaj at different districts of the Punjab like Sialkot, Multan, Delhi, Gurdaspur, Gujranwala, Hissar, Karnal and Amritsar.⁵⁵ All these branches were working for the spread of education and the introduction of social reforms. They believed towards the fusion of sub-castes on the principle of reverting to the four varnas and towards encouraging widow remarriage and discouraging child marriage.⁵⁶ The Arya Samaj even fixed the marriageable age for girls and boys as sixteen and twenty five respectively. It laid stress on a strategy to diffuse knowledge and dispel ignorance.⁵⁷

To remodel and transform the society, Arya Samaj paid ample attention to the education of girls. It organised a network of schools and colleges for them, where education was imparted in the mother tongue. At Lahore in 1886, “The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College” was founded in the sacred memory of its founder.⁵⁸ Later, Lala Dev Raj with the help Mai Bhagwati of Haryana started “The Kanya Maha Vidyalaya” at Jalandhar in 1886. This institute was instrumental in removing the social evil of purdah and raised the marriageable standard of the girls.⁵⁹

54 J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 110.

55 *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report*, p. 134.

56 *Ibid*, pp. 134-135.

57 Lala Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, Bombay, Longmans Green and Company, 1915, p. 179.

58 J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, pp. 126-127.

59 *The Tribune*, Lahore, March 25, 1923, p. 8.

The Arya Samaj also criticised enforced widowhood and laid emphasis on widow-remarriage. It is reported that one of the earliest widow remarriages sponsored by the Samaj was in 1894 in Lahore.⁶⁰ Societies were set up all over the Punjab to promote widow-remarriages. It was a great achievement of the Samaj. Rai Bahadur Ganga started a Widow Marriage Association in the Punjab in December 1914 and got the widow remarriage legalised for those who wished to remarry.⁶¹ The Amritsar branch led in this drive for the acceptance of widow remarriages. They performed widow remarriages on a grand public scale giving maximum publicity to each event. It encouraged the widow remarriage even amongst higher castes like Arora, Brahmins and others as well.⁶²

Thus, this movement started in 1877 in Punjab worked in the twentieth century for the women emancipation. It encouraged people to leave old customs and traditions and appealed them to educate their daughters, encouraged widow remarriages, discouraged child marriage and purdah system.

The Nirankari Movement was founded by Baba Dayal Singh (1783-1855). Sometimes during the decade of the 1840s, he called for the return of Sikhism to its origin and emphasized the worship of God

60 Kamlā Devi Chattopadhyay, *Indian Women's Battle for Freedom*, New Delhi, Abhinav Publishers, 1983, p. 46.

61 *Census of India, 1921, Vol. XV, Punjab and Delhi, Part I, Report*, p. 246.

62 Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm : Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*, New Delhi, Manohar, 1976, p. 101.

as Nirankar (formless).⁶³ He condemned idol worship and making obeisance to “holy men”, he disapproved of going on pilgrimages and performing brahmanical rituals.⁶⁴

This movement advocated that the women must not be treated as unclean at childbirth; disciples were not to use astrology or horoscopes in setting the time for ceremonies; dowry was not to be displayed at marriages; neither lighted lamps nor blessed sweets, *prasad*, was to be placed in rivers; and no one was to give brahmans any payments for conducting rituals.⁶⁵ Thus, this movement believed in one formless God and wanted women to leave all the superstitious activities and ceremonies which they used to follow to please their deities.

The Namdhari Sect or Kuka Movement was founded by Balak Singh of Village Hazaro in the north west frontier region.⁶⁶ The disciples of the sect chanted hymns and, like dancing dervishes, worked themselves into a state of frenzy and emitted loud shrieks (*Kuks*); they came therefore to be named *Kukas*.⁶⁷

The *Kukas* were against child marriage. They condemned infanticide and dowry system. They gave equal status to women and believed in inter-caste marriage between hindus and untouchables.

63 Kenneth W. Jones, *The New Cambridge History of India : Socio-Religious reform movements in British India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 87.

64 Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Vol II, 1839-1964*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 123.

65 Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar (eds), *Women and Social Reform in Modern India : A Reader, Vol. II*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2007, p. 2.

66 Khushwant Singh, *A History of The Sikhs, Vol. II, 1839-1949*, p. 127.

67 *Ibid*, pp. 129-129.

They even allowed women to be initiated through baptism.⁶⁸ This movement was important as its disciples participated in the national movement for freedom in the first half of the twentieth century.

In 1858 an American Presbyterian Mission was established at Ludhiana. Immediately after the annexation of Punjab, it had spread its activities from Malwa to Majha area of Punjab.⁶⁹ The Church Missionary Society opened centres around Amritsar and Lahore and in the hill districts. The society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Salvation Army, the Methodists, Episcopians, Moravians and Roman Catholic order vied with each other in gaining converts.⁷⁰ Even the English government was supporting the activities of Christian missionaries. It can be judged from the following Table:

Table - 2
Number of Converts into Christianity

| Year | Number of Conversions |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1881 | 3,796 |
| 1891 | 19,547 |
| 1901 | 37,980 |
| 1911 | 1,63,994 |
| 1921 | 3,15,931 |
| 1931 | 4,14,788 |

68 Kenneth, W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Movements in British India* p. 91.

69 Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, 1839-1949*, p. 137.

70 *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XX, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1908*, pp. 291-292.

Thus, the number of converts to Christianity increased at rapid rate from 1881 to 1931. After 1901 the increase became evident and the reformers in Punjab were worried about these conversions.

In 1853, Maharaja Dalip Singh adopted Christianity. And after twenty years in 1873 four Sikh students of the Amritsar Mission School offered themselves for conversion into Christianity.⁷¹ Even Dayanand's Arya Samaj was also spreading its message at a fast pace. So all these reasons stirred a small group of prominent Sikhs to form the Singh Sabha of Amritsar, which held its first meeting on 1 October, 1873. Among those who helped to establish the Sabha were Sir Khem Singh Bedi, Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala and Giani Gian Singh. Sandhawalia became its President and Giani Gian Singh its Secretary.⁷²

To restore Sikhism to its past purity, to publish historical religious books, magazines and journals, to propagate knowledge using Punjabi, to return apostates to their original faith and to involve highly placed Englishmen in the educational programme of the Sikhs were the lofty aims of the Sabha.⁷³

Singh Sabha of Amritsar, then of Lahore, and Chief Khalsa Diwan all worked for emancipation of women. They regarded female education (based on domestic art) as the only way by which they could

71 G.S. Chabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab, Vol. II*, p. 456.

72 Harbans Singh, "Origin of the Singh Sabha," *Punjab Past and Present* (April 1973), p. 278-29.

73 *Ibid*, p. 29.

emancipate their girls and opened various schools for them. The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Ferozepur was the fine example of this.

Thus, the emancipation of women became the central concern of the social reformers. Several societies sprang up for the amelioration of women's lot and status. These socio-religious reform movements led a crusade against the social evil customs persisting in the society of the province.

Theoretical Engagements

The subject of the present thesis is a debated issue in academic circles especially amongst historians and scholars. The varied methodological and theoretical approaches and perspectives to understand the women in modern India may be categorised in three ways. First, the nationalist approach which traces the history of the freedom movement from 1885 to the partition of India in 1947.

The Nationalist school developed the idea that nationalism was a unified and collective opposition of the Indian nation against the common enemy represented by British colonial rule.⁷⁴ Nationalist discourse, according to Partha Chatterjee, resolved the “women question” by the end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁵ The indigenous elite leaders led the people especially women from subjugation to freedom.

74 Suruchi Thapar - Bjorkert, *Women in The National Movement : Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices, 1930-42*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2006, p. 41.

75 Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question,” *Recasting Women : Essays in Colonial History (eds.)* Kumkum Sanjari and Sudesh Vaid, Delhi, Kali for Women, 1989. pp 238-239

Like Mahatma Gandhi who brought the women into public life and motivated them to solve their own problems.

Similarly, various reformers and educationists in Punjab encouraged their women to come out of their houses and participate in the activities important for their development. Elite leaders of Punjab like Baba Khem Singh Bedi, Surinder Singh Majithia, Lajpat Rai, Bhai Takhat Singh, Rambhuj Dutt Chaudhary and others opened various institutions and paved the way for the women to form their own organisations and associations.

The second approach is of the historians of the 'Cambridge School'. This school views the development in India and the provinces primarily in terms of the British and colonial elites. This school regards the colonial rule as a boon to the India. Colonial historians narrate the civilizing mission of the British as rescuing Indian women from their own culture and society. This school reduces the over-emphasis on and glorification of elite leaders, instead projected them as 'middle men'.⁷⁶ These middle men took the help of Britishers in cleaning their society from all sort of social evils and tried to emancipate their ladies.

The late 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of a new body of historical knowledge which referred to itself as 'Subaltern Studies'. The subalterns dismissed previous historical writings as elitist,

76 Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert, *Women in the National Movement*, p. 41.

materialistic or over-materialistic and instead focused on 'marginal' and non-elite groups and their 'autonomous' resistance at various stages in the development of Indians.⁷⁷ The subaltern approach discusses the 'history of below' and re-reads history from their perspective. They take into account all the magazines, journals, newspapers, books and others edited or written by the women themselves. The history by the women is discussed thoroughly.

Review of Literature

The period of the research work is vast, moreover in this period from 1901 to 1947 the political and socio-economic conditions of whole of India had undergone changes. Colonial Punjab under the Britishers from 1901-47 saw various changes in every section of the society, especially women. Though much literature and source material is available on this subject, but we find very little work on Punjabi women and therefore it needs more probing.

*The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement 1857-1947*⁷⁸ by Manmohan Kaur has touched various social evils customs prevalent in the Punjab and other provinces of India. This book elaborates various phases of the freedom struggle and the role of women in that. It mentions many Punjabi women leaders but not in a comprehensive way. Gail Minault's *The Extended Family*⁷⁹ is the collection of eleven

77 *Ibid*, p. 42.

78 Manmohan Kaur, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1968.

79 Gail Minault, *The Extended Family : Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1981.

articles examining the participation of women in Indian politics in the historical perspective. Beginning with the social reform movements of the nineteenth century, continuing during the freedom movement and into contemporary India and Pakistan, the book makes a major contribution to the history of the Indian women's movement. There is one article 'Kinship, Women and Politics in Twentieth Century Punjab' which gives account of the women of the colonial Punjab. But this is mainly limited to the Muslim women and not the women in general. *The History of Doing*⁸⁰ by Radha Kumar is an illustrated account of movements for women rights and feminism in India from 1800-1990. It gives a brief interpretative history of women's organisations and associations in the different parts of India. Many Punjabi women like Lado Rani Zutshi, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sarla Devi Chaudharani and others are mentioned. It depicts the participation of the women of Punjab in national organisations and movements but the regional and local association of women in the Punjab are not referred. Geraldine Forbes's work *Women in Modern India*⁸¹ gives a sympathetic and comprehensive study of Indian women. The author begins with reform movements for women and their impact. How women were attaining education is elaborated. The women participation for legal rights and in the nationalist movement in the north and southern parts of India is also mentioned. Various women of North India mainly of Punjab

80 Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing : An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1880-1990*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1993.

81 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University, Press, 1998.

have been named but it is not a complete study of women in colonial Punjab. The book tries to clear the concepts relating to the gender studies and gives a picture of women of India in general and is not confined to any specific region.

The above mentioned books are those which were published in the last two or three decades of 1900s. These mainly dealt with the social reform movements and the national struggle for independence. Women of the different regions of India were mentioned and their participation in detail was not discussed. The books which were published in the first decade of 2000, looked into the history of India from women's point of view. New avenues for women were seen and their participation was discussed in almost all the public affairs like in theatre, films, social work, politics, literature and others.

*Women's Studies in India*⁸² by Malashri Lal and Sukrita Paul Kumar focuses on aspects of female experience that conventional learning has either ignored or deliberately relegated to silence. It wants to study the women history by co-relating it with other disciplines like political science, sociology, psychology and literature. It gives a new approach, but is not based on any specific region. *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*⁸³ by Doris R. Jakobsh is a penetrating volume first to chart the history of gender construction in

82 Malashri Lal and Sukrita Paul Kumar (eds.), *Women Studies in India : Contours of Change*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2002.

83 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003.

Sikhism right from the time of Sikh Gurus. It discusses the Singh Sabha reformers, armed with western education and the Victorian ideals of the high colonial era, sought to reinterpret tradition according to their own needs and visions. The book is very informative, even mentions the formation of regional organisations like Bhujangan Council, Sikh Educational Conferences and others in Punjab. But Jacobsh's work is limited primarily to the Singh Sabha Movement which tried to improve the condition of women during the colonial rule. *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*⁸⁴ by Manju Verma discusses all the important phases of the nationalist movement in which the women of Punjab also participated. This book is a very good source of information on the women of Punjab, but it covers only one part of the concerned research work. Geraldine Forbes's *Women in colonial India*⁸⁵ is a collection of essays on politics, medicine and historiography explaining women as participants in the nationalist politics and colonial schemes to provide western medicine for women and as subjects of women's history. Again this work is of all India level and not related to any particular region. *Women in the Indian National Movement*⁸⁶ by Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert is a pioneering work relating to the women in India. It deals with the old concept of the national movement and participation of the women. But

84 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, Delhi, Abhijeet Publications, 2003.

85 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Colonial India : Essays on Politics, Medicine and Historiography*, New Delhi, Chronicle Books, 2005.

86 Suruchi Thapar – Bjorkert, *Women in the Indian National Movement : Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices, 1930-42*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2006.

women of the middle section of the society are taken into account along with the elite class women. The book is not related to Punjab but still it gives the idea to discuss the local women of the region and their contribution. The book also discusses the Hindi vernacular print media and the role played by women in it. Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar in *Women and Social Reform in Modern India*⁸⁷ argues the need to understand the history of social reforms from a much wider array of perspectives : for example, the connections between specific social abuses on the one hand, and, on the other, systems of traditions of gender practices across times, classes, castes and regions. Again it is not a full fledged study of women in the colonial Punjab. Only one aspect of social reforms is elaborated. Kamlesh Mohan's *Towards Gender History*⁸⁸ is an important source of information with special reference to the Punjab. It has the collection of six essays discussing different aspects of the women. The status and position of the women from Gurus period to the colonial rule has been discussed. Then it also mentions the importance of vernacular journal 'Stree Darpan' in fashioning the minds and images of the women. Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy is discussed in detail as a catalyst for creating women's consciousness in Punjab. The book discusses some of the areas of concern of the research work but it is not a complete study of the women in colonial Punjab (1901-47).

87 Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar (eds.), *Women and Social Reform in Modern India : A Reader*, vol II, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2007.

88 Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History : Images, Identities and Roles of North Indian Women with Special reference to Punjab*, Delhi, Aakar Book, 2007.

Chapterisation

This study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is 'Introduction' which discusses the historical background of the topic. The aims and objectives of the study are critically analysed as well as the social evil customs and social reform movements pertaining to the women are thoroughly discussed in the chapter. Some of the theoretical interpretations are also taken into account. The chapter even elaborates the review of existing literature on the women in colonial Punjab.

The second chapter 'Women Awareness Through the Vernacular Press' discusses the impact of media which was initially started by the Britishers. The print media was used by the male reformers who sometimes even involved their wives and other female allies to give the clear picture of the society. The impact of the vernacular journals, magazines and newspapers on the womenfolk has been critically analysed.

In the third chapter 'Women : From Education to Occupation', the initiatives taken by the Britishers in the field of education have been discussed. This chapter also analyses how women after receiving education some of them started opting for new profession and occupation and contributed to the society as doctors, teachers, lawyers, skilled workers and others. They joined hands with their male counterparts and opened various schools for the girls and even participated in the public life of Punjab during the colonial period.

The fourth chapter 'The Emergence of Organisations and Associations for Women' discusses the contribution of both Britishers and male reformers of Punjab who formed new organisations. A.O. Hume, retired British Civil Servant encouraged male leaders to form Indian National Congress in India. Similarly, the early male leaders of the Singh Sabha were pro-British and they formed various associations with the patronage of Britishers. Then these organisations took up the gender issues and even encouraged some women to form their own associations like Istri Sabha, Bhujangan Council, Punjab Istri Conference and many more. These associations regularly organized conferences, meetings and discussed gender issues. These associations motivated women to participate in public life.

The fifth chapter deals with 'Women Participation in Public Life'. This chapter analyses how the educated women of Punjab began participating in all the regional, national and international activities. Women started representing their sisters and tried to take their demands to the Government of Punjab and India.

In the sixth chapter 'Women in the Nationalist Movement', participation of women in the freedom movement is mentioned. All the political happenings in other provinces affected the women of Punjab and they started participating in the struggle for freedom. And after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 the women of Punjab directly jumped into the national struggle for independence.

The seventh chapter is 'Conclusion' which summarises the findings and interpretations of the thesis. The importance of the vernacular print media, education, organisations and associations for female emancipation is highlighted. The enlightened women then entered public sphere and political arena of the Punjab.

Chapter - 2

WOMEN AWARENESS AND VERNACULAR PRESS

In every country the press is the guardian of the liberties of its people as well as the most effective instrument for extending the bonds of human freedom and progress.¹ It plays an effective role in moulding and educating public opinion. It proves itself as an exdona in the socio-political consciousness. The press, particularly the vernacular one, highlights the inherent social evils of the society. This press also exposes the wrong and unjust policies of the administrative system which, by and large, serves as the principal source of inspiration both for the social reformers and the political leaders of the day.

The print media, especially, vernacular magazines, journals and newspapers in the various provinces of British India played a major role in awakening society as well as educating people about their rights and duties. This media was instrumental in bringing about radical changes in different systems of society steeped in ignorance and poverty. The socio-economic and political issues were highlighted by the press which also tried to inform people about the developments in industry, education, science, technology, agriculture, art, entertainment and other fields.

1 Nripendra Nath Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. I, Jan.-June, 1930, Calcutta, The Annual Register Office, p. 365.

The advent of Britishers in India led to various changes in the society. These foreign rulers introduced new ideas about women's roles and capabilities and these ideas were adopted by the enlightened Indians.² The nineteenth century social reformers treated women as objects for reform or uplift. But in the early twentieth century, there was a qualitative change in the approach of these reformers. Now they used 'Media' for projecting the persistent social blindness and nature of women's oppression.³

In this chapter an attempt has been made to trace out the role of vernacular press which helped in the gender consciousness and activism among women in the colonial Punjab and made them aware about discrimination, social tyranny, oppression, economic dependence and low status owing to their biological identity. The vernacular press of the Punjab was the first public self-expression of women's ideas and opinions, and a rich medium through which conflicts and ambiguities about the role of women in the society and nation were traced out. The articles were primarily written by the educated urban middle class and elite women and the issues discussed crossed class and caste boundaries.

Some articles provided a schematic overview of social, political and economic developments or took up one particular issue, for example, women's education, social reforms or the role of mothers in

2 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.1.

3 Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History : Images, Identities and Roles of North Indian Women with Special references to Punjab*. New Delhi, Aakar Book, 2007, p. 105.

domestic reforms. The style of writing varied from gentle urging to emphatic exhortation and was not specific to any period. All the issues of all ages were discussed. Contemporary issues of education, social evils, national struggle were compared to the ancient period and people were encouraged to look at their past and were asked to apply good things of that period to the present. In particular, a concerted effort was made to motivate and encourage women who were having a segregated existence. Examples of wives of Sikh gurus, goddesses and pious women were given, and women were asked through this media to come out of the rigid shackles of the society.

From 1901-47, in Punjab most of the print media was in the form of weeklies, journals, magazines or fortnightlies. Every newspaper or magazine was published with a particular aim and agenda. Some were having political agenda, some revolved around social evils and some had economic or cultural agendas.

In this chapter, a critical analysis of nine journals and newspapers of Punjab has been made to depict how they created awareness about issues pertaining to women. Various journals and newspapers were published in Punjab like *Azad Bhain* (Rawalpindi), *Istri* (Amritsar), *Istri Rattan* (Layalpur), *Istri Samachar* (Quetta), *Isti Satsang* (Amitsar), *Istri Sudhar* (Amritsar), *Phuleran* (Amritsar), *Punjabi Bhain* (Ferozepur), *Sughar Saheli* (Amritsar), *Huq* (Lahore), *Huq Bulletein* (Lahore), *The Punjab* (Amritsar) and many more. All of them

in one or the other way played a pivotal role in recasting and redefining the image of women in Punjab. Most of these were edited by the male members but sometimes they had co-opted their wives as editors like of '*Punjabi Bhain*', '*Sharif Biwi*' (Lahore), '*Panchal Pandita*' (Jalandhar) and others. A few of them were also the representatives of different educational institutions like '*Punjabi Bhain*' which was started by Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Ferozepur.

Out of the numerous women's journals published during the period under reference, nine attracted special notice : *Azad Bhain*, *Istri*, *Istri Rattan*, *Istri Samachar*, *Istri Satsang*, *Istri Sudhar*, *Phuleran*, *Punjabi Bhain* and *Sughar Saheli*. Five of them were published from Amritsar, one from Rawalpindi, one from Quetta, one from Layalpur and one from Ferozepur. Almost all of them tended to reinforce the traditional roles of mother, sister and daughter. Qualities of a modern daughter-in-law and her code of conduct were frequently discussed by their contributors. They chose to dilute social obsession with women's domestic role and projected the urgency of utilizing their potentialities for social and national work.

All these magazines and newspapers were extremely critical of the prevalent evils, social customs of child marriage, inhuman treatment of widows, female illiteracy, purdah system and sati pratha. They linked social reform with its comprehensive agenda of revolution.⁴

4 Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History*, p. 106.

The aims of all these journals were influenced by the editor's perception of the urgent problems of Indian society and politics. *Azad Bhain*, which means 'free sister' was published as early as 1923 and was one of the most important journals dealing with women's problems. It was a monthly journal and was published in Punjabi from Rawalpindi. It was launched with a view to present not only women's perception of existing social mores, problems and current national issues but also the common man's opinions and aspirations. 'In various articles the position of women was discussed and comparison was done of ancient period women and women in British period'.⁵ The crusade was launched for changing of social attitude towards women. It was divided into various sections like news section, entertainment section in which stories were published of great men and women who were working for the emancipation of women.

Istri meaning 'woman' was a monthly magazine published from Amritsar. It was published from 1932 onwards. 'Sardarni Bhagwan Kaur was the editor of the magazine with Sardarni Raghbir Kaur, Bibi Rattan Kaur and Bibi Inder Kaur as the co-editors'.⁶ As the name suggests this magazine was mainly for the females and all the topics pertaining to women and their condition were published. Its annual Indian subscription was rupees four, with a foreign subscription being

5 *Azaid Bhain*, Rawalpindi, May 1924, pp. 37-38.

6 *Istri*, Amritsar, April, 1932, p. 28.

rupees six. This was expensive for that period. Regular appeals were made in the magazine to different educational institutions to buy this and to include in the syllabus of the students. Even traders and merchants were asked to advertise their business through the paid advertisements of the magazine. This was one of the best source of income to the magazine.

The aims of *Istri* were influenced by the editor's perception of the urgent problems of the Punjabi society and the belief that contemporary magazines which were published for women, though making an admirable contribution, were not fully alive to the concerns and social agony of women in the Punjab. Hence, the editor undertook to sculpt a new model for Punjabi women : self reliant, confident and capable of securing her rights and her independent economic and social status.⁷ This journal's main aim was to make people aware about the kind of education imparted to girls should be more related to the domestic work in Punjabi medium. This journal was basically education oriented. Articles were published about the different schools and female education.

Istri Rattan meaning 'Jewel Woman' was first published on 1 October, 1925 from Layalpur. It was a monthly magazine with illustrations. It's annual and six monthly subscription was rupees four

7 *Ibid*, March, 1932, pp. 50-51.

and two respectively.⁸ For increasing its readership, people were encouraged to make more and more subscribers and one year free subscription was given to the person who used to make ten new members.

This monthly magazine was published in Punjabi and was political, social as well as an educational journal. *Istri Rattan* was pro-British and welcomed all the new British policies with open arms. Female education started by the Britishers made Punjabi girls more aware about their society and politics. *Istri Rattan* also tried to have debate about the medium of education for girls.⁹ All the political events were regularly published with illustrations. The main aim of this magazine was to make people aware about the new British policies.

Istri Samachar was a monthly journal in Punjabi published from Quetta. The name of the journal meant 'Women News', it was published from 1909 onwards. It's main aim was to cultivate the minds of women and to make them conscious of various social evils which were creeping into the society. 'Purdah system was prevalent in the society and reference in this journal was given about the establishment of Purdah College in Patna'.¹⁰ It presented various examples of widow remarriage, intercaste marriage and even the

8 *Istri Rattan*, Layalpur, October, 1925, p. 2.

9 *Ibid*, January, 1926, pp. 27-30.

10 *Istri Samachar*, Quetta, 24 August, 1909, p. 4.

appointment of Christian teachers in schools for teaching girls. *Istri Samachar* even published advertisements for the requirement of female teachers.¹¹ Comparison of development of education, especially for female was done with different states. Punjabi women were made to think about how to progress and how to help their husbands.

Istri Satsang meaning 'Woman Congregation' was a fortnightly newspaper. It was published from Amritsar and was in Punjabi language. The year of publication was most probably in the first decade of 1900s, may be from 1905. 'This newspaper gave importance to highlighting the political, social and the cultural events. It was replete with various articles and multifarious news items. This newspaper's political agenda was to liberate women from the orthodox and obnoxious evils of the society'.¹² To bring the fruits of civilization such as female education, liberal thought, equality, fraternity and the concept of 'new woman – equal to man in every way of life' was the lofty aim of the *Istri Satsang*. It tried to touch each and every evil of society and gave various solutions to overcome them like Sati system, purdah system, condition of widows, female illiteracy, child marriage and superstition.¹³ Regular articles were published about the legacy of Sikh Gurus as great reformers and during the British period, British policies were welcomed and used to appeal to people to adopt these progressive policies.¹⁴

11 *Ibid*, 8 August, 1909, pp. 15-17.

12 *Istri Satsang*, Amritsar, 10 August, 1909, pp. 4-8.

13 *Ibid*, 25 May, 1909, pp. 7-9.

14 *Ibid*, 10 June, 1909, pp. 3-5.

Istri Sudhar (meaning women reform) was started in 1925 from Amritsar. Bibi Kartar Kaur was the editor of the magazine. It was started as a Punjabi weekly magazine but after one year in 1926 it turned into a monthly magazine. When started, its annual and six monthly subscription was rupees three and two respectively.¹⁵ But in 1926 the subscriptions were raised to rupees five and three which was reasonable at that time as compared to other journals. This list also mentioned the names of the persons of Burma which shows that the readership of this magazine was not limited to only Punjab but also outside Punjab.¹⁶ It's main aim was to make people aware about the women reforms undertaken in different parts of India. It proposed to accelerate the pace of the then ongoing socio-cultural and political changes in India and manifold developments in the world. It mentioned of establishment of Istri Tract Society¹⁷ in Amritsar in 1927 and its aims were widely discussed. *Istri Sudhar* gave reference to various foreign women who came to Punjab and embraced Sikhism and started working for women emancipation.¹⁸ It served as a forum for creative dialogue and exchange and circulation of ideas and proposed to enable its readers, especially women, to understand and identify the roots of social problems and participate in the process of social change and also to harness the heat of ideological friction for recreating or inventing tradition.

15 *Istri Sudhar*, Amritsar, August, 1926, pp. 1-3.

16 *Ibid*, January, 1926, pp. 6-7.

17 *Ibid*, March, 1927, p. 3.

18 *Ibid*, January, 1926, p. 3.

Phuleran was published from 1926 onwards from Amritsar in Punjabi. Its annual subscription was rupee two which was cheap during that period, so it was very easily available for the people at the low prices. This magazine followed the policy of generating discussion and debate between the upholders of two points of views on every social, political and cultural issue. By this readers got more benefit intellectually as the different points of view on the various issues and problems were discussed. The main aim of *Phuleran* was to make readers aware about all the women conferences held in India like All India Women Conference (AIWC), Women's India Association (WIA) and Vidwa Viyah Sahayak Sabha, Lahore.¹⁹ Articles of foreign ladies were regularly published.²⁰ Editorials regarding women representation were also discussed. Articles in *Phuleran* were regularly published for generating awareness among the women and also appealed women to help men in religious and political affairs and asked women to send articles and poems for publication.

Punjabi Bhain (meaning Punjabi Sister) was a monthly journal in Punjabi, published from Ferozepur. It represented an educational institution 'The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya'. The school was started in 1882 and this journal's first issue came in May, 1907. Bhai Takhat Singh was the editor of this magazine. 'From 1907 to 1920 it was regularly published but from 1920-30 its publication was stopped due

19 *Phuleran*, Amritsar, June-July, 1926, pp. 30-32.

20 *Ibid*, October-November, 1926, pp. 130-133.

to the financial crisis. From the mid of 1930 it was again started and was then published regularly.²¹ Its annual subscription was rupees two which was very reasonable according to that time. 'This magazine even had foreign subscribers and correspondence, and received occasional letters to the editor from European women and women of other countries.²² There is a possibility that Punjabis residing in European countries were subscribing to this magazine too. In the beginning it was primarily an educational journal directing its discourses towards women and encouraging parents to teach their daughters. But later it modified its agenda and started discussing all the social evils and political affairs. With its successful career of one decade it had won the admiration and approval of a number of contemporary newspapers and magazines such as *Partap*, *Khalsa Advocate* and others. It was meant to cultivate the minds of women with two major goals in view-one was to raise them to a level where they could be suitable companions for their husbands. And, the second was to prepare them mentally to play their dual role as active crusaders for social reform and fighters in the nationalist struggle for independence. All the major developments in any part of India were discussed regularly. It threw light on many topics like agriculture, health, education, industry, economics, socio-political issues, literature, law and other areas of human life.

21 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, February, 1932, pp. 22-23.

22 *Ibid*, May, 1914, pp. 32-34.

Sughar Saheli meaning 'accomplished friend' was a monthly magazine. Its annual subscription was rupees two and was published from Amritsar in gurmukhi script. Its agenda revolved around the women in society and politics. 'Female pioneers in girl education were regularly discussed and women's participation in Sikh Ladies Conference of Punjab was regularly looked upon'.²³ Women and right to vote was debated in the columns of the magazine.²⁴ British government policy of distributing scholarships to girls was also published. Even political parties which were taking women issues were praised by *Sughar Saheli*. This magazine wanted overall development of women in the society.

All these magazines and newspapers had non-commercial character – ran on no profit no loss basis, frequently issued appeals to the public, through its own columns and other nationalist vernacular newspapers, for adding to the number of subscribers to these journals and newspapers. In spite of the price-hike of stationery and printing, editors determined to continue the publication like of *Punjabi Bhain*, *Istri Satsang* and *Phuleran*. But all these nine magazines and newspapers were remarkable and they managed to publish almost all their issues except during financial crisis when publication was stopped for a while.

23 *Sughar Saheli*, Amritsar, October, 1917, p. 4.

24 *Ibid*, September, 1918, p. 20.

The major issues and themes such as female education, purdah system, widow remarriage, sati system, child marriage and women trafficking, which sparked off debates and discussions among the readers and contributors which had been taken on its agenda by the Indian Women's Movement in due course, are discussed below.

“Educate a girl, and you educate an entire family”; this became the slogan of Indian liberals during early twentieth century. The girl once educated was likely not only to see to the education of her whole family, but was to put a new life into her community as well was the thinking of reformers.²⁵ So the reformers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Punjab expounded on their ideals of education through the various mediums at their disposal: tracts, magazines and newspapers were especially utilized to spread their objectives.²⁶

Vernacular Press was utilized to launch a fierce campaign for creating awareness among men and women about the need of female education. In the April issue of *Istri* in 1932, an article of Inder Singh Ji Dilbag was published 'Istri Vidya Par Vichar'. This article tried to mobilize people about female education and suggestions were given as what kind of education for women was needed - domestic, art and craft and religious.²⁷ Thus at that time a limited type of education was recommended for the girls. The main motive behind the

25 S. Das, *Purdah : The Status of Indian Women*, New Delhi, Ess Ess Publications, 1929, p. 147.

26 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and identity*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 132.

27 *Istri*, Amritsar, April, 1932, p. 8.

education was to make them ideal wife, daughter and mother. People were not bothered of providing professional education for them in the early decades of 1900s.

Questions were raised in the columns of *Istri Satsang* like 'Ki Istriyan Nu Bhi Vidya Di Lor hai?' Comparison was made with the European ladies and their contribution in the field of education was discussed. In an article 'Vidya' of *Istri Satsang* an example of British women was cited to prove that due to the education they were working in homes as well as in offices.²⁸ Similarly education would enable Punjabi women to play an active and valuable role in the public life. Karamjit Kaur Layalpur wrote an article 'Istri Vidya' in *Istri Rattan* highlighting the reasons for mobilizing public opinion in the favour of opening schools and colleges and vocational courses for women.²⁹ There was a popularized Victorian notion of woman as helpmate to man which became increasingly central point in the discussion of women and education in these magazines.³⁰ Now the western educated young men wanted drawing room companions and not tradition - bound, illiterate wives.

The social agony of illiterate women, who suffered daily insults and humiliations as wives at the hands of their educated husbands and in laws family owing to their genuine problems of communication

28 *Istri Satsang*, Amritsar, 24 Jan. 1909, p. 6.

29 *Istri Ratan*, Jan. 1926, p. 27.

30 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*. p. 33.

coupled with their ignorance, was widely discussed. The following extract from the article *Avidya De Dukhre* in *Istri Satsang*; issue illustrates the point :

ਸਹੁਰਾ ਘਰ ਸਾਰਾ ਹੀ (ਸਸ, ਨਿਨਾਨਾਂ, ਦੇਵਰ, ਜੇਠ, ਪਤੀ, ਸੌਰਾ, ਆਦਿ) ਪੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਤਦ ਉਸਦਾ ਪਤੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਨਿਨਾਨ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਜਪੁਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੰਠ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਿਨਾਨ ਬਾਨੀ ਕੰਠ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਲਗ ਪਈ ਤੇ “ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਨਾਦੰ” “ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਵੇਦੰ” ਤੇ ਆਈ ਤਾਂ (ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੇ ਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸੀ) ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਇਥੋਂ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੜਨ ਲਗੀ ‘ਮੁੰਨੀ ਦਾ ਲਾਲਾ ਨਾਦੰ’ ‘ਮੁੰਨੀ ਦਾ ਲਾਲਾ ਵੇਦੰ’, ‘ਮੁੰਨੀ ਦਾ ਲਾਲਾ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਈ। ਨਿਨਾਨ ਨੇ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਪਰ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਜਬਾਬ ਦਿਤਾ ਮੈ ਕੋਈ ਬੇਸ਼ਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਂ ਜੋ ਮੁੰਨੀ ਦੇ ਲਾਲੇ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਲਈ ਜਾਂਵਾਂ।³¹

(women due to illiteracy were not reciting Gurbani in the right way)

The vernacular press turned to ‘Adi Granth’ and the teaching of Sikh Gurus to substantiate their cause for the female equality and develop an urge for their education. The Gurus wives, Bibi Bhani, Mata Gangaji and Mata Gujriji were treated as role models. Gurmukh Singh Shamsher's article ‘Istri : So Kyun Manda Aakhiye Jit Jame Raajan’ explained his point of view very clearly. He wanted equal opportunities for women in the field of education as various Sikh ladies studied and became role models.³² A ceaseless campaign was started for female education and examples of various women working for this cause were regularly discussed in *Sughar Saheli*. Srimati Sant Kaur of Patiala state was working for the women and she used to give

31 *Istri Satsang*, 25 Feb. 1909, p. 5.

32 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, May, 1910, p. 27-28.

financial help to the various schools and colleges and even donated rupees five hundred at Taran Taran in the Sikh Educational Conference. She condemned various social evils.³³

Another important point of discussion in print media was the nature and content of education for girls. Giani Balwant Singh Chatrath's article 'Sanu Keho Jahi Vidya Di Lor Hai' (What kind of female education is needed?) in *Istri Sudhar* discussed this issue. Different subjects for girls like religious education, relating to hygiene, domestic work, embroidery and even practical science subjects were suggested for the girls.³⁴ Care was to be taken in selecting books for the young girls and their education was to be deeply religious and moral. *Istri Rattan* recommended a kind of education which could make the girl a simple, modest, religious, and a perfect home maker and that education which could enable her to acquire skills in the needle-work, cooking and in any of the domestic arts.³⁵

Thus, at that time initially in 1900s all the articles regarding the education published mainly wanted woman to become an ideal person. The syllabus prescribed was only domestic in nature as women were not allowed to go out of their homes to earn money. But in the third decade of 1900s, the syllabus for girls began to change and reformers and the government started introducing professional courses for the girls.

33 *Sughar Saheli*, Amritsar, Aug, 1917, p. 22.

34 *Istri Sudhar*, Amritsar, Jan., 1926, pp. 3-5.

35 *Istri Rattan*, Dec., 1915, pp. 28-30.

Stress was also laid on the need of training women for employment in the various professions such as teaching, medicine, social work, but without any compromise regarding the ultimate role of woman as an ideal house wife. In practice, the teaching of domestic arts continued to remain a major subject in the premier institutions in Punjab : Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (Jalandhar), Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (Ferozepur).³⁶ The editorial commentaries of various magazines and newspapers informed their readers regularly about the establishment of new educational institutions with boarding facilities for girls and the expansion of existing schools and colleges. June issue of 1932 of *Punjabi Bhain* mentioned the opening of new colleges and schools. During the early 1930s, two new high schools for girls were opened in Ambala and Moga. In Lahore 'Kinniard College' was opened by the Christian missionaries and 'Lahore College' was opened by Sir Ganga Ram. 'Lady Hardinge College, Delhi' was established with the help of Lady Hardinge and was affiliated to the Panjab University. Some Christian missionaries also opened Medical School in Ludhiana for the girls.³⁷

Some magazines also mentioned that girls were also interested in professional education in Punjab like medical, teaching and other professions. Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Ferozepur was ahead in girls

36 Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History*, p. 113.

37 *Punjabi Bhain*, June, 1932, p. 3-5.

who were opting for the medical profession. Bibi Gurdial Kaur, Tejwant Kaur and Jagjeet Kaur passed F.S.C. Medical exam.³⁸ Sharan Kaur of Lahore of this Ferozepur school did her MBBS from Medical College, Ludhiana. Raminder Kaur daughter of Sodhi Diwan Singh Magistrate, Fazilka did her medical education from Agra College of Medicine.³⁹ Narajan Singh's daughter Davinder Kaur of Raees Kotli (Gujranwala) did her graduation from Indraprasta College, Delhi in 1932.⁴⁰ Dr. Hardit Kaur was also the student of Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya, Ferozepur. Even girls were having option of profession of teachers as in each and every school women teachers were required. Various colleges and schools in Punjab were running Teacher Training classes. Ferozepur Vidyalaya started their first teacher training class in 1914 and girls were invited to join these classes and scholarships were fixed according to their qualification. Girls who passed their primary education, were to be given scholarship of rupees eight per month for one year and who were middle passed were given rupees ten per month for a year. And after completion of the course, they also had the facility to join the same school as a teacher. They were also provided certificates from Punjab Government Department of Education.⁴¹ Harnam Kaur Nabha,

38 *Ibid*, July, 1932, p. 8.

39 *Ibid*, Nov., 1932, p. 3-5.

40 *Ibid*, March, 1914, p. 3.

41 *Ibid*, p.3.

daughter-in-law of Kahan Singh Nabha did her teacher training course from the Ferozepur Vidyalaya and taught in the same school till December, 1935. Harnam Kaur's sister, Amar Kaur also followed the footsteps of her elder sister.⁴²

When the girls got exposure, then they started writing poems. Sarojini Naidu was their inspiration and almost every day their poems were published in the vernacular press. Harnam Kaur and Amar Kaur both the sisters were praised in the columns of Punjabi Bhain.

ਦੇ ਕੋਇਲਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਸਾਰੇ,
ਅਮਰ-ਹਰਨਾਮ ਕੌਰ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਦੋਵੇ ਜਾਣ ਲੋ,
ਸ਼ਾਇਰੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਏਨਾਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਮਾਲ ਭੈਣੋ।⁴³

Girl students of various schools also wrote about various social evils in the form of poems.

ਸਿੱਖ ਕੰਨਯਾ ਹਾਈ ਸਕੂਲ ਰਾਵਲਪਿੰਡੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੰਥ ਅਗੇ
ਪੁਕਾਰ,

ਦਿਓ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਅਸਾਂ ਤਾਈਂ,
ਇਹੋ ਬਿਨਤੀ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਹੈ।
ਬਿਨਾ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਸਭ ਨਾਰੀ,
ਬਣੀ ਹੈ ਪੈਰ ਦੀ ਜੂਤੀ,
ਤੇ ਲੱਖੋਂ ਕੱਖ ਹੋ ਬੈਠੀ,
ਇਹ ਨਾਰੀ ਸਭ ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਹੈ।

42 *Ibid*, Dec., 1935, p. 21.

43 *Ibid*, September, 1933 (poem written by Beant Kaur Kani), p. 27.

(The position of an uneducated women is very bad and an appeal is made by the girl students to educate their sisters).⁴⁴

Harnam Kaur Nabha's poems were regularly published like 'ਨਰਗਿਸ ਦਾ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ' (Nargis Da vichora), 'ਨਾਰੀ' (Nari), 'ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭੈਣ ਲਈ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ' (Punjabi Bhain Layi Bhainan Di Sikh), 'ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਦਯਕ ਘਰ ਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਫੁੱਲ' (Mere Vidyak Ghar De Naven Phul), 'ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਸਖੀਆਂ' (Meriyān Puraniyan Sakhiyan) and many more.⁴⁵

Many Punjabi women like Harnam Kaur, Amar Kaur, Dr. Hardit Kaur, Raminder and others used to write poems, articles, essays in the different journals of this period.

Various newspapers made people especially women aware about the different kind of professional education they could opt for, so that they could earn their living and could also help in the development of the nation. Article 'ਹਿੰਦ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਲਈ ਕੰਮ' (Hind Istri Layi Kum) in the March issue of 1931 of *Punjabi Bhain*, explained different professions for ladies like religious teacher, editor of newspapers, school teachers, doctors, art and craft teacher, lawyer, tailor, goldsmith, cloth dyer, cloth maker, chef and many more.⁴⁶

The vernacular media through their editorial commentaries informed their readers about all the meetings of 'Sikh educational conference'⁴⁷, 'Punjab Women Education Conference'⁴⁸, 'All India

44 *Istri Satsang*, 25 March, 1909, p. 5.

45 *Punjabi Bhain*, December, 1930, p. 11, 12, 17.

46 *Ibid*, April, 1937, p. 5-7.

47 *Ibid*, Sep., 1932, p. 8-9.

Women Conference' (AIWC).⁴⁹ All the resolutions passed and annual reports of different educational institutions also received a special notice in the columns of the Punjabi magazines.⁵⁰

All these journals tried their level best to take each and every issue relating to the women education. From primary to higher education, the girls were made aware about all the institutions. Poems and articles were published to make parents aware to send their girls to schools.

The second important theme of the vernacular press was the condition of widows and widow remarriage. The print media expressed the views about the bad condition of widows and some of the journals even tried to launch a fierce campaign for creating awareness among people for improving the condition of widows. *Istri Satsang* was the pioneer in this context.

Istri Satsang gave examples of the foreign ladies who were working for the emancipation of widows. Nihal Singh Chawalanwala of Chawalmandi, Amritsar in his article 'ਸੱਚੇ ਤੇ ਝੁਠੇ ਰੈਹਣੇ' (Sache Te Joothe Rehne) gave example of Karniliya of Rome. She was a widow having two children. Her husband died and after his death, she started studying for some time and later earned money for her kids. People in Punjab were asked to educate their girls so that they could

48 *Ibid*, Sept., 1934, p. 3.

49 *Istri Sudhar*, July, 1927, p. 28.

50 *Istri Satsang*, 25 March, 1931, p. 16.

make use of their education when needed.⁵¹ One separate column was published for widows named ‘ਰੰਡੀਆਂ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖੜੇ’ (Randiyan Arthaat Vidwa Istriyan De Dukhre) in which contribution of Sikh Gurus in improving the widow's conditions was mentioned. Guru Amardas propagated widow remarriage long before the advent of Britishers. He was against the Sati system by which widow was asked to burn herself on the pyre of her dead husband.⁵² From the ancient period, women of our nation were taught that they were not entitled to the right of inheritance if they were born as a female and it was her lifetime duty to serve her relatives and family without any complaint. They were not educated as orthodox people believed if women were not aware then they could easily believe in superstitious sayings of elders. In the name of religion women were forced to continue widowhood.⁵³ This was one of the reasons for an increasing number of widows in Punjab and other states. There were two more causes which led to a large number of widows – the child marriage and prohibition of widow marriage in higher castes.⁵⁴ The widows were ill-treated at their in-laws place and sometimes were called as ‘ਡਾਇਣ’ (Dayan or witch). Male members of the family even sexually harassed these women which made them either to commit suicide or to elope with someone.⁵⁵ The widows had two alternatives after the death of her

51 *Ibid*, 10 Aug., 1909, p. 4.

52 *Ibid*, 25 July, 1909, p. 8.

53 *Ibid*, 25 Jan., 1909, p. 6.

54 *Ibid*, 25 Feb., 1909, p. 7.

55 *The Punjab*, Amritsar 1 May, 1906, p. 3-6.

husband either to become Sati or to live in extreme worst conditions surrounded by inhuman environment. If she accepted 'Sati' then before performing that ritual, she was given 'Kesar' (saffron) in powdered form. By doing this the victim was intoxicated and in that condition she easily sat on the dead husband's pyre.⁵⁶

This system of Sati was much prevalent in the rural areas where people were less educated and aware. Old people of the village used to regard this deed of a lady as pious work in their life and these were worshipped as goddesses. Their temples were built. Live example of these type of temples can still be seen at village Mandaur, in present Fatehgarh Sahib district of modern Punjab. Here villagers go to this 'Sati Mata Temple' and the woman who became a Sati is worshipped till today.

Regular articles, essays were also written in *Istri Satsang* regarding the psychology of widows. Writer Jan Kama's essay in *Madras* English newspaper was published in *Istri Satsang*. Jankama cited an example of a widow whose father was well educated but he didn't educate his daughter. She was married at the age of ten years and after two years of her marriage her husband died. She thought now there was no happiness for her in the world, she dreamt of her husband during night. She was not allowed to attend parties, feasts and coloured clothes were banned for her. Whenever she saw her

56 *Istri Satsang*, 20 June, 1909, p. 5.

sisters and sister-in-laws talking to their husbands, she felt very alone. Then she used to ask questions to herself that why widow remarriage was not allowed?⁵⁷

Mahatma Gandhi's article 'विधवा की दुरदशा' (Vidwa Di Durdasha) in *Azad Bhain* highlighted the recommendation for saving the women from this evil. The social agony of widows was depicted and Gandhi regarded them as the most pious creatures in the world. He explained that Hindu religion praised 'patience' and widow was the person who was suffering all the sorrows of life with full patience. Religious leaders were against widows and put restrictions on them. The widow's sorrow was regarded as her happiness and a way to heaven. A girl of ten years age who did not even know the meaning of marriage, how could she know about the pious living of a widow? He gave various recommendation to save widows - firstly, asked people not to marry a girl before she attained fifteen years of age. Secondly, the girls who were married before the above mentioned age and became widows, must be remarried. Thirdly, if a girl of fifteen became a widow, her parents should marry her within one year. Fourthly, each and every member of the family should respect the widows. Her in-laws should even try to educate her. Lastly, he suggested to the parents not to worry about the society and marry their young widowed daughters. They were not to be afraid of their excommunication and if

57 *Ibid*, 25 March, 1909, p. 6.

done so, then they could regularly request their friends and relatives to accept them for the noble cause. Gandhi was even against the popular practice of widower's remarriage because it was responsible for adding to the number of child widows and thus posing a grave social problem. According to Gandhi, widwa or widow was that lady whose husband was dead and the lady who married at the right age with her or family's consent and the lady who knew husband-wife relations. A widow was not a young girl who didn't know about all these things. So widow remarriage was the best option for their emancipation.⁵⁸

The Punjab, monthly journal favoured widower's remarriage but only with widows. This practice could easily decrease the number of child marriages. This journal became the forum for a creative dialogue between the supporters and opponents of widow and widower's re-marriage. It played a role of saviour against the organized social oppression including the galore of widower's remarriages with the young girls. 'द्विपदा द्विद्वार' (Vidwa Vivah) in November issue of 'The Punjab' in 1905 presented a comparative view of the privileged position of a widower and the abject status of a widow. Widower remarriage was liked by the contributors of this journal.⁵⁹ This journal was also giving alternative for widows other than Sati. It was against the concept of 'Chadar Andezi' in which a

58 *Azaid Bhain*, Rawalpindi, Dec. 1928, p. 9-14.

59 *The Punjab*, May, 1906, p. 3-5.

brother of the deceased husband used to marry the widow. This practice was leading to polygamy (meaning man having more than one wife). So the best alternative suggested was the marriage of a widow with a widower without any caste bar. This kind of marriage was regarded as ideal by the editor of this journal and an appeal was also made by the editor to the religious leaders to make this marriage as a rule in their rule books.

In the editorial 'ਵਿਧਵਾ ਅਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਸ਼ਾ' (Vidwa Ar Una Di Dasha) urged the people for widow remarriage. A comparison was made to the reformers in Bengal who were working for widows. The example of editor 'Babu Shankar Lal' of 'Abla Hit Kari' was given who announced prize of one thousand rupees for that person who could prove that in the Hindu Shastras widow remarriage was not allowed. Bijnaur's Vidwa Viyah Society sent four scholars to meet brahmins of Kashi, Parag, Kanpur and Lucknow and discuss the issue of widow remarriage. On the same pattern the people of Punjab were asked to prove from their holy books which banned widow remarriage.⁶⁰

Istri Sudhar magazine informed its readers about the establishment of new institutions working for women especially widow emancipation, and also issued appeals for the donations to support them. Sir Ganga Ram established a trust to which he donated a property of twenty one lakh rupee's. By the income of this property, six institutions worked which are as follows :

60 *Ibid*, 1 Nov. 1905, pp. 15-17.

First, Vidwa Viwah Sahayak Sabha; second, Sir Ganga Ram Free hospital; third, Hindu Students Career Society; fourth, Sir Ganga Ram Business Bureau and Library; fifth, Mechanical Art and Craft School (for girls); sixth, Hindu Orphanage.⁶¹ In 1915, Vidwa Viwah Sahayak Sabha was established in Lahore and from 1915 to 1925, this Sabha arranged six thousand three hundred and thirty four widow remarriages. This Sabha recorded rupees ninety five thousand six hundred and thirty nine expenditure from 1915-25 with an average expenditure on one wedding of rupees fifteen. For the propagation of widow remarriage this Sabha was publishing three newspapers and even published books in Urdu, Gurmukhi, Hindi and English. The patron of this Sabha 'Sir Ganga Ram' never interfered in the castes of girls and they were married according to the tradition of their religion and castes. This Sabha managed to publish their monthly reports of remarriages according to castes.⁶² The above mentioned point is illustrated in this follow extract :

ਵਿਧਵਾ ਵਿਵਾਹ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਸਭਾ, ਲਾਹੌਰ

ਇਹ ਸਭਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਾਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਾਈਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1926 ਵਿਚ 202 ਵਿਧਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਿਪੋਰਟਾਂ ਪੁੱਜੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਲਾ ਕੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਚਲਦੇ ਸਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਨਵਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਅਖੀਰ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ਤੱਕ ਕੁੱਲ 2406 ਪੁਨਰ ਵਿਆਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ

61 *Istri Sudhar*, Jan. 1926, p. 55-56.

62 *Phuleran*, Amritsar, July-Aug. 1926, p. 40.

ਰਪੋਟਾਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ - ਬਰਾਮਣ-443, ਖਤਰੀ-315, ਅਰੋੜਾ-429, ਅਗਰਵਾਲ-87, ਕਯਸਤ-87, ਰਾਜਪੂਤ-217, ਸਿੱਖ-199, ਹੋਰ-398। ਸਭਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਹੁਣ ਤਕ 1885 ਰੁਪਏ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਮਿਲੀ ਹੈ।

(Lahore Vidwan Vivah Sahayak Sabha organized two hundred and two widow remarriages in the month of October, 1926. Castewise classification was published - Brahman- four hundred and forty three, Khatri- three hundred and fifteen, Arora- four hundred and twenty nine, Aggarwal- eighty seven, Kayastha- eighty seven, Rajput- two hundred and seventeen, Sikh-one hundred and ninety nine and others three hundred and ninety eight).⁶³

In later issues of *Phuleran*, widow remarriages were mentioned province wise, for example in December, 1926, widows who got married in Punjab and North Western Frontier province were one thousand and nine hundred thirty two, in Sindh- two hundred and thirty, Delhi- eighty one, Central provinces- six hundred and eighty two, Bengal- one hundred and forty five, Madras- nine, Bombay- six.⁶⁴

Punjabi Bhain magazine of Ferozepur also mentioned various widow associations working outside the Punjab. Widow Ashram in Poona was also working on the same guidelines of Lahore Sabha for widows.⁶⁵

63 *Ibid*, Nov-Dec, 1926, p. 201-202.

64 *Ibid*, Jan., 1927, p. 264.

65 *Punjabi Bhain*, 1 Aug. 1907, p. 22.

Various conferences were also held which were working for widow reforms like Ganga Ram organised Vidwa Conference in September, 1926. This conference was held at Lahore under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai. All the resolutions passed in this conference were published in *Phuleran*. First, resolution was passed for the marriage of child widows who had never lived with their husband. Second, this conference praised the working of Sir Ganga Ram's Vidwa Vivah Sahayak Sabha. Third, it fixed marriageable age for girls and boys as sixteen and twenty five respectively. Forth, it appealed to the different castes to make rules for their castes not to allow widower's marriage to unmarried young girls and widow's marriage to bachelors. Fifth and last, it was against the marriage of girls for the sake of money. People were asked to follow these resolutions for making society free of all type of social evils.⁶⁶

Punjabi Bhain in 1909 highlighted the opening of widow homes in Punjab. The debate on widow homes figured frequently in the columns of this journal. The different point of views were discussed regarding widow remarriage and widow homes. In article ‘द्विपदा विरलाप : मानयोग वीरां दे उलटे प्रीश्रम’ (Vidwa Virlap : Manyog Veeran De Ulte Prishram) discussed pros and cons of widow homes. Women supporters wanted widow remarriage instead of widow homes. In these ashrams some times they remained as the unpaid maid of all

66 *Phuleran*, Oct.-Nov., 1926, p. 135-136.

the work. Even in some cases they were an easy sexual prey to male members in the ahsrams.⁶⁷ Thus, contributors in *Punjabi Bhain* were against widow homes.

Istri Satsang also propagated against the widow homes. It encouraged widow remarriages and for this various matrimonial advertisements were published under the heading of ‘ਪੁਰਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ’ (Purshan Layi Vidwa istriyan di lor). This is illustrated in the following extracts :

(1) ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਲਸਾ (ਜਾਤ ਜਿਮੀਦਾਰ) ਔਹਦਾ ਪੋਸਟ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਤਨਖਾਹ 60 ਰੁਪਏ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਦੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵਿਧਵਾ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਕੋਈ ਉਮਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

(2) ਇਕ ਸਿਖ ਅਰੋੜਾ ਖਾਨਦਾਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਮਰ 35 ਸਾਲ ਦੁਕਾਨਦਾਰ ਆਮਦਨ 125 ਰੁਪਏ ਮਾਹਵਾਰ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਇਸਤਰੀ 19-20 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।⁶⁸

Various examples of widow remarriages were also cited in the newspapers and journals. In the issue of 10 January, 1909 of *Istri Satsang*, the marriage of a widow girl of thirteen years age of Arora family of Amritsar was mentioned.⁶⁹ Another example was given of a Khatri widow girl of sixteen years age of Lahore who was married to a Arora caste man of thirty years age.⁷⁰ Another widow marriage was performed with great zeal on 21 February, 1934 at Lahore of Lala Dharam Chand and Shrimati Rameshwari Devi of Lahore. This

67 *Punjabi Bhain*, July, 1906, p. 16-18

68 *Ibid*, 25 July 1909, p. 6.

69 *Ibid*, 25 March, 1909, p. 8.

70 *Ibid*, 25 Feb., 1909, p. 6.

marriage was even attended by Shrimati Lekhwati Jain (first woman member of Legislative Council Punjab) and other prominent personalities of Lahore.⁷¹

Thus, it can be seen that widow marriages were prevalent at that time but mostly in the cities. In the rural areas, these marriages were less in number as in cities. The only probable reason could be the lack of awareness in the villagers or presence of orthodox people there.

The vernacular press tried to discuss each and every issue related to the widows. Readers were also informed about the new developments for the emancipation of widows in other provinces of India and new policies adopted by the British government were published in the columns of this print media.

The vernacular press launched a vigorous campaign against purdah. *Azad Bhain's* article 'लज्जा' (Lajja) of Pushap Pankhari, Rawalpindi tried to demonstrate the ability to understand the complex issue of purdah in the context with the larger issue of systematic and organized social oppression of women. 'Pushap Pankhari' pointed that 'shyness' was the most important characteristic of women but extreme shyness in the form of purdah became a hindrance in the way of the development of women as well as of society. It also explained why purdah was needed to save women from the evil eyes of men.⁷²

71 *The Tribune*, Lahore, 23 Feb., 1934, p. 6.

72 Azad Bhain, Rawalpindi, May, 1924.

Purdah system in India was started when the Muslims started invading the Indian territories. The Mohammedan invaders were short of women and were eager to obtain them from among the conquered Hindu races. So people in order to save their women started keeping their women in Zennana - secluded quarters and when these women were to leave their secluded quarters, they went closely veiled so that no rowing Mohammedan eye could possibly catch a glimpse of them.⁷³

So purdah under Muslim influence, became a protective measure in Indian society. And with the passage of time women themselves came to regard it with jealous pride to such an inordinate extent that it grew to be an envied boast for a woman to be able to assert that not even the eye of the sun had ever beheld her face. Women themselves were quite content to be shut away in crowded, airless and isolated rooms at the back of the houses, or screened in by shuttered and trellised device through which only faint glimpses could be obtained of the life outside.⁷⁴

Women in purdah were deprived of education, real knowledge, wealth and personal freedom. Begum Sahiba Hasrat Mohini in her article 'Purdah' in March 1920 issue of *Punjabi Bhain* criticized purdah as the major obstacle in the way of girls education. She went

73 S. Das, *Purdah : The Status of Indian Women*, p. 65.

74 *Ibid*, p. 66-67.

a step further when she linked it with the women's right to good personal health like every other human being. She, being a Muslim woman, discarded purdah and appealed the people to abolish this custom. This tradition of purdah was started by the Muslims and at that time Muslims too were the first to oppose this custom.⁷⁵

Examples were given of women of India who had honoured tradition and never followed veil. Sita, Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Savitri were the well known names in our history. Ahaliya Bai, Tara Bai, Noor Jahan, Raziya Sultana were all the names in our history who never veiled from anyone.⁷⁶

The custom of purdah was not so much prevalent in Punjab. It affected, in the first instance, those people whose livelihood and official position depended directly on the Muslim conquerors. It also affected the high caste people who had imitated the rulers. High caste women were caught in this vicious circle of purdah.⁷⁷ As soon as a man in Punjab became affluent enough to be able to afford a servant's wages, that servant ran errands and made all purchases in the bazaar, that enabled the wife to slip into purdah, which she did with alacrity, as it conferred upon her an incontrovertible mark of ascent in the social scale.⁷⁸

75 *Punjabi Bhain*, March, 1920, p.8.

76 *Ibid*, Dec., 1932, p. 13-15.

77 S. Das, *Purdah: The Status of Indian Women*, p. 84.

78 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, Dec., 1932, p. 13-15.

Rajinder Kaur 'Kamli' Gujranwala in her article 'ਪੜਦਾ ਤੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਜਾਤੀ' (Purdah Te Istri Jaati) explained prevalence of purdah system among the upper castes of Punjab only. Whenever someone got a good job or became financially sound, he made the female members of the family wear purdah. She discussed that the Sikh religion was against purdah, so women must avoid the evil custom. She urged her sisters to get education.⁷⁹

This purdah system was limited to the upper caste society. It never extended to the low-caste group as economic necessity protected them. The need of earning their living through bodily toil effectively precluded all possibilities of seclusion. Only among high castes, purdah was universal. High caste men and women thought that freedom of movement outside the house would lower their standing and place them on a common level with low castes, so women stayed in the 'Zenanas'.⁸⁰

Istri Samachar mentioned drawbacks of purdah and zenana in its issues. Purdah abolished all the possibilities of the high caste women participation in social life of the community. Visits, feasts, discussions, musical parties, all these took place in men's quarters and not in zenanas. Women were shut away from the sun, air and exercise, fell victims of various diseases and infections which used to make their life hell.⁸¹

79 Rajinder Kaur 'Kamli', "Purdah Te Istir Jati", in *Punjabi Bhain*, December, 1932, p. 13-15.

80 *Azad Bhain*, May, 1924, p. 15.

81 *Istri Samachar*, 24 Sept., 1909, p. 20-22.

Even it was not possible to make arrangements for education of girls in the zenana as majority of them were either not aware or did not want their girls to study and avoided a private lady or male tutor.⁸²

But in some parts of Punjab, missionary ladies and women teachers (who were product of various girls schools of Punjab like Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya and others) tried to educate women against purdah at their places. Even various Sikh Educational Conferences and especially, Women Educational Conference held in April, 1913 in Punjab passed the resolution to make arrangements for teaching women in Zenana. Male and female reformers all were working for the women emancipation and wanted a purdah free society.⁸³

All these magazines and newspapers even urged men to change their rigid attitudes and orthodox views in keeping with the progressive trends of the world. While emphasizing the vital need for uprooting the pernicious social customs particularly purdah, they also pointed out that women possessed as much intelligence as men for deliberating upon the issue of national welfare and implementing plans for achieving these objectives.

The debate on child marriages figured frequently in the columns of various journals and it was also highlighted that there was growing resentment of critical reformers against this discriminatory social norm of the society.

82 *Ibid*, 16 Nov., 1909, p. 17-18.

83 *Ibid*, April, 1913, p. 14.

The custom of child marriage was, to some extent, the result of Muslim conquest. The Muslim invaders used to carry Indian women but according to their shariat law it was forbidden in their religion to carry off married women. So as a means of protection, Indians resorted to marrying their daughters not only at the approach of puberty, but even as infants.⁸⁴

But after the decline of the Muslim power, this evil custom was performed because of economic reasons. Whenever child marriage was performed, the new bride usually came to the joint family and by this the young bride was in no way dependent on the earning of the groom. Secondly, she was always an asset and not an outlay, as she took the place of an unpaid servant. Thirdly, the little bride also brought dowry with her, so the earlier she came into the household the better. Fourthly, child marriage was also preferred as the younger the bride, the less the chances of her surviving for long the strain of marriage duties and the more likely the early need for a 'new bride' who brought another dowry.⁸⁵

The vernacular print media of early twentieth century became the forum between the supporters and opponents of child marriage. Editorial commentaries of *Phuleran* criticized this evil custom. In February, 1927 issue, it was mentioned that European and American people when they came to know about marriage of five year old boys

84 S. Das, *Purdah: The Status of Indian Women*, p. 64.

85 *Ibid*, p. 80-81.

and girls, then they used to laugh and ask questions how India could develop when such kind of evil practices were prevalent. The consequences of these type of child marriages were also explained. Young girls were married and before their ideal age they become mothers. Firstly, there was no time left for them to get education; secondly, due to young age their bodies were not fully developed so weak and sick children were born. Thirdly, after giving birth even young mothers were not strong enough to do any physical labour which in return reduced their capability to earn money for their living. Thus appeals were made to the people to get rid of this practice. The reformers were asked to eradicate this evil from its roots.⁸⁶

Examples of animals were also given in these newspapers for opposing the marriage of children. It was stated, that as family in animals started at a particular age then why human beings started their family before time and particular age. It is illustrated in the following extract:

ਪਸ਼ੂ ਵੀ ਗ੍ਰਹਸਤ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤਾਨ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਕਤ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੰਜੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਫਿਰ ਜੇ ਮਨੁਖ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਲ ਵਿਆਹ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਲ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਗ੍ਰਹਸਤ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਹਨੇਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕੀ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਏਹ ਕੁਕਰਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਪਸ਼ੂਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਨਿੱਘਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ?⁸⁷

Contributors of the journals used various census of 1921, 1931 and others to explain people about the bad effects of child marriage. Sex ratio (number of girls per thousand males) was decreasing.

86 *Phuleran*, Feb., 1927, p. 67-68.

87 *Ibid*, Feb. 1927, p. 68-69.

Spread of diseases and number of physical problems to women were increasing at a high rate. The maximum number of child marriages in Punjab were amongst the Hindu castes than Sikhs and Muslims.⁸⁸

Istri Sudhar magazine gave examples of various states which had fixed the marriageable age for girls and boys. *Kota Riyasat* made a law, by which a girl of not less than twelve years of age was to be married and a girl of eighteen years was not to be married to a man double her age.⁸⁹

Similarly various examples were given of different states where child marriage was prevalent. In Jaipur, a Jain 'Isher Lal' married his ten year old daughter to Phool Chand of fifty years age for the sake of rupees five thousand.⁹⁰ A widow of Indore also married her nine year old daughter to an old man for rupees five thousand.⁹¹ In April, 1932 issue of *Punjabi Bhain* it was also mentioned that an old man of Brahman caste went to marry a girl of his grand daughter's age. But when people of that village came to know about the wedding, they all beat that old man and made him run from there. These type of incidents were becoming examples for others and even people were becoming more and more critical of this evil custom.⁹² In Rawalpindi in 1923, the marriage of a four year old girl was arranged with a forty

88 *Ibid*, Jan., 1927, p. 264.

89 *Istri Sudhar*, Jan, 1926, p. 55.

90 *Ibid*, July-Aug., 1926.

91 *Punjabi Bhain*, Sept., 1919, p. 7.

92 *Ibid*, April, 1932, p. 32.

year old man on Diwali night. And this wedding was also stopped by the people of that place and the four year old girl was saved.⁹³

Istir Satsang newspaper used to publish the poems and the songs depicting the critical condition and psychology of the child bride. The following extracts illustrates the point :

ਇਕ ਬਾਲ ਬਿਵਾਹੀ ਬੀਬੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰਲਾਪ!

ਆਈਂ ਨੀਂ ਮਾਏਂ ਦੇਖੀ ਧੀ ਦੇ ਤੂੰ ਦੁਖੜੇ! ਤਰਸਾਂ ਤੇ ਤੜਫਾਂ ਦੇਖਣ ਹਤ ਪਤੀ
ਮੁਖੜੇ!! ਕਾਰੇ ਜਵਾਈ ਤੇਰੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਨਾ ਹਾਲਓ! ਬਾਲ ਬਿਵਾਹ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ ਬੇਹਾਲ
ਓ!!!

ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਨ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਗੁਣ ਭੀ ਨਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਜੀ! ਲਾਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਪਤਿ
ਭੀਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਜੀ! ਤਾਹੀਓਂ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਏਡਾ ਭੈੜਾ ਏਹ ਹਾਲ ਓ! ਬਾਲ ਬਿਵਾਹ ਕੇ
ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ ਬੇਹਾਲ ਓ!!!

ਲੋਕੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਦੁਖਾਂ ਮਾਰੀ ਕਰਦੀ ਪੁਕਾਰ ਜੇ। ਬਾਲ ਬਿਵਾਹ ਨ ਕਰੀਓ ਏਹ ਬਦਕਾਰ
ਜੇ। ਧੀਆਂ ਨਿਮਾਣੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਂਦਾਂ ਇਹ ਗਾਲ ਓ॥ ਬਾਲ ਬਿਵਾਹ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ
ਬੇਹਾਲ ਓ!!!

ਉਮਰ ਜਵਾਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਗੁਣ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਹੈ। ਤਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਯੋਗ ਵਰਦਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਹੈ।
ਧੀਆਂ ਨਿਮਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਜੀ ਸਾਰ ਓ। ਬਾਲ ਬਿਵਾਹ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ ਬੇਹਾਲ
ਓ!!!⁹⁴

(A young girl asks her mother, why she married her so early, why no education was imparted to her and suggest others to marry their daughters when they are educated and when they have turned to appropriate marriageable age).

93 *Azad Bhain*, December, 1923, p. 4.

94 *Istri Satsang*, 25 March, 1909, p. 7-8.

These vernacular magazines and newspapers also advocated the role played by the various organisations at national and regional level for emancipation of women. In 1933, the All India Women Conference (AIWC) in its seventh session of Lahore under Lady Neel Kanth passed various resolutions regarding the persisting social evils in the society. A resolution was also passed against the child marriage.⁹⁵ AIWC in 1910 also discussed the issue of child marriage. The age for marriage of girls and boys was suggested as fourteen and twenty years respectively.⁹⁶ The Sikh Educational Conference of 1919 in its session laid emphasis to educate girls instead of marrying them at a very young age.⁹⁷ The Women League of Punjab⁹⁸ also discussed the aftermaths of child marriage on the health of girls at its session in 1916 in Lahore.⁹⁹ A little bride of nine to thirteen years of age was subjected to burden of pregnancy before she had the strength to carry it to a successful end. Several miscarriages and still births before the birth of the first living child were usual. Sometimes non-consensual sex was done which led to the forced motherhood before their bodies were fully developed or their bones had solidly set. Added to this, the shocking conditions of midwifery, and the result was an abnormally high mortality of mothers and infants in child-birth, the prevalence of female disorders and children's diseases.¹⁰⁰

95 *Punjabi Bhain*, Jan., 1933, pp. 35-36.

96 *Ibid*, Jan.-Feb., 1910, pp. 20-21.

97 *Ibid*, April, 1919, pp. 3-5.

98 The Women League of Punjab was established in 1900 at Lahore.

99 *Ibid*, Jan., 1916, pp. 14-15.

100 S. Das, *Purdah: The Status of Indian Women*, p. 82-83.

Another issue discussed in the columns of these newspapers and magazines was women trafficking. The practice of selling and exchanging females was prevalent in some areas of Punjab. The print media elaborated that this trafficking in women persisted well into the twentieth century and became lucrative moneymaking schemes for people in Punjab.¹⁰¹

Punjabi Bhain in June 1917 gave examples of women trafficking in the hilly states. The British government had already banned the sale of women but still women below twenty six years of age were made to stand on 'Square' (ਚੜ੍ਹਤਰਾ) and were sold in auction from rupees fifty one to rupees four hundred. The British government was appealed to take strict actions against the culprits. Other editors of different newspapers were also requested to publish the articles regarding this evil practice.¹⁰²

Even some women were involved in trafficking. Two minor girls were taken by women at Batala and were sold at the railway station. But 'Sewa Samiti of Batala' caught that lady and the girls were saved.¹⁰³ In Amritsar, a jat bought a widow and daughter for rupees six hundred. He sold the daughter for rupees twelve hundred and six months later got rupees three hundred for the widow.¹⁰⁴

101 Donis R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 111.

102 *Punjabi Bhain*, June, 1917, pp. 14-15.

103 *Phuleran*, August, 1926, p. 91.

104 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 111.

Istri Sudhar also launched a crusade against this evil and tried to make women aware about their safety and security. *Istri Satsang* wanted women to work and get education if they wanted to save them from these evils. To become financially independent was the best alternative to evade this problem.

The problem of sati system, female infanticide, polygamy, polyandry, dowry system were also discussed in the issues of these newspapers. The best option to end these customs according to print media was the spread of education and favouring British and reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Punjabi Bhain's contributors wrote numerous articles, poems, songs in the form of appeals to make Punjabi society evil free. Various book reviews were published by the journal like 'Manual of Midwifery', 'Niti Ratan Bhandar', 'Bhai Mula', 'Istri Sudhar', 'Swarag De Ratan', 'Randepe De Dukhre' and many more.¹⁰⁵ *Istri Satsang* published many articles which were against women's jewellery. They wanted simple life for women and urged people that wearing jewellery was not in the Sikh tradition.¹⁰⁶ Issues relating to 'Mid Wifery' and science and technology were usually discussed in *Punjabi Bhain* from 1930 onwards. All the health problems relating to the children and women were explained with symptoms and precautions. The concept of birth control was also published in 1934 issue of *Punjabi Bhain*.

105 *Punjabi Bhain*, December 1912, p. 10-11.

106 *Istri Satsang*, May 1909, p. 18-19.

These newspapers, magazines and journals played an important role in terms of gender issues. Regular articles and editorials were published about the husband-wife relationships. Slowly and steadily expectations of the young women were changed from one-sided devotion and fidelity, humane and personal equation based on mutual self respect, romantic love and a sense of comradeship. As more and more articles were published condemning enforced widowhood and ill practice of Sati, there was a change in the thinking of people and they started promoting widow remarriage leaving the sati practice. The vernacular press also helped in projecting the key role of mothers in the progress or decline of an individual, nation or mankind. Punjabi men and women sought to establish a new equation between the functions of mothers and project of nation-building. Even the women activists and reformers endorsed this new orientation. After discussing the social evils and ill practices, the contributors of this print media frequently referred to the economic dependence of women as an important factor for the degradation of women. They were encouraged to study new upcoming professional education like medicine, law, teaching and others. The economic independence of women was discussed regularly and they were also encouraged to take up cottage industries like making cloth, painting, stitching and many other skilled works.

Contemporary news of importance from social, economic and political fields were regularly published in the vernacular print media of colonial Punjab. This media succeeded in its mission of transforming the consciousness, that is self image, world views, ideals, aspiration and goals of the urban Indian women especially of colonial Punjab. It threw light on varied social aspects including female education, widow remarriage, sati system, purdah system, illiteracy, science and technology, women trafficking and others had national leaders as writers like Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others. The print media from 1901-47 in colonial Punjab wielded a tremendous influence over the Punjabi society as it fought against social evils and worked relentlessly for creating awareness among women in the colonial Punjab to fight for a more respectable status in society.

Chapter - 3

WOMEN : FROM EDUCATION TO OCCUPATION

The emphasis on different arguments justifying the value and necessity of education from the point of view of the individual as well as society has varied according to the historical needs of any society in different stages of its evolution. The first argument regards education as a value in itself, since it develops the personality and the rationality of individuals. The assumption here is that society, recognising the innate value of rationality and learning, accords a high status to the educated. The second argument emphasises the usefulness of educated persons to society at large. The knowledge, by serving a social purpose, raises their status in society.¹

The people of Punjab before 1849 were not much in favour of the professional education and the importance of professions was also not regarded much. Education at that time mainly revolved around religion of different communities - Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and religious education was imparted. Traditionally, education meant learning of sacred literature. Members of the priestly class imparted this education to boys and girls.² Even for the girls there were not big buildings as schools, but sometimes they were taught at religious places like temples, gurudwaras or masjids. Female education at that

1 *Toward Equality, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, New Delhi, Government of India Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1974, p. 234.

2 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 35.

time was much prevalent in wealthy families.³ Education on a moderate scale was prevalent, provided that it did not make the women leave the path of homely virtues.⁴ Female education was informal and largely limited to the practical and religious matters. Women from respectable families often studied classical or vernacular literature as “a pious recreation” and girls from propertied families received some education in keeping accounts. But most females learned only the household art.⁵ Thus, before the annexation of Punjab, female education was mainly religious and traditional and was to make girls as pious creatures.

After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, vast strides were made in the field of education. In one of the earliest declaration of British policy then made, the intention of the government to take in hand the work of educating the masses was emphatically declared.⁶ And under this declaration, the Department of Public Instruction in the Punjab was instituted in January, 1856 with Mr. W. Arnold as the first Director. The first step taken by the Director was to ascertain the steps taken by the people in the way of education. The education department (with a Director, Two Inspectors of Schools, ten Deputy Inspectors and Sixty Sub-Deputy Inspectors)

3 Karamjit Kaur Layalpur, “Istri Vidya” in *Istri Rattan*, Layalpur, January 1926, p. 27.

4 Ela Sen, *Testament of India*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1939, p. 235.

5 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 36.

6 *Report on the administration of the Punjab and its dependencies for 1849-51*, Lahore, Punjab Government Press, p. 144.

collected the data regarding the efforts of people in the field of education. Boys were taught at religious places of Sikhs, Hindus and Muhammadans. The teachers were paid rupees two a month in cash, but offerings in kind and fees for performing religious ceremonies formed a material addition to their means of subsistence.⁷ The girls according to this report, apart from religious education were taught in private schools which were mainly started by the benevolent societies and private individuals for the benefit of girls but not on a larger scale.⁸

When the Education department was first organized, it was proposed to let the question of female schools stand over till the ordinary establishments were set on foot. Gopal Singh, one of the Deputy Inspector, wrote a paper regarding the role of government in opening more female schools. Other Deputy Inspectors of Ferozepur (Karim-ud-Din), Jalandhar (Alaudar Hussain) and Rawalpindi (Safdar Ali), took up the question of female education with great interest and zeal. And with the British efforts the first female school was opened at Rawalpindi, under the auspices of Mr. Browne, Inspector of Schools, in December, 1856. By the close of the 1857, seventeen schools had been established and the total number of girls attending them was three hundred six or eighteen per school.⁹

7 *Report on the administration of the Punjab and its dependencies for 1901-02*, Lahore, Punjab Government Press, p. 164.

8 *Ibid*, p. 167-168.

9 *Mr. Arnold's Report on Public Instruction for the year 1856-57, The Beginning of Western Education in the Punjab*. Lahore, Punjab Government Press, 1857, p. 4.

After the formation of Education Department in Punjab, all the major obstacles were discussed in the field of education of boys and especially girls. In the early nineteenth century, the Britishers viewed social restriction as the primary cause for the illiteracy of women. But in the twentieth century, these causes or hindrances were combined with the problem of less number of girl schools and female teachers.

All the influences which operated against the spread of education amongst boys – the conservatism and prejudice of the people, the remoteness of the advantages accruing from education, the indifferent quality of the education offered and its cost – all gain added strength in opposing the education of girls.¹⁰ Among the other social causes which also counted, were the conservatism and prejudice reinforced by the purdah system and the custom of early marriage which led girls' withdrawal from the school when she reached the stage of literacy.¹¹

The other educational obstacles which became more apparent with the passage of time in the twentieth century were the difficulty of inducing girls to attend school regularly and to remain there for a reasonable length of time, the paucity of competent women teachers coupled with the prejudice against employing men and the differences of opinion regarding the nature of the curriculum.¹²

10 J.A. Richey, *Report on the progress of education in India (1917-1922)* Eighth Quinquennial Review, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1923, p. 126.

11 *Ibid*, p. 126-127.

12 H. Sharp, *Report on progress of education in India (1912-1917)* Seventh Quinquennial Review, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1918, p. 171.

For all these difficulties, various efforts were made by the government in Punjab. All the British policies which were drafted were tried to be implemented in this region. The zenana education was started, by which education was tried to impart at their homes.¹³ In Punjab, grants were also given for zenana classes by the Municipal and District Boards, provided their teaching was satisfactory.¹⁴ But this effort was not much successful as the house-to-house visits, favoured by the women themselves and their relatives, did not prove economical.¹⁵

The second step taken by them was the system of co-education and later opening of new separate girl's schools. In Punjab, co-education was unpopular¹⁶ and had failed to obtain foothold. Even various vernacular newspapers and journals started fierce campaign against this co-education system. This is illustrated in the following extract :

“ਮੁੰਡੇ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਠੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੀਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਹਟੀਆਂ ਖੁਲਣ ਲਗੀਆਂ ਜੇ। ਇਸ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਨਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਾਇਮਰੀ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਠੀ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਤਾਂ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਐਸੀ ਹਾਨੀਕਾਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ..... ਪਰ ਨੌ ਜਵਾਨ ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਅਰ ਮੁਟਿਆਰ ਲੜਕੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਠੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਨੌ ਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਤਬਾਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਰਬਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚਰਜ, ਆਚਰਨ, ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਅਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੀਲ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਉੱਚ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਤੋੜ ਭੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਤਜਰਬਾ ਅਤਿ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਹੈ।¹⁷

13 *Report on progress of education in India 1917-22*, p. 127.

14 *Review of Education in India in 1886*, Calcutta, 1888, para 242.

15 *Quinquennial Review of Education in India, 1907-12*, London, 1914, p. 538.

16 *Ibid*, p. 534.

17 “Munde Kudiyan De Sanje College : Co-education” in *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, July, 1932, pp. 3-7.

“By co-education, young girls and boys would be busy in love affairs. Co-education is not much harmful till primary schools but in higher education they might loose their characters. If people want to maintain the importance of women and their character then they have to give up this experiment of co-education.”

So to overcome this problem, the Britishers as well as reformers started opening new girls schools in various parts of Punjab. Alexandra High School (Amritsar), Government High School (Ambala), Stratford Women College (Amritsar), Government Girls High School (Kaimbalpur) Government High School of Gujranwala, Moga, Gurdaspur, Hissar, Hoshiarpur, Layalpur, Sargoda, Peshawar, Jammu and many more with Kinniard High School (Lahore), Lady Anderson Girls High and Normal School (Sialkot), Lady Irwin School, Shimla and others were opened by the British government in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹⁸

Many reformers who were either motivated by some religion or sometimes worked for social emancipation also opened various schools. By the end of the nineteenth century, progressive Arya Samajists opened the Arya Kanya Pathshala (Girls School) in 1890.¹⁹ The Kanya Mahavidyalaya (Girls Higher School) of Jalandhar was opened somewhat later in 1896 and eventually it developed into a

18 “Aitki Enterance Vichon Pass Hoyian Bibiyān” in *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, May, 1934, pp. 16-28.

19 Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharma : Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab*, Delhi, Manohar, 1976, pp. 104-05.

women's college.²⁰ The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya started in 1892 by Bhai Thakat Singh and his spouse Harnam Kaur, came to embody the ideals and hopes of the Sikh reformers.²¹ Sushila College (Lahore), Mahila Vidyalaya (Lahore), Sir Ganga Ram Hindu Women's High School (Lahore), Shri Ram Ashram High School (Amritsar) were few other schools which were opened by various reformers who were fighting for the cause of female education.²²

But the provision of the schools was not in itself sufficient especially in towns as there was a difficult question of transit from home to school. So the third step taken by the government was the arrangement to be made for conveyances for the students. The co-operation of the richer parents in this matter was availed. Even for propagating the need of female education, they received particular assistance from missionary bodies, both European (including American) and Indian.²³ The Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharma and Khalsa Societies were making great efforts to bring education within the reach of the masses and the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Muslims was also gradually establishing its own schools.²⁴

After analysing all the hindrances in the way of education of girls, Britishers started implementing their policies on education. From 1882-1902 they discussed the problems of the education for

20 Madhu Kishwar, "Arya Samaj and Women's Education : Kanya Mahavidyalaya in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21, no. 17, April 16, 1986, pp. WS9-WS24.

21 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 145.

22 *Punjabi Bhain*, May, 1934, pp. 16-28.

23 *Eight Quinquennial Review on Education in India*, 1917-22, pp. 128-129.

24 *Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab for the year 1918-19*, Lahore, 1919, pp. 20-25.

women and tried to overcome them. From 1902-1921, they followed a liberal policy and also asked help from the Indian people. From 1921-1947, women awareness increased and they also participated in imparting education and stepped forward to begin their own schools.

In 1862 an enthusiastic movement was initiated in the favour of female education, and a grand Darbar was held at Lahore under the presidency of Sir Robert Montgomery, then Lieutenant Governor, for the purpose of enlisting the co-operation of the chiefs and other Native gentlemen of the Punjab.²⁵

In 1882, the Indian Education Commission marked a new era in the history of education in India. It discussed the problems of education of women with great insight. All the obstacles in the way of female education were analysed. There was no demand for education as a means of livelihood among the girls and women. The system of child marriage and employment of male teachers in girl's schools prejudiced many parents to withdraw their daughters early from schools. The parents wanted different curriculum for girl's education and not the same as of boys.²⁶

Various measures were adopted in the Punjab for female education in accordance with the recommendations of Education Commission. Liberal grants-in-aid were given to girls schools than the

25 *Administration Report of Punjab, 1901-02*, p. 169.

26 Y.B. Mathur, *Women Education in India, 1813-1966*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1973, pp. 40-41.

boys schools and on easier terms. In 1889 an Inspectress of Schools was appointed and under her supervision, scholarships for girls on passing the lower primary and upper primary examinations were awarded. Normal classes for the training of female teachers were also instituted in several girls schools and a certificate examination was to be held annually.²⁷

Thus with the advent of Britishers in Punjab, the religious and household education of girls was transforming to primary and secondary education. The efforts of the missionaries (who began the first girls Schools) in Punjab were also encouraged by the government in the second half of nineteenth century when the government offered financial support to them.²⁸ Mr. Arnold's Report on Public instruction mentioned of the missionary schools at Jalandhar, Lahore, Peshawar, Amritsar and Ludhiana. Ludhiana Missionary was regarded as the best school in this field.²⁹ In 1836, the American Missionaries opened a school for promoting female education in East in the city of Ludhiana. The staff then consisted of four ladies, three of whom were almost wholly engaged in managing Christian girls' day and boarding school. The fourth lady retained her work in the zenanas and sometimes had slight knowledge of medicine which helped rural

27 *Administration Report of Punjab, 1901-02*, pp. 171-172.

28 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 35.

29 *Mr. Arnold's Report on Public Instruction for the year 1856-57*, p. 4.

women in their health problems.³⁰ These kind of missionary schools were started as private schools and they with their experience of the educational system of Europe, introduced graded classes in their schools with a set curriculum for each class.³¹ The missionaries were interested in female education and schools for girls because, they argued, women needed to be brought into the fold to make conversions permanent. Their main motive was the spread of Christianity. For this purpose they taught girls all the household art which proved as a boon for the female education.³²

Now when the missionary efforts were increasing in the field of female education as by 1900s, there were more than thirty European women educating the people in Punjab.³³ Then the reformers of Punjab got scared of the real motive of missionaries which was to spread Christianity. Now they started working for the female education having curriculum which was to be primarily based on their tradition and conventions. They viewed only two options in front of them either to send their daughters to mission schools or to start their own schools for girls based on the traditions of their society.

30 M. Rose Greenfield, *Five Years in Ludhiana or Work Amongst our Indian Sisters*, London, S.W. Patridge & Co., 1886, p. IV.

31 P. Thomas, *Indian Women Through The Ages : A Historical Survey of the Position of Women and The Institutions of Marriage and Family in India From Remote Antiquity to the Present Day*, New York, Asia Publishing, 1964, p. 308.

32 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 37.

33 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 130.

The reformers looked to their own ideal of womanhood. They turned to the contribution of their gurus and vedas. The names of Sikh women who had contributed greatly to the glorious heritage such as Bibi Bhani, Mata Gangaji, (Guru's Wives) then Sundri, Sharn Kaur, Rani Sahib, all these women came to be cited as examples of true womanhood.³⁴

So the reformers opened the schools where the education of girls and women was expected to lead to a situation where by a true helpmate could discharge her duties in the home properly. The main motive was to make girls as ideal mothers, daughters, wives and perfect in other family relations. The notion of purity, education and the home bound nature of womanhood were integral aspect of reformers. They were to be trained for the performance of those little household duties such as cooking and sewing, and other similar things which could contribute so very largely to the comforts of a family.³⁵

Whereas the Britishers not only wanted domestic education for the girls but also wanted them to be aware of their society and surroundings. Sir George Clarke, Chancellor of Bombay University supported this notion in his convocation address. He wanted the women to be expert in their domestic duties with the knowledge of religion, of cleanliness of houses, of literature in which their rights

34 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocation Gender in Sikh History*, p. 155.

35 *Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 February, 1905, p. 10.

and duties were mentioned. The general science, geography, health and diseases, children and their health problems were subjects which he wanted to teach the girls. This is illustrated in the following extract.

“ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਰਖਯਾ, ਘਰ ਦੀ ਸਫਾਈ, ਬਾਲਾ ਦੀ ਖਬਰ ਗੀਰੀ ਅਰ ਬਿਰਧਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਆਦਿ ਵੀ ਸਿਖਾਏ। ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਿਟਰੇਚਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੀ ਦੇਸ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਨਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੈ। ਸਾਇੰਸ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਿਖਾਵੇਗੀ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰਲੀਆਂ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਸ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਾਇੰਸ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਰਾਦ ਇੱਥੇ ਆਮ ਬਾਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਹੈ। ਲੜਕੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਭੀ ਕੁਝ ਹਾਲ ਦਸਣਾ ਲੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੂਰਜ ਚੰਦ ਤਾਰੇ ਆਦਿ ਹੋਰ ਬਾਹਰਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਭੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਦਸਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਬਨਾਵਟ ਅਤੇ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਜ ਭੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਜਾਨਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।”³⁶

In the early twentieth century, both the reformers and the British government in Punjab were deeply concerned about the curriculum and kind of education needed for the girls. The importance of female education was felt. They all believed that “Woman above all educates humanity. Man was regarded as the brain, but woman as the heart of humanity; he its judgment, she its feelings; he, its strength, she, its grace, ornament and solace”.³⁷

After looking into all the obstacles in the way of female education, the government tried to examine the measures which were

36 Sir George Clarke, Chancellor Bombay University, “Convocation Address” in *Punjabi Bhain, Ferozepur*, April, 1909, pp. 7-9.

37 Sushil Devi, *The Gaekwar Prize Eassy : The Ideal of Hindu Womanhood with Practical Suggestions For Its Realisation*, Lahore, Civll & Military Gazette Press, 1907, p. 14.

to be taken to promote primary, secondary, college and special education for the girls.³⁸ Schools for general education, whether departmental or aided, were classified as Vernacular or English and as primary or secondary. Middle schools were also started.³⁹ The administration of both primary and secondary schools was in the hands of three different types of authorities, viz. Provincial governments, local bodies, District and Municipal boards and private agencies.⁴⁰ In the primary and secondary schools a uniform course of study was given for both the male and female schools. Vernacular reading and writing, arithmetic, object lessons and the geography of the Punjab, with elementary needle work for girls was decided.⁴¹ Subjects such as home hygiene, elementary laws of health, cooking, care of children and also subjects concerning enlightened mothering, a good standard of maternal physique, better care of infancy, appropriate feeding, care and management of children, effective attention to children's diseases and generally to their physical condition, good sanitary environment and other matters of domestic concern, domestic art, embroidery all the subjects which would prepare girls primarily for home and married life were the basic concern of people in the province. They wanted different curriculum

38 Y.B. Mathur, *Women's Education in India*, p. 78.

39 *Administration Report of Punjab and its dependencies*, 1901-02, p. 173.

40 Sir John Sargeant, *Progress of Education in India*, 1937-47, vol. I, 1948, p. 53.

41 *Administration Report of Punjab and its dependencies*, 1901-02, p. 173.

for girls from boys.⁴² Reformers and educated men, in the nineteenth century wanted primary and secondary education to be limited to the household and domestic scope.

The higher education was controlled by the Punjab University (incorporated in 1882) which had the Lieutenant Governor as ex-officio Chancellor, a Vice-chancellor appointed by the government and Senate.⁴³ The High School embraced a primary, middle and high school department, the first two corresponded to a Middle School and the last had a course of two years and terminating with the Entrance examination. On passing the entrance examination in English students were admitted to the Arts College and on passing in the Vernacular to the Oriental College, Lahore.⁴⁴ The curriculum prescribed in the High Schools was of the same subjects prescribed for the primary, middle schools, but carried to a higher stage.

Inder Singh 'Dilbagh' of Amritsar in his article 'ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਵਿੱਦਯਾ ਪਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ' (Istri Vidya Par Vichar) recommended totally different kind of curriculum for girls. He wanted only the study of vernacular language, knowledge of accounts for managing household work and singing songs as subjects to be taught in the primary schools. In middle schools, he recommended practical knowledge of health and diseases

42 Tek Singh, "Istriyan Nu Kis Prakar di Vidya Di Lor Hai?" in *Punjabi Bhain*, April, 1917, p. 14-15.

43 Sir Stanley Reed, (ed.), *The Indian Year Book, 1914 : A Statistical and Historical Annual of the Indian Empire with an explanation of the Principal topics of the day*, Calcutta, Coleman & Co., p. 49.

44 *Punjab Administration Report, 1901-02*, p. 174.

with religious knowledge. He was not much inclined to the professional education as he only wanted women to be homemaker not bread earner.⁴⁵

Mrs. A. Latif, wife of the Financial Commissioner, Punjab in her presidential address at the Punjab Women's Educational Conference, Lahore on third November, 1934, referred to the curricula taught to the girls in Arts Colleges. She said the ideal for the Punjab was not merely a mass of primary passed women but an army of trained house-wives and mothers with well trained captains who would drill and lead the rank and file. She wanted Domestic Science as the subject in which a degree in Domestic Science could be instituted.⁴⁶

After the organisation of the Education Department in Punjab, various schools were opened for the girls and women. Now the question was the proper functioning of these schools, so to encourage and promote girl's education and supply efficient supervision and foster its growth an Inspectress was appointed in 1887. Mrs. Francis, as the first Inspectress, did splendid and devoted work.⁴⁷ The province was divided into three circles - Central, Western and the Eastern. The Inspectress regularly visited the government and aided schools. The department with the help of regular inspection took the light of education to the remotest corners of the Province.⁴⁸ These

45 Inder Singh 'Dilbagh', "Istri Vidya Par Vichar", *Istri*, Amritsar, April, 1932, pp. 28-32.

46 "The Punjab Women's Educational Conference, 1934" in Nripendra Nath Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register*, July-December, 1934, Calcutta, pp. 471-472.

47 Miss V.G. Bhan (Assistant Inspectress), "Inspection," *Punjab Educational Conference and Exhibition's Proceedings*, 1926, pp. 539-542.

48 *Ibid*, p. 542.

Inspectress even organized various refresher courses for primary teachers, for example, the Rawalpindi Inspectress (Miss Must) organised such a kind of “refresher course” in 1919 by which teachers were able to improve their qualifications.⁴⁹ Miss Stratford, the chief inspectress remarked the greatest need to ensure the steady and regular progress of the schools was the strengthening of the inspecting staff by appointing more and more assistant inspectress.⁵⁰

These inspectress even visited the local girls schools and asked them about the changes they wanted in girls education. On 28 November, 1919, Miss Stratford along with Mr. Clark (Deputy Comissioner) visited Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Ferozepur and explained the importance of female education.⁵¹ They even participated in the Sikh Educational Conferences being held in different parts of the Punjab. Bibi Pritam Kaur, Inspectress of Schools Kapurthala delivered her lecture at the twenty first Sikh Educational Conference at Khalsa College in Amritsar. This is mentioned in following extract.

“ਜਿਤਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਸੋਸ਼ਲ ਸਟੇਟਸ ਉੱਚਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਉਤਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਕੌਮ ਕਦੀ ਬੀ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ। ਇਸਤਰੀ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲੈਹਰ ਉਤਨਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਜਾਗ ਤੋਂ ਉਠਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੜਾਈ ਵਲ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।⁵²

49 *Report on the progress of Education in the Punjab 1919-20*, Lahore, 1920, p. 41.

50 *Ibid*, p. 43.

51 *Huq Bulletin*, Lahore, Nov. 1919, p. 3.

52 Pritam Kaur, “Sikh Kaur Vich Istri Sudhar Lehar” in *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, May, 1931, pp. 21-26.

(Nation can not progress completely until and unless social status of that particular nation is up to the mark. For that social status, there is need of female emancipation. For that development, important steps should be taken for the spread of female education).

These inspectresses even conducted examination of middle and higher schools. All the exams were conducted by the education department under the supervision of these appointed officials like Miss Thomson. The inspectress conducted exam of government and aided schools like Dev Samaj Girls School, Sikh Kanya Mahavidayala and others.⁵³

Female education progressed by the efforts of three main groups – the British rulers, Indian male reformers and educated Indian women. The motives of all these three groups were different for the promotion of education of girls. The Britishers wanted their civil servants to have educated wives to further ensure their loyalty. Reform-minded men were interested in developing a progressive society. The “new women” after 1920s wanted professionalized housewives and later wanted women to join new jobs.⁵⁴

In the twentieth century, education became the parameter by which different classes of society in Punjab laid the reforms for women. For upper class educated men it became an eligibility for marriage. “Educated men desired educated wives for their sons and

53 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, March, 1933, p. 7.

54 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, pp. 60-61.

presumably educate their daughters with the same object in view, but they generally withdraw them from school on any manifestation of a desire to adopt a profession or to push education to any length which might interfere with or delay marriage. These people send their daughters to schools in order to enable themselves to marry them better and occasionally on easier terms.⁵⁵ For this purpose matrimonial notices regularly appeared in the newspapers and journals; education increasingly became a prerequisite for marriage possibilities and a modern home.⁵⁶ This is illustrated below :

“ਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਲਈ ਪੜੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ : ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਅਰੋੜਾ ਬੰਸ ਉਮਰ 20 ਸਾਲ ਲਈ ਪੜੀ ਲਿੱਖੀ 12 ਤੋਂ 16 ਸਾਲ ਤਕ ਉਮਰ ਦੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।”⁵⁷

But the advantages of education as an aid to successful marriage did not influence the parents of the poorer and lower middle classes. They were, on the other hand, less averse to the employment of their daughters in independent occupation.⁵⁸ Thus, the women started progressing towards *Occupation from Education*.

Now before moving to the second half of the chapter, that is, Occupation, few terms are to be understood first. *Education*⁵⁹ means a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills. *Occupation*⁶⁰

55 *Eighth Quinquennial Review of education in India 1917-1922*, pp. 129-130.

56 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 136.

57 *Istri Satsang*, Amritsar, 10 Aug., 1909, p. 6.

58 *Eighth Quinquennial Review*, 1914-1922m o, 130.

59 Sally Wehmeier (ed.), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 403.

60 *Ibid*, p. 876.

means a job or profession or the way in which you spend your time, especially when you are not working. *Profession*⁶¹ means a type of job that needs special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of education. *Job*⁶² means work for which you receive regular payment. All these four terms are interlinked. Occupation is a wider concept than profession and job and occupation can only be attained if a person is educated.

So in the context of females in society, different type of education was imparted to them at the different times. This led to variation in their occupation from ancient to modern period.

Before the advent of the British or before the initiation of formal education to the women in Punjab, they were imparted religious or traditional education based on the conventions of the society. Girls were given training in domestic household works combined with respecting the elders and caring the children. This led to a household or domestic occupation for the women. Thus, women were in the full fledged circle of domestic occupation. Thus, the bulk of the female population of this province was undoubtedly constantly engaged in numerous kinds of works, which comprised among other duties of cleaning and plastering the house, bringing up children, cooking, milking of cows and buffaloes, spinning, sewing and mending of clothes, embroidery of clothes and shoes. All these activities, though

61 *Ibid.*, p. 1010.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 696.

of the utmost importance, were regarded at the census, as no work at all, and the women engaged in them were treated as 'non-working dependants'.⁶³

But when more stress of education was laid on skilled one rather than religious or traditional then there was a change in the occupation of women. The Britishers and the reformers tried to impart education of household with special training in the field of teaching, medical aid, law and many more. This led to professionalism in women. Now their occupation began to witness a change from homemaker to the bread winner.

More skilled occupations of females were recognized. Even in certain categories women workers were more numerous than men. In the textile industries, spinning of cotton, wool, silk and other fibres was largely done by women, and both in cotton and wool spinning there were more than three times as many women workers than men, while among the total number of textile workers the proportion of women workers per thousand men workers was as high as six hundred forty two in 1921. Another large industry in which women workers exceeded the men in numbers and was the food industry where there were one thousand twelve hundred fifty nine females per thousand males. The number of women who pounded rice or grinded flour was more than five times the men. The classes of midwives, and

63 Hasan Khan Khan Ahmad, *Census of India, 1931, Volume XVII Punjab, Part I*, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933, p. 216.

nurses naturally were women and among indoor domestic servants women were numerous, five hundred and nineteen per thousand men.⁶⁴

Hence, women were never free and were always busy in one or the other occupation with the change of time.

As the education department of Punjab was taking steps for the spread of education, women were needed in every department of the national life. The Health and Education Services were seriously hampered for a want of the intelligent co-operation of women, both as citizens and home-makers, and also as professionally equipped teachers, nurses, and doctors.⁶⁵

Now as the female education progressed women began to take up careers too.⁶⁶ The notion of service along with that of duty increasingly became the slogan of reformers in their transformational endeavour of women.⁶⁷ The inauguration of girls schools had opened a novel occupational option for women – to serve as honorary teachers at various girls schools. The dearth of teachers continued to be the one of most pressing issues facing the girls schools. The call for teachers filled almost every edition of vernacular newspapers and journals.

64 J.T. Marten, *Census of India, 1921*, Vol. I, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1924, p. 277.

65 H. Gray, "Education" in A.R. Caton, *The Key of Progress : A Survey of the Status and Conditions of Women in India*, London, Oxford University Press, 1930, p. 1.

66 P. Thomas, *Indian Women through the ages.*, p. 316.

67 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 155-156.

Even government also took steps for the appointment of women teachers. A conference on the education of girls was held in February 1919 in Lahore which recommended - need of at least one teacher for every thirty girls and that there were to be two female teachers in every primary school.⁶⁸

Local women earlier didn't want to join schools as teachers, so it, therefore, became necessary to employ, to a large extent, the services of missionary societies, English ladies, Indian Christians and members of the domiciled community as teachers.⁶⁹

But with the passage of time local girls started becoming teachers in primary schools. For these primary teachers, not much training was needed but as new high schools and colleges were opened, trained teachers were needed. Thus the women came out of their homes and started serving their society as teachers.

Then the question of trained teachers arose, so the Britishers started opening normal schools for training of teachers in the Punjab. Government Normal School for Women, Lahore,⁷⁰ was opened for training of teachers. Even some aided schools also opened their doors for the teacher training like Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, and others.

In 1914, Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya started Training classes from April of that year. Two types of courses were to be taught – junior and senior. Both courses were of two years duration and eligibility for them was primary and middle pass women respectively.

68 *Report on the progress of education in the Punjab, 1918-19*, Lahore, 1919, p. 20.

69 Y.B. Mathur, *Women's Education in India*, p. 66.

70 *Report on the progress of education, 1919-20*, p. 33.

Even scholarships were given of Rupees eight and ten per month. After passing these courses, students were given certificates by the education department by which they could get jobs easily in government and aided schools.⁷¹

By the end of 1942, classes for training master's (male teachers) wives were started at the government schools for girls in Layalpur, Sialkot, Pakpattan and Gakhar. The Government High School for girls, Jalandhar and government school for girls, Amritsar also opened the classes for training of master's wives.⁷²

The government carried out the training of primary, secondary and higher school teachers in these normal schools. The basic eligibility was fixed for admission to these schools. Sometimes the government opened these normal schools with the help of local government and aided high schools.⁷³

In Punjab, the government also adopted the policy of taking over the local training classes and converting them into normal schools for women, as those maintained for men. Of these the best was the Lahore Normal school. The Junior English teachers were also trained at the Kinnaird College, Lahore.⁷⁴

In 1911, the number of female instructors – professors and teachers of all kinds except law, medicine, music, dancing and

71 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, April, 1914.

72 *Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab during the quinquennium ending 1941-42*, Lahore, 1942, p. 37.

73 *Eigth quinquennial Review, 1917-1922*, p. 145.

74 *Ibid*, p. 149.

drawing was one thousand and five per thousand males.⁷⁵ This indicates that in 1911, 10.5% of persons in teaching profession were females. In 1921, the female teachers per thousand males were one hundred forty four⁷⁶ which meant 14.4%. This indicated 3.9% increase in the number of female teachers. This increase was mainly due to opening of new normal schools for training of teachers by the government and reformers of the Punjab. From 1901 to 1947, there was similar increase in the number of female teachers in the Punjab in almost every decade.

Medicine was one of the new careers opened to the women in the late nineteenth century. Besides the profession of teaching, there was increasing attraction of the medical profession for girls who took up their higher education.⁷⁷

There were three main professions adopted by women in the colonial Punjab. It can be seen from the following table.

Table 3
Women in Profession

| Profession | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 | 1931 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Teaching | 680 | 1,791 | 1,826 | 1,9,32 |
| Law | 96 | 130 | 227 | 330 |
| Medicine | 6,857 | 6,862 | 5,471 | 7,958 |

75 E.A. Gait, *Census of India, 1911, Vol. I*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1913, p. 441.

76 L. Middleton and S.M. Jacob, *Census of India, 1921, Volume XV, Punjab and Delhi*, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1923, p. 379.

77 *Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab 1919-20*, Lahore, 1920, p. 41.

In 1901, the number of females of Punjab in the profession of teaching, law and medicine were six hundred eighty, ninety six and six thousand eight hundred fifty seven respectively.⁷⁸ In 1911, it rose to one thousand seven hundred ninety one, one hundred thirty and six thousand eight hundred sixty two respectively.⁷⁹ Further increase was seen in 1921 as females adopting these professions of teaching, law and medicine were one thousand eight hundred twenty six, two hundred twenty seven and five hundred forty seven.⁸⁰ By the end of 1931, the number again rose to one thousand nine hundred thirty two, three hundred thirty and seven thousand nine hundred fifty eight respectively.⁸¹ The women in these professions were encouraged by both the male reformers and the government of Punjab.

“Apart from the training of teachers, it has been recognised by many authorities, including the Calcutta University Commission, that the profession in which there is greatest need for women is the medical.”⁸² This was one of the resolutions passed by department of Education at Simla on first October, 1919.

78 *Census of India, 1901*, imperial Tables for the Punjab, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, 1903, pp XV-XI II to XV-CI XXXV.

79 *Census of India, 1901*, vol I, Part-II, Tables Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, 1913, pp. 309-311.

80 *Census of India, 1921*, vol XV, Punjab and Delhi, Part-II, Tables, Lahore Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1922, pp. 343-345.

81 *Census of India, 1921*, vol XVII, Punjab Part III, Appendices to the Imperial Table, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933, pp. 79-81.

82 “Despatch from the Secretary of State for India, dated 5th Nov. 1915” in Y.B. Mathur, *Women's Education in India*, p. 183.

The steps taken by the Britishers regarding medical aid and education were inaugurated by a movement of Her Excellency the Countess of Dufferin. In 1885, the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava founded the National Association for supplying Medical Aid by women to the women of India.⁸³ The aims of the Association also included the training of women as doctors, nurses and midwives. An appeal was made and the ruling princes and princesses and aristocracy of India readily came forward with donations and endowments. Branches were formed in the provinces and hospitals staffed by women were established in cities and towns, named after Empress Queen Victoria.

Very soon this movement gained momentum and medical classes were opened in nearly all the provinces. This was highly appreciated by women, both, because they could now learn a subject of practical importance and also because they could choose a career for themselves, leading them to economic independence.⁸⁴

In the later years medical education received more attention of the government. The Lady Hardinge Medical College Delhi was opened on 8th October 1916. The college was named after the founder, the late Lady Hardinge of Penshurst, who knew that the one of the greatest needs of the women of India was the provision of medical

83 Evelyn C. Gedge and Mithan Choksi (eds.), *Women in Modern India : Fifteen Papers By Indian Women Writers*, Bombay Taraporewala Sons & co., 1929, p. 57.

84 *Review of Education in India in 1886*, Calcutta, 1888, para 232.

help, and that such help could best be given by their own countrywomen, provided that these could be satisfactorily trained.⁸⁵ Generous subscriptions were given by princes and wealthy land owners for the opening of this college. In March, 1917, the hospital attached to it was opened by Lady Chelmsford.⁸⁶ This medical college was affiliated to the Panjab University (Lahore) and its students were allowed to appear for the university examination for the M.B.B.S. degree.

In 1920, The Lady Chelmsford All India League for Maternity and Child Welfare was founded. The work of the league divided itself into three main activities, namely, health schools, health centres and propaganda. There were five health schools initially, which trained women as Health visitors at Lahore, Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. The Punjab Health School at Lahore was taken over by the government from the Lady Chelmsford League in 1927.⁸⁷

In 1921, a "State Medical Faculty" was constituted in the Punjab for the purpose of examining and granting licenses to practitioners of the sub-assistant surgeon class.⁸⁸

Apart from the above mentioned institute, there were various other medical institutions working in the Punjab. In 1921, the Medical School of Lahore was shifted to Amritsar.⁸⁹ The North India

85 Gedge and Choksi (eds.), *Women in Modern India*, p. 52.

86 *Progress of Education in India, 1917-22*, pp. 156-157.

87 Gedge and Choksi (eds.), *Women in Modern India*, pp. 55-56.

88 *Progress of Education in India, 1917-22*, p. 156.

89 *Ibid*, p. 156.

Medical School for Women at Ludhiana, was a missionary institution and was doing admirable work.⁹⁰ This institution was running courses in medical class, compounder's, midwifery and nurses class. The Madrassa Tibbiya or Yunani School of Medicine at Delhi was doing commendable job.⁹¹ The Punjab Medical School for Women at Ludhiana was also giving good results in medical education.⁹² The King Edward Medical College, Lahore was a co-education college. Every year there was a steady increase in the number of women students on the college rolls.⁹³

These were some of the efforts, as enlisted above, made in the field of medical education. Now the question is that why the government initiated medical education for the females at a large scale.

The pioneers of female education - the Christian missionaries studied, in detail, the health conditions of women. They viewed, that the Indian women is exposed to the same risks of disease as the other women, but she has an additional handicap of the perils of child birth.⁹⁴ Owing to customs in connection with caste and purdah, moreover, she may not receive help from a male doctor in her time of peril, even if help were available and will die undelivered rather than

90 Sir James Douie, *The Punjab, North-West and Kashmir*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1916, p. 125.

91 *Administration Report of Punjab and its dependencies 1901-02*, p. 179.

92 *Progress of Education in Punjab, 1919-20*, p. 37.

93 *Progress of Education in Punjab, 1941-42*, p. 32.

94 *Report of Indian Statutory Commission, 1930*, Vol. I, p. 50.

show herself to a man.⁹⁵ The women was accordingly dependent for help in her confinement on the services of indigenous midwife or Dai.

The service of Dai or midwife was usually performed by the wife of the village scavenger or other person of low caste; and she must often have been trained under her husband.⁹⁶ The typical dai had no knowledge of the use of antiseptics and many times in order to sever the cord a frequent 'practice in villages was for these women to use sharp implement which was handy, such as a piece of glass, a pen knife, a stone, a piece of rusty iron or even the same sickle which the woman was using in the field when she was called to the case; and hence it was really not surprising to find that the birth of child was often followed by blood-poisoning and death, either to the child or the mother, or to both.⁹⁷

So to save women from this ill treatment, the government started opening new hospitals and dispensaries with initially European and later local practitioners. But these government hospitals and dispensaries, were alike unused by the vast majority of women. The prejudices of the women themselves were not less opposed to tell their sufferings to men, than their jealous husbands and fathers, or other guardians. The whole system of purdah or the seclusion of females, forbade the calling in of a male practitioner, however urgent the case maybe.⁹⁸

95 Margaret Balfour and Ruth Young, *The Work of Medical Women in India*, 1929, p. 3.

96 E.A. Gait, *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. I, Part-I Report, Calcutta, 1913, p. 425.

97 A.R. Caton, *The Key of Progress*, p. 48.

98 M. Rose Greenfield, *Five Years in Ludhiana*, pp. 45-46.

The missionaries, and the British government started working for providing medical aid to the Indian women by their own womenfolk. This was done by opening new schools and colleges to provide medical teaching which created experts in the medical profession. Now this was the best profession and the need of hour by which ill treatment of women could be stopped and their proper health could be maintained.

Various girls from Punjab were either studying in medical colleges of Punjab or of nearby provinces. After studying and completing their degrees in M.B.B.S., they starting serving their nation. Lady Hardinge College, Delhi was the most popular college at that time outside Punjab (As Delhi became separate province in 1911).⁹⁹ The colleges at Ludhiana, Amritsar, Lahore and Agra also lured the female students.

Students of schools opened by reformers were also encouraged to pass the entrance test for admission in medical colleges. Bibi Hardit Kaur¹⁰⁰ of Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyalaya completed her M.B.B.S. degree from Lady Hardinge College in 1932. In June 1932, Bibi Harjagir Kaur and Harbans Kaur also cleared the entrance test and took admission in the medical College of Delhi.¹⁰¹

99 *Report on Census of India, 1921, Par I, Vol. XV - Punjab and Delhi*, 1923, p. 2.

100 *Punjabi Bhain*, June 1923, p. 6.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Dr. Raminder Kaur, M.B.B.S., Superintendent Mental Hospital Lahore and Panjab University Lecturer, was one of the first students of Ferozepur school to pass entrance test for M.B.B.S. degree of Lady Hardinge College. She even served as a lecturer in that college, and later was appointed medical officer in the princely state of Patiala.¹⁰²

Bibi Mohinder Kaur and Inderjeet Kaur, students of Medical College Ludhiana were also trying to follow the foot steps of Dr. Raminder Kaur.¹⁰³ Bibi Sharan Kaur and Harbans Kaur also completed their medical education from medical college, Ludhiana.

These educated women then started participating in local conferences held in Punjab like Sikh Educational Conferences and delivered lectures regarding the importance of education for girls. They even used to visit local schools for girls to encourage them to pursue higher education.

Even highly educated men of the twentieth century started publishing their articles regarding various professions which women could opt for. They discussed the work of religious instructor, profession of teachers, doctors and law for the girls. The home industries of embroidery and lace making were also opened for girls. They were even encouraged to become editors of newspapers and journals like Sardarni Bhagwan started her newspaper Istri from

102 "Shrimati Doctor Ramender Kaur Ji," *Punjabi Bhain*, April 1931, pp. 19-20.

103 *Punjabi Bhain*, April, 1920, p. 8-9.

Amritsar in 1920s as editor. The profession of legal practice was also opened to them in late 1930s. In 1933, Miss Sharda daughter of Justice Jai Lal of Lahore High Court was the first Punjabi woman to get the LL.B. degree from Panjab Universtiy.”¹⁰⁴ The men thus wanted women to start doing some productive work.

In Punjab the achievements of private enterprise in the matter of female education were considerable. Hindus, Sikhs and Muhammadans vied with one another in promoting female education. The various religious and social organizations in the province, the Singh Sabha, Anjumans and the Arya and Dev Samaj did much to promote the education of women. The Arya Samaj had its own network of girls' schools. The Dev Samaj took a most admirable lead in the matter of female education. The Singh Sabhas and the Chief Khalsa Diwans started their own schools.¹⁰⁵

There was also a rush for higher and professional education among the females. This is evident from the following remarks of the Director of Public Instruction in his departmental Report of 1909-10.

“In addition to the marked increase in the number of pupils during the year, there are many signs that the education of girls is being more fully realized as one of the needs of the time. Higher education is being taken up energetically by private bodies and the

104 *Punjabi Bhain*, July, 1933, p. 27.

105 *The Tribune*, Lahore, 26 July, 1912, p. 13.

new unaided schools, such as those of the Maharani of Burdwan, the Vedic Pathshala, and the Khatri Girls' School at Lahore, all aim to have High departments.¹⁰⁶

The cause of female education also became the main concern of the Sikh Educational Conference (discussed in the fourth chapter) inaugurated in 1908 at Gujranwala. The impetus for the conference came from a similar endeavour among the Muslims of Punjab. Delegates of Sikh Educational Conference were elected from mediums – the Khalsa Diwan, the various Singh Sabhas, public meetings where no Singh Sabha existed and, through the various Sikh educational institutions. The educated women, many of them whom were fore runners in the education of female through their gratuitous teaching efforts in Sikh schools, also participated in this conference and delivered lectures encouraging female education.

Thus, from 1901-47, the efforts to promote education started by the Britishers (including European missionaries) along with social reformers made women aware and the 'new women' in 1920's and 1930's joined hands with these two groups and tried to open new schools in every nook and corner of the Punjab. The demand for female education grew steadily and what parents wanted, it seemed, was reassurance that these new schools were to observe 'traditional'

106 *Report of Census of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, Part-I, p. 329.*

customs along with modern professional education. The boundaries of the early nineteenth century had been stretched considerably by the early twentieth century. What was deviant behaviour for one generation was acceptable behaviour for the next. What is more important, by the early years of the twentieth century women were full participants themselves in redefining their future.

The women's journey from education to occupation was made successfully by the efforts of the above mentioned three groups – Britishers, reformers and educated women. The Government made sincere efforts for making women educated and perfect in profession by having collaboration with local governments and social and religious organisations. There was an all-round educational development and it helped in raising the social status of women.

Hence, for the first time in the history of the Punjab province, women started moving out of their houses and adopted different kinds of occupation. The traditional occupation of midwife was converted into skilled nurses, compounders and doctors. The place of the religious instructors, priests and preachers was taken by new educated female teachers. All sort of domestic works were done by women in a technical and more skilled manner. Refined methods of child care were taught to women either by nurses, mid wives or by the vernacular media. The vernacular press played important role in as

has been discussed in the first chapter in creating awareness amongst women to enlighten themselves and thus make them economically independent.

Thus, it can be concluded that as education amongst girls progressed, it led to the development of the personality and the rationality of the females which in turn help to accord a high and equivalent status to the women. The usefulness of the educated women was also acknowledged by the society at large. In today's world, journey of women from education to occupation is still going on and it is a never ending process.

Chapter - 4

THE EMERGENCE OF ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS FOR WOMEN EMANCIPATION

The experience of colonial rule was one of the most formative influences on the feminist movement of the early twentieth century. The nineteenth century was a period in which the rights and wrongs of women became major issues : if early attempts at reforming the conditions under which Indian women lived were largely conducted by men, by the late nineteenth century their wives, sisters, daughters, protegees and other affected by campaigns, such as that for women's education, had themselves joined in movements. By the early twentieth century women's own autonomous organisations began to be formed, and within a couple of decades, by the thirties and forties, a special category of 'women's activism' was constructed.¹

When the Britishers came to India, their primary interest lay in the economic gains. But with the passage of time they started interfering in the internal matters of Indian people and with the establishment of their political hold, started making new policies for their vested interests. The education policy was made primarily to procure clerical staff for themselves. However, these policies became a boon for the Indian people in many ways. People became aware and

1 Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing : An Illustrated Accounts of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1993, p. 1.

enlightened about their rights. They joined different occupations and they also started forming organisations for the welfare of their brothers and sisters.

Indian educated men started working against different social evil customs of society - child marriage, dowry system, purdah, enforced widowhood and others. They were now convinced that to get rid of these evils there was only one alternative - spread of female education. "Indians supported female education because they wanted social and religious reform; or social and financial mobility, or both."²

These educational experiments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth produced a "new woman" with interests that went beyond the household.³ Even the social reformers were forming different associations for fight against social evils and for the spread of female education. Between 1900 and 1920 the "new women," that is women who were the beneficiaries of the social reforms and educational efforts of the nineteenth century, stepped forward to begin their own schools⁴ and later formed their own organisations and associations.

In Punjab, Dayanand Saraswati's movement grew rapidly from the 1880s, moving from a criticism of orthodox Hindu customs to their replacement with 'Aryan' ceremonies. The Amritsar Arya Samaj in 1882 was especially active performing widow remarriages.⁵ By the

2 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 41.

3 *Ibid*, p. 64.

4 *Ibid*, p. 54.

5 Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharama : Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*, Delhi, Manohar, 1976, pp. 98-102.

mid of 1880s, Arya Samaj grew increasingly active in movements for women education and in 1890 Arya Kanya Pathshala was opened at Jalandhar. Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Dhuni Chand both became active crusaders for women and Arya Mahila Parishads were also formed in Punjab.

In 1873, the Sikhs under Sardar Thakar Singh Sandhawaliya formed the Singh Sabha Amritsar. The main objectives of this organisation were propagation of Sikhism; propagation of education for boys and girls; making society free from all social evil customs; progress of Punjabi language; and others. In 1879, Sikh leaders of Lahore formed Singh Sabha Lahore on the pattern of Amritsar Sabha. In 1880 both the sabhas joined hands and started working jointly.⁶ This sabha then started opening schools in the different parts of Punjab. In 1892 Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya was opened in Ferozepur by Bhai Takht Singh and his spouse Bibi Harnam Kaur. Then the Singh Sabha within their branches also formed Women Associations (Istri Dal) for women emancipation. Women were appointed as 'Updeshaks' (preachers) who used to go to other regions and made people aware about the need of women education. These Updeshaks inspired the women to join the Singh Sabhas and work for women cause.⁷

6 Mehar Singh Rawel, *Doctor Sir Sunder Singh Majithia : Life, Aim and Contribution*, Amritsar, Arora Bans Press, 1977, pp. 66-67.

7 *Guru Singh Sabha Bagbanpura Lahore De Niyam, 15 April 1929*, Amritsar, Khalsa Press, 1929, p. 39.

After the formation of the Singh Sabhas, Women Cells within these Sabhas were opened in every part of Punjab. The main active leaders and reformers decided to establish a head office of all these scattered Singh Sabhas. The Singh Sabha of Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sargodha, Amritsar, Jhang all were working for the same cause viz. for the progress of the nation. So to meet this end, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was founded in Amritsar in 1902 as the main organizing body and various Singh Sabhas got affiliated to it in 1902.

The print media especially vernacular journals and newspapers like *Punjabi Bhain*⁸ (of Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya). *Istri Satsang*, *Phulwari*, *Istri Rattan* and others propagated for the formation of organisations, especially for women, through the columns of their issues. ‘Sikh Istri Jathebandi’ article in January issue of *Punjabi Bhain* in 1931 asked women to come together and form organisations mainly for women causes and help the reformers of Punjab.⁹

The Chief Khalsa Diwan was established on 30 October 1902 at Amritsar. It was registered on 9 July 1904 under the Act XXI, 1860.¹⁰ Twenty nine regional Singh Sabhas got associated with the Chief Khalsa Diwan on 30th October. Bhai Sahib Arjan Singh Raees Bagriyan, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and Sodhi Sujan Singh were

8 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, April, 1917, p. 6.

9 “Sikh istri Jathebandi” in *Punjabi Bhain*, Jan. 1931, pp. 3-4.

10 *Rules and Regulations of the Chief Khalsa Diwan by Honorary Secretary*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, n.d. pp. 3-4.

appointed as the Secretaries of the organisation.¹¹ The organisation was formed mainly to promote the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, educational and economic welfare of the people. To promote the teachings of the Sikh Gurus was also the aim of Chief Khalsa Diwan. For the women, the scope of its activities was confined to maintenance of Sikh widows and to advocate widow remarriages among Sikhs. Orphanages and infirmaries for orphans (both males and females) and handicapped children were also established for their up bringing, development and education.¹² It also drafted rules to open schools for girls for propagation of female education.¹³

The Chief Khalsa Diwan used to conduct Khalsa Diwans in different parts of Punjab like Baluchistan, Ludhiana, Lahore, Anandpur Sahib, Gujranwala and other districts for preaching Sikhism, baptizing people into Sikhism and informing people about the various social evils persisting in society and encouraged people to get rid of these evils with the mode of education.¹⁴ It also started different kind of funds for raising money and used it for many progressive works. Preacher's Fund was started for paying the salaries of the preachers, Help Fund for social work in society, Khalsa Anathalaya (Yateem Khana) fund to help the needy and poor orphan

11 *Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sewa De Panjah Saal, Amritsar, Wazir-i-Hind Press, 1952, p. 4.*

12 *The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, January 1907, p. 9.*

13 *Ibid, April 1906, p. 8.*

14 *Ibid, Jan. 1906, pp. 16-17.*

girls and boys, Hospital fund was collected to buy medicines to give at religious places and fairs free of cost.¹⁵ Atta Fund (i.e. flour fund) was started to encourage women to keep boxes or drums at their homes, in which they were asked to put handful of flour everyday and the flour was then to be donated in Khalsa Anathalayas.¹⁶ In 1906, Chaudhary Gurdit Singh, Bhai Dewan Singh and Bhai Sohan Singh of Amritsar took the initiative to keep charity boxes and money boxes at the shops. The shopkeepers were asked to donate an anna everyday in these boxes so that the money collected could be used for social welfare works.¹⁷

There is always a need of newspaper or journal for any organisation to become successful and to fulfill all its aims. So in 1903, the Chief Khalsa Diwan started the publication of their weekly newspaper '*Khalsa Advocate*'. Earlier this newspaper was published in English but later on Punjabi medium was used.¹⁸ It also started '*The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan*' from Amritsar. From Ist October 1905, it also started publishing its monthly financial report in this monthly circular so that people could know about the usage of their money donated to this organisation.¹⁹

15 *Ibid*, Jan. 1906, pp. 19-25.

16 *Ibid*, Feb. 1906, p. 21.

17 *Ibid*, Feb. 1906, p. 22.

18 *Sewa De Panjah Saal*, pp. 13-14.

19 *The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Jan. 1906, p. 18.

In 1903, Sardar Harbans Singh Atari, Bhai Takht Singh of Ferozepur, Bhai Arjan Singh Chak Ramdas, and Bhai Teja Singh Mainganwale went to Sindh for preaching Sikhism. During their tour, the Sikhs of Sindh handed them a child of six years age whose mother had died and his father was unable to take care of his child due to extreme poverty. So this group of four brought the child to Amritsar and discussed with the higher officials of Chief Khalsa Diwan for opening 'an orphanage'.²⁰ So on 11 April 1904, Chief Khalsa Diwan opened '*Yateemkhana*' in Amritsar for taking care of orphans (both males and females). On 18 November 1906, the Executive Committee of Khalsa Diwan passed resolution number four for opening '*Central Khalsa Anathalaya (Yateem Khana), Chief Khalsa Diwan*'. There orphans and needy people were helped, their care was taken, religious, professional practical and commercial education was imparted to them which could help them in earning their living. The organisation even had the right to marry girls and boys staying in the orphanage whom they thought eligible and all the expenditure of the wedding was the responsibility of the Yateem Khana.²¹

The Chief Khalsa Diwan instructed 'the Central Anathalaya' to open more branches in the different parts of Punjab according to the need. Various technical schools, factories and mills were opened by

20 *Report of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1936, p. 4.

21 *Rules and Regulations of Central Khalsa Anathalaya (Yateem Khana)*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1906, pp. 3-7.

this Anathalaya for teaching orphans and sometimes they were sent to other technical schools in their neighbourhood.²² For the proper functioning of Yateemkhana, Chief Khalsa Diwan decided to start permanent fund in 1912. All the money was collected and was deposited in the bank and with the interest of that money the Anathalaya was managed.²³ From 1912-13, there were one hundred and twenty six boys and three girls residing in this orphanage. They were given primary education in the institution itself and for higher education, the male students were sent to Khalsa College, Amritsar while the girls were sent to Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Ferozepur.²⁴ The widow of the preachers were also taken care of. Bibi Har Kaur widows of late Bhai Mehar Singh, preacher who was working Central Khalsa Anathalaya, was given rupee three per month.²⁵ Sometimes widows were also encouraged to remarry and the expenditure of their weddings was borne by Anathalaya.

The Anathalaya became so popular in the second decade of the twentieth century that many families started marrying their children to the orphans of this institution. In 1913, Bhai Jhanda Singh Pandori Waraich of Amritsar, married his only daughter to Harbans Singh of this institution and later gave his whole property to him.²⁶

22 *Ibid*, p. 5.

23 *Report of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, 1 January' 1912 to 31 December' 1913*, Amritsar, Coronation Press, 1914, pp. 2-3.

24 *Ibid*, p. 5.

25 *Ibid*, p. 6.

26 *Ibid*, p. 4.

The institution even appointed women to take care of girl orphans and for preparing food. In 1915-16, Anant Kaur was recruited to prepare food in the kitchen of the institution and Gurdial Kaur was appointed as nurse for providing medical aid.²⁷ Scholarships were provided to girl and boy students for higher studies and even needy people like widows, were also given scholarships.²⁸

In the third decade of the twentieth century, the ratio of girls students was less but this institution was at least trying to help women in gaining education and removing social blots like widowhood.²⁹

The Chief Khalsa Diwan after forming Central Khalsa Yateemkhana also worked for forming 'Central Vidwa Ashram' for the welfare of widows. It wanted to tackle the problem of child marriage and widow remarriage.³⁰ In the Central Khalsa Anathalaya, even women worked for collecting funds in both kind and cash. The wife of Sardar Aaya Singh Jaj collected food grains for the yateemkhana.³¹ The Secretary of Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sardar Mehar Singh Lahore donated rupees hundred to Khalsa Yateem Khana for imparting technical and vocational education to girls. He also donated food and clothes for the girls.³²

27 *Report of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana*, Chief khalsa Diwan, 1 January, 1916 to 31 December 1916, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1917, pp. 4-5.

28 *ibid*, pp. 6-7.

29 *Report of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana*, 1935, p. 12.

30 *The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, Jan. 1906, pp. 14-15.

31 *ibid*, Feb. 1906, pp. 18-19.

32 *ibid*, April 1906, pp. 8-9.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan on 30 June 1935 passed a resolution number three hundred ninety six in the meeting of the Executive Committee and formed 'Soorma Singh Ashram' at Amritsar. Bhai Veer Singh donated rupees four thousand for opening this Ashram. It was mainly opened for blind students where students were taught 'braille' and weaving and stringing chairs and cots. This ashram was started with only five students in 1935.³³ By 1947 the number of students rose to twenty.³⁴

After the formation of the Chief Khalsa Diwan in 1902, in December 1906 it started sending groups (Jathas) to Sindh for preaching. In 1907, when this Jatha was in Sindh and went to Karachi where they saw Muslims conducting Educational Conference, then these Sikh leaders also thought of conducting a conference on the same pattern. After reaching Amritsar, Surinder Singh Majithia called for a meeting of all important officials of the Chief Khalsa Diwan on 19 January, 1908 and it was decided to conduct an All India Sikh Educational Conference.³⁵ So the First Educational Conference was conducted on 17-18-19 April 1908 at Gujranwala and was presided by Sardar Baghel Singh Raees Kulla of Lahore.³⁶

From 1908 to 1947, thirty three sessions of the Sikh Educational Conference were held in different parts of Punjab. In Amritsar, Lahore and Rawalpindi, the conference was held for four

33 *Report of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana*, 1935, pp. 91-93.

34 *Sewa De Panjah Saal*, p. 24.

35 *Sewa De Panjah Saal*, p. 15.

36 Mehar Singh Rawel, *Doctor Sir Sunder Singh Majithia : Life, Aim and Contribution*, p. 148.

times each. The Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sikh Educational Conference were held at Gujranwala in 1935.

The Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was constituted with thirteen members in 1908 and rules and regulations for the Sikh Educational Conference were made. To propagate western science and literature among Sikhs; to develop Sikh literature; to help financially and reform educational institutions, to encourage to open new schools; to provide scholarships to poor and eligible students, to promote female education among Sikhs and others were main the aims and motives of this conference.³⁷

The education committee was working for the propagation of education by opening new schools in Punjab and used to meet the officials of the Department of Education to revise the curriculum for boys and girls separately. Girls and boys were granted scholarships from the committee fund. Girls were encouraged to participate in the exhibitions conducted during the educational conference.³⁸

The delegates to the conference were elected through four channels - the Khalsa Diwan, the various Singh Sabhas, public meetings where no Singh Sabha existed, and through the various Sikh educational institutions. However the wives of the educated elite,

37 *Golden Jubilee Book : Educational Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar (1908-1958) De Panjah Saal Da Itihas*, Amritsar, 1958, pp. 11-12.

38 *ibid*, pp. 12-14.

many of whom were fore-runners in the education of females, through their gratuitous efforts, also participated in the later sessions of the conference.³⁹

The three day session of the Sikh educational conference began by a grand procession on the first day to welcome the President of the Conference. An exhibition was held in which girls of different schools brought their hand made embroidery stuff and the exhibition was open for all the three days. On the second day the Reception Committee's President used to deliver his lecture, then it was followed by the Presidential address and other delegates also delivered their speeches.⁴⁰ On the evening of the second day, 'Kavi Darbar' became an essential part of the conference sessions. Punjabi poets and poetesses drawn from all the communities were awarded prizes. This was a laudable attempt to improve Punjabi literature.⁴¹ All the resolutions were passed and the date and venue of the next session of the conference was fixed on the third day.⁴²

This Educational Conference gave a great impetus to the female emancipation through the propagation of female education. In 1909, it passed a resolution regarding the curriculum for girls' schools. It demanded from the government that girls be taught cooking and

39 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 150.

40 *Golden Jubilee Book*, pp. 18-21.

41 *The Brief Report of the Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan for the year 1928*, Amritsar, Panthic Press, 1929, p. 3.

42 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 21.

midwifery in Punjabi language in their respective schools.⁴³ In the Sixth Educational Conference at Ambala on 21-22-23 March, 1913, Diwan Leela Ram Singh of Sindh in his Presidential address regarded girls' education more important than boys and requested each delegate present to work for female education.⁴⁴ Under the impact of the educational conference, Sardar Sunder Singh, Science Master of Gujranwala Khalsa High School founded Sardar Balwant Singh Istri Sahayak Vidyalaya for widows from his own property.⁴⁵ In the twentieth session of the Conference held at Sargodha on 29-30-31 March, 1929, a women meeting was organised in the form of an 'Istri Conference' and after that regular women conferences were held.⁴⁶

In 1932 in the twenty second session of Conference, 'Sikh Istri Conference' was held under the presidentship of Srimati Shivdevi of Sidkot. She, in her presidential address, spoke on professional education for girls so that they could also share the burden of their husbands. But she also hoped girls to be perfect home makers simultaneously.⁴⁷ By the end of 1930's, this educational conference started discussing political issues, primarily concerning the independence of India. It encouraged both men and women to

43 *Report of Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1909*, Amritsar, Wazir Hindi Press, 1910, p. 10.

44 *Chenvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwayi Di Report*, Amritsar, Wajir Hind Press, 1913 p.21.

45 *Satvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwayi Di Report*, Amritsar Wajir Hind Press, 1914, p.36

46 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 90.

47 *Report Bahivi Sikh Education Conference Lahore Jo 25, 26, 27 March' 1932 Nu Hoyi*, Amritsar Wazir Hind Press, 1932, p.23.

participate in the struggle for freedom through the use of media especially vernacular press for creating awareness among the people.

The main ideal of the Educational Conference of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was to impart education to every girl, boy and adult, whether rich or poor. The resolutions passed in the sessions of the Conference were forwarded to the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab and sometimes an influential Deputation used to meet the higher officials of government of Punjab and Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University.⁴⁸

In the first decade of the twentieth century, there were many 'Youngmen Christian Associations' which propagated Christianity. So to reduce the impact of these associations on youngsters in Punjab, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and Bhai Vir Singh formed *The Youngmen Sikh Association* in Punjab. Initially this association was mainly formed to counter attack the Christian associations but with the passage of time it also started propagating against the various social evils of the society.⁴⁹ This association also started the publication of a journal, *The Khalsa Youngmen's Magazine* from Amritsar. It was published after every three months in 'Punjabi' language with annual subscription of rupees one.⁵⁰ The association even published many tracts, books, pamphlets relating to all the

48 *Univ Sikh Educational Conference De Samagam Di Karwayi Di Sankhep Report*, Amritsar Wajir Hind Press, 1928, pp.102

49 Mehar Singh Rawel, *Doctor Sunder Singh Manithia : Life aim and role*, p. 56.

50 *The Khalsa Youngmen's Magazine*, Amritsar, March 1907, p. 561.

social evils like female infanticide, child marriage, female education, against propagation of Christianity and others. Tract Number One : 'Achraj Kautak' (ਅਚਰਜ ਕੌਤਕ), Number two : 'Maapeyan Da Vair' (ਮਾਪਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਵੈਰ), Number three, five and six : 'Daango Dangi' (ਡਾਂਗੋ ਡਾਂਗੀ) represented the conditions of society before and after the Sikh Gurus, intercaste marriages and interreligious their impact and other social evils like widowhood, child marriage respectively. All these tracts were published by this association in 1905.⁵¹ The association tried to make people aware about the importance of female education through the columns of their journal. This is illustrated below :

‘ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਵਿਦਯਾ’ ਬਾਜ ਨ ਕੰਮ ਸਰਸੀ,
‘ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਵਿਦਯਾ’ ਬਾਜ ਨ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਸੀ,
‘ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਵਿਦਯਾ’ ਬਿਨੁੰ ਨ ਕੰਮ ਵਧੇ ॥੧॥
‘ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ’ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਵਾਦ ਪੜ੍ਹਸੀ,
‘ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ’ ਬੱਚੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਵਸੀ ਜੀ ।
‘ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ’ ਘਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਸਾਂਭੇ,
‘ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ’ ਧਰਮ ਨਿਭਾਵਸੀ ਜੀ
‘ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ’ ਸਭਸ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਜੀ ॥੨॥⁵²

(without female education everything is incomplete, an educated female studies religious scriptures, educates her children, fulfills her household duties and is liked and praised by everyone in the society).

51 *ibid*, 16 Aug. 1905, p. 82

52 *ibid*, April 1905, p. 305.

The members of the Khalsa Young Men's Associations also sometimes visited different educational institutions in Punjab and made people aware about new developments in the field of education. 'The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya' Ferozepur was frequently visited by the members and importance of female education was highlighted.⁵³ This association regularly published the articles relating to female education in their journal. Special issues for women were encouraged and all the recent developments for women were mentioned. The members of the association also delivered lectures in various conferences, institutions regarding the emancipation of women. They regarded vernacular education as the most important source for the progress of women in the society.⁵⁴

There was also emergence of various women organisations which organised annual conferences as the other organisations were doing so in Punjab.

The Bhujangan Council was formed in the early 1900s in Kairon, Amritsar with the help of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. This Council was open to all women of the Punjab and its annual membership was rupees three per person.⁵⁵ Bibi Livleen Kaur, Bibi Milap Kaur and others were the active members of this council. 'Bhujangan Ashram' as a female education institution was run by this Council. In 1916, the Council started the publication of a monthly journal *Bhujangan Pattar* in the month of September with Bibi Livleen Kaur as the editor.

53 *Ibid*, March 1907, p. 557.

54 *Ibid*, July 1906, pp. 323-324.

55 *Bhujangan Pattar*, Kairon, Amritsar, 1 Aug. 1920, p. 13.

‘Gehne Nasak Sabha’ (ਗਹਿਣੇ ਨਾਸਕ ਸਭਾ) was also working under this organisation which used to publish books, tracts, poems and others relating to female emancipation. ‘Bhujangan Pukar’, ‘Bhujangan Virlap’, ‘Shingar Lanat’, ‘Shingar Yudh’, ‘Narki Gehna’, ‘Shingar Siapa’ were the various books which were published describing the ill effects of jewellery and wanted a simple and sober life for the women of the Punjab.⁵⁶

In 1916, ‘the Bhujangan Council’ organised the first ‘Sikh Women Conference’ at Kairon, Amritsar. This ‘Sikh Istri Conference’ became a platform for the Punjabi women to speak for the rights and needs of the women.⁵⁷ Women were encouraged to present papers in this conference on each and every aspect important for girls. On the first day of the Conference Bibi Liveleen Kaur and Bibi Milap Kaur of Amritsar, Doctor Ramindar Kaur were the few ladies who presented their papers in this conference. Gyan Kaur (wife of Master Chanda Singh editor ‘Panth Sewak’) read her paper in the conference. Bibi Jaswant Kaur, Bibi Shivdevi (wife of Banga Singh Inspector Police), Mohinder Kaur of Lahore, Gyan Kaur (wife of Narian Singh Barriter Lahore) were the regular participants of the conference.⁵⁸ The Reception Committee welcomed the President of the conference and a

56 *Ibid*, 1 Oct. 1918, p. 14.

57 *Ibid*, 1 Nov. 1917, pp. 5-6.

58 *Ibid*, 1 Nov. 1917, p. 6.

great procession was held for escorting the President to the venue. The second day witnessed lectures of various women from every corner of the region on female education, social evils like superstition, female infanticide, child marriage and others. The third day was the last day on which special competitions and Khalsa Diwans were conducted.⁵⁹ 'Baal Prikhaya' (competition for healthy child) was conducted and medals were given to the winners. The most healthy baby of the day was selected and given a gold medal. This was done in order to make women more and more aware about the health of their babies and ladies were taught about the science of child care. Baba Khem Singh 'Bedi' (active worker of Singh Sabha movement) was the first to start this competition in this conference.⁶⁰ 'Dharmik Diwan' (Religious Diwan) was conducted in which girl students of different schools used to contest. Finally, on the third day, all the resolutions discussed by the delegates were passed.⁶¹ The venue of the next year conference was also fixed.

In 'The Bhujangan Ashram' of Kairon in Amritsar, different organisations and institutions were also working like 'Mata Sahib Kaur School', 'Bhujangan School', 'Khalsa Bhujangan Diwan', 'Khalsa Bhujangan Council', 'Sikh Istri Conference', 'Bhujangan Pattar' and

59 *Ibid*, 1 Nov. 1917, pp. 5-6.

60 *Ibid*, 1 Oct. 1917, p. 17.

61 *Ibid*, 1 Nov. 1917, p. 9.

‘Gehne Nasak Sabha’. The monthly reports of these institutions with detailed information about their working and expenditure were published in *Bhujangan Pattar*.⁶²

The Punjab Temperance Federation with its headquarters at Amritsar worked for the three fold objective of health, general and adult education.⁶³ The main motive was to make people aware about the anatomical effects of the intoxicants like alcohol on the different parts of the body. They even tried to help the orphans and widows of the victims. Females were given financial help as well as sometimes were trained in some vocational and technical field to earn their living.⁶⁴ Special meetings in the form of Nagar-Kirtan, processions and fairs were organized. The free distribution of tracts, songs, stories, dialogues, poems, mottoes and charts in Urdu, Hindi, Gurmukhi and English was made. The members of the Federation used to deliver lectures in the Punjab, Delhi, UP and Punjab. Different schools, colleges, corn markets, Mandis, Cantonments and religious places were visited and short speeches, addresses and discussions with the people were held.⁶⁵ In 1925, The D.P.I. of Punjab, Sir George Anderson, circulated a letter C.M. No. 14244 G dated 14th December 1925 to the Deputy Commissioners of the Punjab to avail the services

62 *Ibid*, 1 February 1920, p. 4.

63 *Report of the Punjab Temperance Federation, Amritsar, 1925*. (prepared by Master Sant Singh, Secretary Punjab Temperance Federation), p. II.

64 *Ibid*, p. 12.

65 *Ibid*, pp. I, II.

of the Honorary Secretary Punjab Temperance Federation, Master Sant Singh, in their District Board area in connection with health, general and adult education lectures.⁶⁶

The Federation also organised the 'Temperance conference' annually where aims and objects were well furnished.⁶⁷ 'Temperance Magazine' was also started in 1903 for advocating their cause. It chiefly devoted to the federation's mission and movement and had articles, poems, songs, dialogues and reports of the meetings. It had a nominal subscription of rupees One and half and two thousand copies were circulated monthly. All the female issues like female education, position of widows whose husbands died due to excess intake of intoxicants were discussed regularly. The victims were helped by this Federation.⁶⁸ 'Arya Girl School' of Montgomery and Layalpur, 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha' of Lyallpur were visited on 31st December 1925, 7 January, 1926 and 8 January, 1926 respectively by the members of the Punjab Temperance Federation.⁶⁹

Punjab Non-Government Schools Federation was formed in 1927 in Punjab. It was a deliberative and advisory educational body.⁷⁰ It mainly dealt with the educational questions that is opening of new private schools for both males and females. Curricula of studies for

66 *Ibid*, p. V.

67 *Ibid*, p. 63.

68 *Ibid*, p. 64.

69 *Ibid*, pp. 17-20.

70 Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Welcome address at Non-government Schools Conference*, held at Lahore on 2nd & 3rd May, 1931, p. 2.

girls were discussed and suggestions were made to the British government.⁷¹ This federation also conducted annual conferences in which many educationalists and reformists participated like Raghu Natha Sahae.⁷² The Federation wanted 'female education' based on the Indian principles. It wanted domestic education along with vocational training so that the girls could work for the society and their family. It wanted female teachers and made the most substantial contribution to the social, moral and intellectual uplift of the province.⁷³ The main slogan of the federation was the education by the people and for the people.⁷⁴

Khalsa Tract Society was formed in November 1894 at Amritsar with the efforts of Bhai Kaur Singh (son of Rai Bahadur Sadhu Singh Dhupia). But with the death of Kaur Singh in April 1895, Sadhu Singh Dhupia along with Bhai Vir Singh and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia continued the functioning of this society. Initially this society published tracts relating to Gurbani, Sikhism, Punjabi literature and Punjab History.⁷⁵ But later on it also started publishing tracts regarding social reforms, health, social evils and other issues of the society. The annual subscription of the tracts was rupees three.⁷⁶

71 *Ibid*, pp. 3 to 9.

72 K.L. Rallia Ram, *Welcome address' 2nd Annual Conference of Non-Government Schools, Punjab, 25 & 26 Feb. 1928*, Lahore, p. 2.

73 *Ibid*, p. 7.

74 *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

75 Mehar Singh Ravel, *Doctor Sir Surinder Singh Majithia : Life, Aim and Contribution*, pp. 135-136.

76 *The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, p. 16.

'Adhuri Vidya Jind Da Khun', 'Bachche Palan Dian Mattan', 'Baal Viyah De Dukhre', 'Istriyan Liye Amrit Di Lor', 'Agyakar' were the few tracts which were published by this society in the early 1900s discussing all the issues important for women. Tracts on religion, universal brotherhood, Sikh faith, devotion, kitchen education, manners, profession, photography, higher education, general education, female education, material science, general science were regularly published twice a month.⁷⁷

Another society which was working on the same lines of the Khalsa Tract Society was, *Swadesh Bhasha Pracharak Agency* of Taran Taran in Punjab. It also published tracts, pamphlets and books regarding the social evils like child marriage, dowry system, female infanticide and beating of students 'Prem Sahit Sikhya (ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਿੱਖਯਾ) meaning discipline without brutality, tract number one hundred and sixty two was published by this agency. This agency discussed different curricula for girls and boys and wanted education for girls which could make them perfect in household duties.⁷⁸

The Muslim reformers started organising the Muhammadan Educational Conference in the late nineteenth century. In the late 1890s in response to a growing desire of the western educated Muslims to find educated wives, this educational conference started a section to promote women's education. Shaikh Abdullah was

77 *Sewa Dr. Panjah Saal*, p. 19.

78 *Ranjeet Nagara*, Lahore, June 1929, p. 7.

Secretary of this section and he used to organize exhibitions of women's crafts at the annual Muhammadan Educational Conference meetings - to raise money for women's education and to point out that Muslim women were capable of doing useful and constructive work. In 1905, he started an Urdu journal for women viz. *Khatun*. The annual session of this conference were held in different parts of Punjab.⁷⁹ In 1907, its annual session was held in Karachi in Punjab where Sikh leaders came to know about this conference and later organised Sikh Educational Conference at Rawalpindi.⁸⁰

On 1 March, 1914, The All India Muslim Ladies Conference (also known as Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam) was founded at Girls' School, Aligarh. For opening the new building of Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam, prominent Muslim women from all over India went to Aligarh. From Lahore in Punjab, Begum Mian Muhammad Shafi, whose husband was a leading member of the Muslim league and the future Education and Law Minister in the government of India and her sister Begum Shah Din, wife of a justice in the Punjab High Court went to Aligarh, Waheed Begum Yaqub, editor of *Tahzib-e-Niswan* (a journal) of Lahore and Fatima Begum, editor of *Sharif Bibi* (another journal for women) from Lahore attended this opening ceremony.⁸¹

79 Gail Minault, "Sisterhood or Separatism? The All India Muslim Ladies' Conference and the Nationalist Movement," in Gail Minault (ed.), *The Extended Family : Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1981, p. 87.

80 *Sewa De Panjah Saal*, pp. 24-25.

81 Gail Minault (ed.), *The Extended Family : Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, pp. 89-90.

The concerns of these women was the promotion of women's education in the Muslim community in their respective regions. The main aims of this Anjuman were to work for unity among all Indian women; to support those working for women's education and to ensure that both religious education and practical training were included in the curriculum; to promote the improvement of homemaking generally Anjuman also resolved, that no Muslim girl should be married before the age of sixteen.⁸²

In the second decade of the twentieth century, the Anjuman formed various local branches in Lahore, Delhi, Meerut, Jullundhur, Dehradun and a few other towns and these branches started opening many small girls schools. In 1918, two sisters Begum Shafi and Begum Shah-Din and their daughters Begum Shah Nawaz and Begum Muhammad Rafi (who were active in educational and social causes of women in the Punjab) invited the Anjumans to organize their annual session in Punjab. So the All India Muslim Ladies Conference was held in Faridkot House at Lahore on March 3-5, 1918 and over five hundred women attended, more than twice that at any previous conference. This gave an opportunity to the women from the Punjab to meet women from Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Hyderabad.⁸³

82 *ibid*, p. 91.

83 Tahzib-e-Niswan (Lahore) XXI, March 30, 1918, pp. 199-201 in Gail Minault (ed.), *The extended family*, pp. 93-94.

Various women spoke on many social evils like purdah system, polygamy, childmarriage and favoured spread of education among Muslim women of Punjab.

The Begum of Bhopal presided the All India Muslim Ladies Conference from 1914 to 1930 till her death and women from Lahore like Waheeda Begum Yaqub also remained the Vice-President for many years. The Anjuman certainly fostered an increased sense of community and social consciousness among Muslims. It provided a respectable meeting place for purdah-observing women from many provinces, branches out from North India and the Punjab to include representatives from Calcutta, Central India, Bombay and Madras.⁸⁴

The Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 and The National Social Conference was formed at the third meeting of the National Congress in 1887 to provide a forum for the discussion of social issues. From 1885 to 1905, there was no Ladies Social Conference or Mahila Parishads attached to Congress. After 1905, Mahila Parishads were inaugurated and they used to discuss the topics of female education, abolition of evil social customs such as dowry, neglect of widow, child marriage and others at the National Conference.⁸⁵ In December, 1909, a resolution was passed at a Ladies

84 Gail Minault, (ed.), *The Extended Family : Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, p. 100.

85 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, 1998, pp. 66-67.

gathering held under the auspices of the Indian National Social Conference presided over by the Rani Saheba of Pertabgarh in Lahore in Punjab. The resolution was to the effect that a permanent association of Indian Ladies be founded under the name of the *Bharat Stree Mahamandal* (literally means the Great Circle of Indian Women) for the amelioration of the condition of Indian women, and an annual gathering of ladies be held by it at the Christmas season.⁸⁶

So in November, 1910, at a private meeting under the presidency of Mrs. B.N. Sen and Sarla Devi Chaudharani as General Secretary, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal was formed with headquarters at Lahore. The inaugural meeting of this was held during the X'mas week at Allahabad where ladies from different parts of India were expected to congregate there.⁸⁷

Sarla Devi Chaudharani was the neice of Rabindra Nath Tagore and daughter of Swana Kumari Devi, a social activist of Bengal. Chaudharani earlier known as Sarla Debi Ghosal married a widowed Arya Samaji Ram Bhuj Choudhari of Lahore in 1905 and after her marriage she was often referred to as Devi Chaudharani. And in Lahore she worked with her husband and formed, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal in 1910.⁸⁸

86 Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, "A Women's Movement," *Modern Review*, October, 1911, p. 344.

87 *ibid*, pp. 344-345.

88 Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing*, pp. 39-40.

This Stree Mahamandal was formed in Lahore as an organisation representing women of every caste, race, creed, class and party and had a common interest in the moral and material progress of women.⁸⁹ The Chief aim was the spread of female education, but as the purdah system and child marriage were the main obstacles to the education of women it was proposed to start organisations in every province whose function would be to collect money and engage teachers who would be sent to the houses of those who desired to educate their wives and daughters.⁹⁰ For this purpose the Mahamandal developed branches in Allahabad, Kanpur, Bankura, Midnapur, Calcutta, Hazari Bagh and Lahore.⁹¹

There were three main branches of this organisation - Calcutta, Allahabad and the Lahore branch and these main branches were to open sub-branches in the whole of India.

In Punjab, the Lahore branch was headed by Lady P.C. Chatterjee with Mrs. Ramasaran Das and Mrs. Shadilal as the vice presidents. Miss Majumdar acted as the Secretary and Srimati Sushila Devi of Sialkot were the active workers of this branch.⁹² Free private classes were opened at a place outside the Lahore city to impart instruction to zenana ladies three times a week for two hours at a time. Needle work, fancy work, drawing, painting, music, the

89 Sarladevi, "A Women's Movement", *Modern Review*, p. 347.

90 Radha Kumar, *History of Doing*, p. 39.

91 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 70.

92 Sarladevi, 'A Women's Movement', *Modern Review*, p. 349.

literature of Hindi, Urdu, English and Sanskrit was taught there. Besides this a well equipped school outside the city was opened. The Mahamandal was also successful in opening several schools in the heart of Lahore City. Visiting the ladies in the different lanes and houses, lecturing to them and inducing them to devote a couple of hours daily to reading and writing and keeping up their enthusiasm by periodical units was the main work of the General Secretary Sarla Devi in Lahore.⁹³

In 1906, Ram Bhuj Dutt Chaudhari and Sarla Devi Chaudharani founded the *Lahore Hindu Sahayak Sabha*. And later, various Hindu Sahayak Sabhas were formed in Multan, Jhang, Sialkot, Lyallpur, and Gujranwala. These Sabhas worked against all the social evil customs persisting in the society of Punjab.⁹⁴ The members of these sabhas later also participated in the national struggle for independence.

There was also another very important organisation for women - *The All India Women's Conference*. This was of all India level but it worked with its branches which were opened in different provinces of colonial India. The All India Women's Conference (AIWC)⁹⁵ first met in January 1927 at Poona with the Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekwad of Baroda as the first President. There were eighty-seven

93 *ibid*, pp. 348-349.

94 Radha Kumar, *History of Doing*, p. 41.

95 Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle : A History of the All India Women's Conference, 1927-1990*, New Delhi, Manohar, 1990.

members from the local reception committee, fifty-eight delegates from local conferences and two thousand observers (men and women).⁹⁶ The main concern of the women assembled was women's education and it was felt that as the problems connected with girls' education were different in different provinces and localities, so it was necessary to hold women's conferences on educational reform in each province and in clearly defined districts.⁹⁷

AIWC when formed was only an educational reform body but by the next year in 1928, it widened its scope to eradicate social evils as it decided that there could be little progress in educational matters unless harmful social customs were eradicated.⁹⁸ By the 1930s AIWC's members started participating in the political struggle for freedom. By the mid 1930s the list of sub-committees included labor, rural reconstruction, indigenous industries, textbooks, opium and the Sarda Act.⁹⁹

In 1941, the AIWC established its quarterly journal, *Roshni* to reach to each and every women and propaganda on women issues was made through this journal.¹⁰⁰

From 1927 to 1947, twenty sessions of AIWC were held in different parts of India. In Punjab, there was only one session of AIWC at Lahore in 1931 under the presidentship of Muthulakhshmi

96 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 79.

97 Aparana Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle*, pp. 20-21.

98 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 80.

99 *ibid*, pp. 80-81.

100 *ibid*, p. 82.

Reddi (Women activist of Madras) and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur (of Kapurthala State in Punjab) acted as its Chairperson.¹⁰¹ This organisation became so important that a large number of women from Punjab started participating in the annual sessions of conference and sometimes even got elected as the Presidents Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was a die hard activist of the AIWC and always wanted it to emerge as a significant political force for women.¹⁰² In 1934, in the eight session of AIWC, Lady Abdul Qadir of Lahore presided over this conference.¹⁰³ Many other women from Punjab also attended this session. Mrs. Brijlal Nehru of Lahore and Sardarni Pritam Singh of Ambala City were the participants of this Session also.¹⁰⁴

Thus AIWC became a sound platform for the women of Punjab to discuss about their rights and duties. The Conference became so important that it opened its branch in Lahore and women activist regularly organised 'Istri Conference' regarding various social evils of society.

All these organisations mentioned above became the medium for the expression of "Women's opinion." The organisations were either formed by male reformers or later by the "new women" - educated. Both these organisations became a training ground for women who later took up leadership roles in politics and social institutions. The

101 "Appendix 9" in Aparna Basu and Bharati Roy, *Women's Struggle*, p. 215.

102 Gerakdine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 82.

103 *Report of AIWC*, Eight Session, 1934, Calcutta, p. 27.

104 *Ibid*, p. 5.

emergence of these organisations, associations and institutions led to women's participation in public life and further in political arena where they joined hands with their brothers, fathers, husbands against the common enemy-Britishers.

With the help of these organisations, women began to communicate with their counterparts outside their families and local communities. Regional and National organisations were formed and they worked together for one common goal - emancipation of women through the propagation of education (either English or vernacular). The issue of female education had been a thorny topic in colonial Punjab and India and each and every organisation worked for this issue. The organisations opened their respective educational institutions for females, started publishing their magazines and journals for publicizing their objectives. And later asked their women to start up their own associations and institutions for their development.

Thus the education policy formulated by the Britishers for making a class of clerks for their administrative help led the reformers of Punjab and India to make their society free from social evils with the help of education. The educational institutions of these socio-religious reformers led women to come out of their homes to form new organisations for themselves and by themselves. These social organisations later became a platform for women to participate in public life and the freedom struggle for India.

Chapter - 5

WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

The roots of women's participation in public life can be traced back to the nineteenth century reform movement. This movement emerged as a result of conflict between the Indian bourgeoisies, trying to wrest control from the British. This class made attempts to reform itself, mainly by campaigning against caste, idolatry, purdah, child marriage, sati, female infanticide, perceived as elements of primitive identity. Raja Ram Mohan Roy focussed on two issues, namely women's education and abolition of Sati. In the early 1850s, a campaign on widow remarriage was launched resulting in the passage of a Bill in 1856, which allowed widow remarriage. Several eminent women reformers participated in this movement as well as in the religious reform movement of this period. Pandita Ramabai, Manorama Majumdar, Sarla Devi Goshal (later known as Sarla Devi Chaudhrani as she married Ram Bhuj Dutt Chaudhari of Punjab) who started 'Bharata Stree Mahmandal' in 1910 for the education of women with headquarters at Lahore (Punjab); Swarna Kumari Devi who started the women's organisation 'Sakhi Samiti' in 1886 for widows are few examples. These activities gave momentum to women's participation in public spaces, which later paved the way for their entry into the nationalist movement for independence.¹

1 "Report on Women and Political participation in India National Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla", http://www.iwraw-ap.org/aboutus/pdf/Fp_women_and_pal_pax.pdf, p4.

The reform movement started by the early reformers and expansion of education opened the doors for women to participate in public sphere which led them to play an important role in bringing about political, economic and social transformation in India.

Thus, the early twentieth century which saw the demand for women's education gaining emphasis, finally led to the movement for women of all communities to join together and enter the arena of social reform.² This awareness led to the formation of various organisations and associations either by men or women for the emancipation of womenfolk. These bodies further gave women a platform to come up with their own innovative ideas to share with the other members of the society for their upliftment. Hence, women entered public life and became members of the regional and national level organisations in India.

This chapter discusses the women participation in the public life of Punjab. In the early 1900s various organisations were formed in the different parts of Punjab (as discussed in the fourth chapter), so, either, women with the help of their husbands, fathers and brothers or individually started participating in the activities of these organisations.

This chapter looks into the women involvement in Sikh Educational Conferences (1908-47), Sikh Women Conferences, All India Women Conferences (1927-47), Indian National Congress (1901-

2 Malashri Lal and Sukrita Paul Kumar (eds), *Women's Studies in India : Contours of Change*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS), 2002, p. 51.

47), Punjab Legislative Council and Assembly before independence and in other regional, national and international conferences held in the various parts of India. It may be specified here that by women of Punjab we mean either women born in Punjab or residents of Punjab. Women actively participated in all the sessions of these conferences and organisations and even proposed resolutions for the development of their fellow sisters.

Sikh Educational Conference (1908-47)

The Chief Khalsa Diwan of Amritsar established their educational committee in 1908 of thirteen members which organised all the sessions of the Sikh Educational Conference in different parts of the colonial Punjab.³ The function of the conference was to advise and suggest the Educational Committee of Diwan the different kind of methods to impart education and improve education amongst the people. Members (members of the Educational Committee), Fellows (enrolled in the Registers of Committee and who paid rupees eight per month), Delegates (persons elected by any Diwan, Singh Sabha, educational institute or a public body to attend the Conference) and Visitors (who attends the conference but was not a Fellow, Member or Delegate) were the persons who attended the sessions of the conference.⁴

3 *The Report of the Proceedings of the first Sikh Educational Conference held at Gujranwala, April, 1908*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1908, p. 14.

4 "Appendix D : The Sikh Educational Conference - Rules", *The report of 1908*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1908, pp. 165-170.

The Educational Committee was established by the males who organised the conferences. But from the first session of 1908 upto the freedom of India in 1947, there was a notable participation of the women in all the sessions of the Conferences. The women initially started participating in these conferences as mere visitors and then began to present their papers and finally even started to initiate resolutions for women emancipation in the conferences. From 1908-1947, there were thirty three sessions of the conference and in these thirty nine years the women became aware about their rights, duties, needs and importance in the society.

The first session of 1908 at Gujranwala didn't show any women participation. But the President Sardar Baghel Singh of Lahore⁵, Shivdev Singh Oberoi of Sialkote⁶ and Jodh Singh of Amritsar⁷ delivered their lectures regarding female education. The Sixth resolution pertained to the printing of the names of the railway stations and names on tickets in Punjabi for the convenience of females and this was passed unanimously.⁸ Several gold ornaments given away by some ladies of Mardan (district Peshawar) in aid of building Dharamshala in London, proposed by Bhai Teja Singh, M.A., were presented and the audience praised the ladies.⁹

5 *The Proceedings of the Report of 1908*, p. 81.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

In the first decade of the Sikh Educational Conference sessions from 1908 to 1917, women participated as 'visitors' from the second session of 1909 at Lahore on 9-10-11 April. Many women donated money for the female education like Bibi Chet Kaur, Bibi Radha Sarsa and wife of Sunder Singh donated rupees ten, twenty five and two respectively.¹⁰ The next session of 1910 at Amritsar witnessed women as 'fellows' who paid rupees eight per month and were enrolled in the registers of the committee like Bibi Satwant Kaur, Lachman Kaur, Har Kaur, Balwant Kaur and others.¹¹ In the fourth Session of 1911, students of local girl schools and of Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Ferozepur welcomed the President and sung Shabads and presented gifts to the President. Girl students of Ferozepur school were also given scholarships by the committee. Bibi Bhagwan Kaur was given scholarship of rupees four per month for her education.¹²

After 1911 session, the singing of Shabads by girls after the inauguration of session, during discussion of every resolution and in the end of the session, became a regular trend. Girl students of Ferozepur school and other local girl schools usually performed that duty. After 1912, female participants started delivering their lectures on female issues. Bibi Mataab Kaur of Bhujangan Ashram, Kairon (Amritsar) spoke on 'the need of girl schools'. This is illustrated below:

10 *The Report of Proceedings of Educational Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, April, 1909 to Feb. 1910*, Amritsar, Gurmat Press, 1910, pp. 42 to 44.

11 *Educational Committe Cheif Khalsa Diwan Di Report, March, 1910 to December., 1910*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1911, pp. 22 to 26.

12 *Educational Committe Cheif Khalsa Diwan Di Report, January, 1911 to December, 1911*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1912, p. 16.

ਵੀਰੋ! ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਡਾ ਕੰਮ ਸਾਡੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਹੈ। ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਕੰਨਯਾਂ ਪਾਠਸ਼ਾਲਾਂ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੋ ਅਰ ਖੁਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਰੇ ਤਰ ਮਾਯਾ ਦਾਨ ਕਰੋ, ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਜਗਾ ਜਗਾ ਕਾਕੀਆਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ। ਜੇਕਰ ਕਾਕੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਭੁਲਾਈ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਨ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਲੀ ਬਣੇਗੀ।¹³

(Brothers! The most important work is our education, open more and more girl schools at different places and donate money. If we will forget the education of girls then the children will not be educated).

Bibi Agya Kaur wife of Bhai Takhat Singh also spoke on 'Istri Vidya' in the conference.¹⁴ Bibi Harnam Kaur of Amritsar presented a gift to the President 'Joginder Singh (Wazir of Patiala State) on which it was written - "To educate a boy is to educate an individual but to educate a girl is to educate a family."¹⁵

The sixth Sikh Educational Conference of Ambala on 21-22-23 March, 1913 witnessed the participation of a young girl of eight years. Bibi Chatar Kaur came to the pandal (hall) with her small black donation box in which she collected the money from the other participants. The amount collected was rupees two hundred and sixty three and her father Ram Singh Kabli doubled it to Rupees five hundred and twenty six and they both donated that to the

13 *Mufarak Kavita Ate Lekh Jo Ferozepur Ashram, Kairon Ashram, Bhai Hira Singh Ate Diwan Chand Ne Punjvi (5th) Sikh Educational Conference Layi Likhe*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1912, pp. 6 to 9.

14 *Punjvi Sikh Education Comnference Di karwayi Di Report Jo Sialkot Vich April 1912 Nu Hoyi*, Amritsar, Wajir Hind Press, 1912, p.9

15 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

committee.¹⁶ Then Chatar Kaur read her poem on female education.

Few lines of that poem are as follows :

ਜਾਗੋ ਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਵੀਰੋ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਦੁਲਾਰਿਓ।
 ਸਾਡਾ ਵੀ ਹਾਲ ਕੁਝ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆਰਿਓ।
 ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਥੋਡੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰੀਆਂ।
 ਭੁਲਣਾ ਨਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਿਮਾਣੀਆਂ।
 ਵਿਦਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਹੀਨ ਬਲ ਬੁਧੋਂ ਨਿਤਾਣੀਆਂ।
 ਇਹ ਹੈ ਸੰਦੂਕੜੀ ਚਾਂਦੀ ਸੋਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੀ ਹੈ।
 ਨਿੱਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਸੇਵਾ ਇਹ ਨਿੱਕੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਸਰੀ ਹੈ।¹⁷

In the seventh session of the Conference of 1914 at Jalandhar, Bibi Savitri Devi stood on the same dice where her male counterparts used to speak. She read her paper in English on 'The Sikh Education' in which she discussed the traditions and customs prevalent in Sikh society since the period of the Gurus. She laid stress on the importance of girl education as advocated by Gurus as well as its relevance in modern times.¹⁸ Shrimati Hemant Kumari Chaudhari of Victoria Girls School, Patiala also donated her book 'ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਮਾਤਾ' (Aadarsh Mata) to the library of the Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan.¹⁹

16 *Golden Jubilee Book, Educational Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar (1908-58), Amritsar, Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1958, pp. 12-13.*

17 *Kavita Jo Chenvi Sikh Educational Conference Vich Padiyan Jan Layi Tayaar Hoyian: Krit Dr. Harnam Singh, Babu Jagjeet Singh, Bibi Chatar Kaur, and Bhai Duni Chand, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1913, pp. 3-8.*

18 *The Sikh Education - a paper written by Bibi Savitri Devi for the 7th Sikh Educational Conference, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Coronation Press, 1914, pp. 2 to 5.*

19 *Educational Committee Di Satvi Salana Report, 1914-15, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1915, p. 26.*

Discussing the importance of female education for domestic household works like cleaning the houses, cooking, taking care of children and first aid, Bibi Agya Kaur delivered her lecture at the eighth session of the conference at Ferozepur in 1915.²⁰ Bibi Gyan of Rawalpindi became the winner of the art exhibition launched by the conference in 1915.²¹

The tenth session of the conference was held at Lahore on 6-7-8 April, 1917 with Harbans Singh Raees Attari as the President. This session was of great importance as many Rajas, Maharajas, Muslim and Hindu deputation attended this conference alongwith the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, Sir Michael Francis O'Dwyer.²² The members of the Muslim deputation – Khan Bahadur Mian Shahdeen (Chief Judge of Chief Court, Punjab), Mian Mohammad Shafi, Mian Fazal Hussain and Chaudhari Shahabudeen praised 'women participation' and congratulated the female participants as is illustrated below :

“ਮਾਉਂ, ਬੇਟੀਓ, ਭੈਣੋਂ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਪ ਭੀ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਮੁਸਤਇਦ ਹੁਈ ਹੈ।²³

In this session, the women also donated large sums of money to the committee like Bhagat Kaur and Pratap Devi donated rupees fifty thousand to Lahore Khalsa High School and rupees forty two thousand respectively.²⁴

20 *Shrimati Bibi Agya Kaur Ji Da Vikhyan*, n.d.

21 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 22

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

The next ten sessions of the conference from 1918 to 1929 witnessed further improvement in the women participation. Bibi Chatar Kaur regularly came to attend the conference with her father carrying a small black box and read poems for female emancipation.

The poem

“ਇਕ ਇਕ ਪੈਂਡ ਤੁਸੀ ਪਾਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੰਦੂਕੜੀ ਜੇ,
ਹੱਥ ਨਾ ਸੰਕੋਚੇ ਪਾਵੇ ਪੈਂਡ ਤੇ ਰੁਪਏ ਹੁਣ,
ਛਣਕੇ ਸੰਦੂਕੜੀ ਮੈ ਜੋ ਖੜੀ ਹੱਥ ਹਾਂ ਲਈ।²⁵

(She requested people to donate the maximum so that the amount could be used for females).

Bibi Gurdit Kaur daughter of Bhai Dewan Singh of Amritsar donated utensils for the eleventh session of the conference. Bishan Kaur of Sindh was honoured and given thousands of rupees by the Educational cCommittee for her contribution in spreading and preaching Sikhism in Sindh at the twelfth session of the Sikh Educational Conference of 1920 at Dinga on 2-3-4 April.²⁶ In 1921, at the conference at Hoshiarpur, Rajinder Kaur participated in ‘Kavi Darbar’ and secured fourth position in the competition.²⁷

In 1922 at the fourteenth session at Delhi, Mrs. Rai of Madras sang shabad²⁸ which proved that women of provinces outside the Punjab also participated. Pritam Kaur daughter of Takhat Singh

25 *Educational Committee Di Gayarvi Salana Report, 1918-19*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1920, pp. 9-10.

26 *Educational Committee Di Salana Report Babat 1919-1920*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1921, p. 63.

27 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 55.

28 *Chudavi Sikh Educational conference De Samagam Di Karwayi Di Report, Delhi 1922*, Amritsar, Wazir Hindi Press, 1926, p. 4.

Ferozepur was awarded 'Gold Medal' for her first position in the tenth class exam.²⁹ In the Conference of 1925, Pritam Kaur was given scholarship of Rupees fifty per month for studying B.T. degree course.³⁰ At the sixteenth Educational Conference of 1926, Ranjeet Kaur, Harnam Kaur and Satwant Kaur of Ferozepur School were awarded 'Mai Sada Kaur Medal' of gold for their first position in the entrance exams. Amar Kaur, and Mohan Kaur got 'Bhai Bishan Dass' silver medal for their first position in Gurmat education exam.³¹

The nineteenth session of the conference at Montgomery on 6-7-8 of April, 1928 saw an important change in women participation. On 8th April, 1928, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. there was a Sabha of women where approximately fifteen hundred women participants gathered and discussed the issues of female education and health issues.³² Dr. Raminder Kaur presided the Sabha and in her presidential address stressed the need for more female schools. Then Wazir Kaur, B.A.B.T., spoke on the need of female teachers and inspectresses. Pritam Kaur, B.A. B.T., pleaded for opening more and more educational institutions for the girls.³³ Tej Kaur won 'Mai Sada Kaur Gold Medal' by standing first in the M.S.L.C. candidates of Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Ferozepur.³⁴

29 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

30 *Educational Committee Di Sataarvi Salana Report 1925*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1926, p. 69.

31 *Solvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Report, 1926*, Amritsar, Panthak Press, 1926, pp. 26-27.

32 *Univi Sikh Educational Conference Di Report, Montgomery, 1928*, Amritsar, Panthak Press, 1928, pp. 20-21.

33 *Educational Committee Di Vihvi Salana Report*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1928, pp. 57-58.

34 *Brief Report of the Educational Committee of Chief Khalsa Diwan of the Year 1928*, Amritsar, Panthak Press, 1929, p. 14.

In the twentieth session of the Sikh Educational Conference in 1929 at Sargodha, women called a meeting in the conference under Dr. Raminder Kaur. Here, after the speeches of Kuldeep Kaur (B.Sc.) and Bishan Kaur of Karachi, it was decided that there was an urgent need of 'Sikh Women Association' in the Punjab.³⁵

Hence in the ten sessions of the conference from 1918 to 1929 women started preparation to organise their own independent associations.

From 1930 to 1947, more educated women started participating and raised the issue about their rights. From 1930 to 1947, there were further thirteen sessions of the conference. After the twentieth session of the conference of 1929, the next twenty first session of the conference was held in 1931 at Amritsar on 3-4-5th of April. 'Here Ghaniya Singh recited the poem of Harnam Kaur, a popular poetess of that time.'³⁶ It indicates that women in the 1930s became good poetesses and their poems were read at those grand events. The twenty second conference of 25-26-27 March, 1932 at Lahore was very vital as here a separate 'Sikh Istri Conference' was organised under the Presidentship of Sardarni Shivdevi of Sialkot on 26 March, 1932 at 5:00 p.m. in Lahore University hall.³⁷ This women conference witnessed more than fifteen hundred participants of Hindu, Muslim

35 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 90.

36 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 93.

37 *Baivi Sikh Educational Conference Lahore 1932 Di Report*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1932, p. 14.

and Sikh religion. Even European ladies attended the conference. Amrit Kaur, wife of Pratap Singh Advocate, Khadija Begum M.A. (a Muslim lady), Harnam Kaur Nabha, Raghbir Kaur and many others read their informative addresses. All the ladies were asked to work in their respective regions for their sisters and the need of 'Istri league' was felt.³⁸

The Reception Committee of this Lahore Conference also formed a 'Ladies Sub-Committee' with Amrit Kaur as Convenor and the other members were - Bibi Shivdevi, Bibi Bawa Udham Singh, Bibi Teja Singh Raees Lahore, Dr. Raminder Kaur, Bibi Tej Kaur, Sardarni Nihal Kaur, Sardarni Harcharan Kaur Punjab University and Sardarni Jagjeet Kaur.³⁹ One of the members of that sub committee Dr. Raminder along with Harnam Kaur and wife of Sardar Sampooran Singh Chawla proposed the twenty fifth resolution pertaining to the free education of the girls in the schools.⁴⁰

In the mid of 1930s, members of the Sikh Educational Conference started passing resolutions for the employment of women in Punjab Education Services (P.E.S). The thirteenth⁴¹ and twenty fourth⁴² resolution were proposed in the conference to appeal to the head of the Education Department, Punjab for employing women in

38 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

41 *The Report of Educational Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1933, p. 13.*

42 *Educational Committee Di Baivi Salana Report, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1931, p. 43.*

the Women branch of PES. The scope of the scholarships given by the Educational Committee was extended in the 1930s as girls were given stipends not only for studying but also for completing their Teacher Training Courses. 'In 1931, Bibi Ram Kaur and Bibi Dito were given monthly stipends of rupees ten and twelve respectively. Bibi Bhagwan Kaur scholarship was also started for this purpose.⁴³

In the twenty third session of 1933 at Peshawar, Bibi Jaswant Kaur participated in 'Kavi Darbar' and got a medal for her excellent performance. Akali Kaur proposed the resolution for spreading Sikhism and female education in Kashmir.⁴⁴ By 1934, the issue of female education was changed into co-education. Dr. Davinder Kaur pleaded against co-education and requested opening of different schools for different sexes.⁴⁵ In 1935 at the occasion of Silver Jubilee celebrations of the conference, Mrs. Bedi and Mrs. Keshab (both European ladies), read their papers on 'female education' and 'need of reforms for females' respectively.⁴⁶ Bibi Balbir Kaur 'Bal's poem 'Kalam' was praised by the audience in the twenty sixth session in 1936.⁴⁷ Kumari Jawant Kaur of Amritsar won the first prize in 'Kavi Darbar' at Amritsar at the twenty seventh session of the conference in 1938.⁴⁸ Bibi Amrit Kaur 'Amrit' also recited her poem.⁴⁹ Bibi Prakash

43 *Educational Committee Di Baivi Salana Report*, pp. 107-108.

44 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 107.

45 *Educational Committee Chief Khalsa Diwan Di Report Babat* 1934, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1935, p. 40.

46 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 119.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 123.

48 *Stayinvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwayi Di Report*, 1938, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1939, p. 11.

Kaur, Bibi Daljeet Kaur and Bibi Amar Kaur got gold medal for first position in tenth class examination, silver medal for the first position in middle examination and silver medal for the first position in Gurmat Education respectively.⁵⁰

In 1939, Bibi Jaswant got the first prize of rupees twenty one in 'Kirtan Darbar' at Sialkot.⁵¹ In 1941 at the twenty ninth session, girls again participated in 'kirtan darbar' and acquired the first and second positions.⁵² At the thirtieth session at Faridkot in 1943, Bibi Joginder Kaur Radio Artist got the third prize in kirtan darbar.⁵³ At the thirty first session at Sargodha in 1944, Mrs. Kartar Nirman Giani Sargodha recited her poem and the audience praised it a lot.⁵⁴ The year 1945 again saw the women participating kirtan and kavi darbar. The thirty third session of the Sikh Educational Conference was held at Karachi in 1946 and here the same trend in the women participation was seen.⁵⁵

Hence, in the Sikh Educational Conference from 1908 to 1947 women participation was remarkable. Initially they came to the conference as mere visitors, then they started reading papers and participated in various exhibitions and competitions like kirtan and kavi darbar. Eventually under the patronage of the committee they

49 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

51 *Golden Jubilee Book*, p. 113.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 123.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

55 *Ibid.*, pp. 135-142.

formed their own 'Sabhas' within the conference and started representing the women of Punjab and proposed resolutions for the female emancipation.

In the late 1930s, women even got a special sitting arrangement in the pandals (halls) of the conference. Female delegates were made to sit on the right side of the stage (in the complimentary blocks and galleries) and the female students of the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala and of other local girl schools were made to sit.⁵⁶

Thus, the Sikh Educational Conference provided a platform for the women of Punjab to represent their sisters. They got a chance to participate and this participation motivated the male members of the Conference to speak for them. They helped the women to get better education through the scholarships and eventually encouraged them to work in the Punjab Education Services. Hence, women got a golden opportunity in the sessions to get good education and after education they opted for new careers. Women also started forming associations for themselves.

These sessions were so relevant that even women of other provinces like Madras also came to Punjab to participate in them. Thus the women of Punjab were coming into the contact of women of other provinces and this generated more awareness in them.

56 *Stayinvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwauyi Di Report*, p. 14.

Sikh Women Conferences

The Bhujangan Ashram of Kairon, Amritsar was the pioneer in organising the Sikh Women Conferences in the undivided Punjab. These conferences witnessed the participation of many active women from and outside the Punjab. The main objective of the conferences was the female emancipation. It laid stress on female education and tried to make women aware of all sort of useless superstitions, black magic, fasts and other old customs and tradition which the ladies were following. They wanted to educate women about child care and healthy life.⁵⁷ They provided a platform for the women of Punjab to come forward and discuss all the hot issues of society at that time. All the social evils like child marriage, widowhood, custom of sati, purdah system and others were discussed regularly in the sessions of the conferences.

The Conference was open to all the men and women irrespective of their caste, religion or creed. Admission fees for the male and female members was fixed at the rate of rupees five and three respectively.⁵⁸ An Executive Committee and the Reception Committee were formed to assist the main organising committee. All the poems and papers which were to be read at the conference were sent fifteen days before the session to the Reception Committee. Women were

57 Mohinder Kaur, "Istri Conference Ki Ki Karegi?", *Bhujangan Pattar, Kairon*, 1 October, 1917, p. 25.

58 *Bhujangan Pattar, Kairon*, 1 September 1917, p. 17.

also asked to submit their papers and any resolution (which they wanted to propose in the conference) to the Reception Committee.⁵⁹ The tickets of the Conference were issued from the head office at Amritsar and were given to the participants on their arrival at the venue. The fees for the tickets was deposited beforehand by the participants. Free tickets were also issued as 'Complimentary tickets' to the 'Updeshaks' or preachers of Sikh Girls schools and other important reformists in the society. To get the complimentary tickets, the managers of the girls' schools were asked to send their application fifteen days before the conference.⁶⁰ The stay of the participants was also organised by the members of the Reception Committee.

The conference was usually held for three days. On the first day of the conference, the Reception committee welcomed the President of the Conference and she was brought to the hall in a great procession. The second day witnessed the lectures of various females and males from every corner of the region. Poems were also read by the popular poets and poetesses. On the third and last day of the conference resolutions were passed and 'Religious Diwans' and 'Baal Prikhaya' (Competition for the healthy baby) were held. Children of age three and below participated in this competition and to judge the contestants, a qualified lady doctor was invited and the winners were

59 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

60 *Ibid.* 1 October, 1917, p. 16.

given gold and silver medals.⁶¹ Thus, by this the women were encouraged to take good care of their children so they could win that competition and they were also given knowledge regarding the health of babies.

Bibi Livleen Kaur⁶² and Bibi Milap Kaur⁶³ were the main activists in organising these conferences. Shrimati Bhagwanti Ram Kaur was the President of the Sikh Women Conference held on 26, 27, 28 October, 1917.⁶⁴ She was the wife of Sardar Mataab Singh, Barrister of Ferozepur and was working for female emancipation in her home town.⁶⁵ In her presidential address she tried to make clear the difference between the motives of the Sikh Educational Conferences and the Sikh Women Conferences. According to her the main objective of the former was emancipation of women through the spread of female education, while the latter focussed on female emancipation with female education as well as eradication of all social evils in the society like female infanticide, child marriage, dowry, purdah, sati system and others. She suggested for organising an association based on the pattern of 'Sisters of Mercy' working in England and suggested the name 'Daya bir or Daya punj Bhaina' for helping ill people. She was against the same type of education for

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

62 Editor of *Bhujangan Pattar*, Kairon.

63 Important worker of *Bhujangan Ashram*, Kairon.

64 *Bhujangan Pattar*, 1 November, 1917, p. 5.

65 *Ibid.*, 1 October, 1917, p. 43.

girls and boys and wanted girls to be taught more about the household activities. She propagated against wearing jewellery and stressed on simple living for the women.⁶⁶

Shrimati Amrit Kaur, President, Reception committee of 1917 Sikh Women Conference at Amritsar delivered her lecture on the importance of the conference. She was pro-British and thanked the government for their peaceful administration during the time of the first world war (1914-18). She focussed on the need of establishing female colleges as there was only Khalsa College for boys for higher studies.⁶⁷

Bibi Milap Kaur, active worker of the Bhujangan Ashram also participated in the proceedings of the Conference.⁶⁸ Bibi Gyan Kaur wife of Shri Master Chanda Singh (editor of Panth Sewak) read her paper on the duties of an ideal wife in the house and wanted only that education for a girl which could make her an ideal wife, ideal mother and ideal daughter in the society.⁶⁹ Bibi Jaswant Kaur spoke on the efficient domestic expenditure by the lady of the house. If the husband earns then it is the duty of the wife to spend that money in a proper and efficient manner.⁷⁰ Bibi Shiv Devi, wife of Sardar Bhanga Singh (Inspector of Police) made a comparative study of the safety of women

66 “Speech of shrimati Bhagwanti Ram Kaur”, *Bhujangan Pattar*, 1 Nov., 1917, pp. 14-25.

67 “Speech of Bibi Amrit Kaur,” *Bhujangan Pattar*, 1 Nov., 1917.

68 *Bhujangan Pattar*, 1 Nov., 1917, p. 5.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

during ancient and modern times. She debated on the need of awareness among women about their security in the society. Sardar Narain Singh's (Barrister of Lahore) wife Bibi Gyan Kaur read her paper on the need of suitable female education for making her a perfect homemaker. Bibi Mohinder Kaur recited her poem on the same theme in the Conference.⁷¹

Thus, the Sikh Women Conference of 1917 witnessed the participation of women from almost every part of the Punjab as mentioned above from Amritsar, Sialkote, Lahore, Ferozepur and other places. Even Maharani Nabha was supposed to attend that session but due to her ill health, she was not able to attend that important conference of women.

Bibi Hardayal Kaur (wife of Sardar Bahadur Singh Rasaldar Major and A.D.C. Viceroy India) was the President of the 1918 conference. But due to her ill health, Bibi Amrit Kaur, wife of Doctor Balwant Singh, Amritsar, presided the session.⁷² In her presidential address, she spoke on the existing condition of the women facing various restrictions. She stressed that women were not free to marry the boys of their choice, they also preferred not to have professional education and limited themselves to get domestic education. She praised the reformers who were working for female education and

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

72 *Ibid.*, 1 Nov., 1918, p. 3.

pleaded with them to introduce education based more on professional and vocational training.⁷³ The audience also praised the poem of Bibi RatanKaur Dheerka at the Conference. She focussed mainly on the importance of the conference which is illustrated below:

ਇਹ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਹੈ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ,
ਜਿਸਦਾ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਆਜ ਹੈ।
ਸਦ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਰਖਦਾ,
ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰ ਮਦਾਨੋਂ ਲਾਜ ਹੈ।
ਏਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਵਾਸਤੇ,
ਸਭ ਬਣ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੁਭ ਕਾਜ ਹੈ।
ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਆਈ।⁷⁴

'Nek Bibiyan' was the paper read by Bibi Har Kaur Saihansara, at the Sikh Women Conference of 1921. She elaborated different ways by which any nation could progress. (1) The firm faith of the citizens could make the nation prosperous. (2) Only educated citizens whether males or females could climb the ladder of progress. (3) Unity, universal brotherhood, and revolution could help the nation to progress. (4) The society free from all evil customs could make people progress. She opined that females were very important pillars of the society to make a nation prosperous.⁷⁵ Thus, women at that time were not only thinking about their province but also wanted complete development of their nation - India.

73 "Speech of Bibi Amrit Kaur", *Bhujangan Pattar*, 1 Nov., 1918, pp. 11-24.

74 *Bhujangan Pattar*, 1 Dec., 1918, p. 7.

75 *Ibid*, 1 March, 1921, pp. 9-13.

Bibi Patwant Kaur of Kairon, Amritsar compared 'Sun' with the 'education' in her lecture at the conference. She said that as when sun rises then there is light everywhere and people like to work in the light of day. Similarly if there is light of education then everyone would like to work in that light and the society will progress. Hence she gave importance to female education for the well-being of the society.⁷⁶

Bibi Tejwant Kaur of Mianwind propagated for female reforms and asked more women to join 'Bhujangan Council' at Kairon (Amritsar). She pleaded for donation to the council so that it could do more and more reformative work for females like opening new girls' schools, helping the widows to remarry and creating awareness amongst the people about the ill effects of purdah and dowry system.⁷⁷

Hence, the Sikh Women Conferences of the Punjab were attended by many women from the different parts of Punjab. The conference discussed the issues ranging from social evils prevalent to the methods for eradicating these evils. The stress was laid on the female education with the subjects mainly dealing with the household affairs. Lady doctors were called upon for conducting the competition of healthy babies and the objective behind it was to educate women about the correct ways of child care.

76 *Ibid*, pp. 13-19.

77 *Ibid*, pp. 19-24.

These women conferences mainly worked for the overall development of the women. The participants of the conference worked for the concept of Ideal homemaker. They worked for removing all kinds of social evil customs of the society whereas the main objective of the participants of Sikh Educational Conference was the propagation of education for females. They looked to education as the only tool for improving the condition of women. Professional education for girls was the need of the hour for them. They wanted girls to come out of their houses and adopt new occupations and form associations.

Thus both the conferences were working for the emancipation of women either making them perfect homemakers performing household activities.

All India Women's Conferences (1927-47)

Early in 1926, Mr. E.F. Oaten, director of Public Instruction, Bengal, at a prize-giving ceremony in Bethune College, Calcutta, urged women to put forward their views and demands regarding the kind of education they wanted.⁷⁸ And he called on Indian Women to “tell us with one voice what they want, and keep on telling us till they get it.” Mr. A.L. Huidekoper, an ex-Principal of Bethune College, made use of this appeal as the basis of two articles which were published in *Stri Dharma*, the monthly magazine of the Women's Indian Association (WIA). Then Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins, in the autumn of 1926, as

⁷⁸ Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle : A History of the All India Women's Conference 1927-1990*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 1990, p. 20.

Secretary of the WIA, Adyar, Madras, addressed an appeal in a form of a circular letter to women all over the country to form local communities and hold constituent conference in each of the provinces and in certain other clearly defined districts and Indian states, for the purpose of declaring their views on the problems of education.⁷⁹

There was a tremendous response to this appeal - women's associations all over India held meetings and sent in their proposals and schemes. The first All India Women Conference (AIWC) meeting was preceded by twenty-one constituent conferences. About seven thousand women of all castes and communities attended these constituent conferences to express their views on education and elect delegates to the AIWC meetings.⁸⁰

Thus, the First All-India Women's Conference was organized to take place at Poona, where it was duly held from January fifth to eighth, 1927 under the distinguished Presidentship of Her Highness the Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekwad of Baroda - Mrs. Cousins being the first Honorary Organising Secretary.⁸¹ Delegates to the conference included a large number of professional educationalist as well as social reformers, women associated with the nationalist movement and the wealthy and titled. The general resolutions outlined the best type of education for females included basic assumptions about women's place in society.⁸²

79 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, 1935, Vol. I, Calcutta, p. 377.

80 Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle*, p. 22.

81 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, 1935, p. 377.

82 Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 79.

The participation of women of Punjab in all the sessions of AIWC is studied in this section.

From 1901-47, twenty sessions of AIWC were held in all the different parts of India. The first session was held in 1927 at Poona and twentieth session was held at Madras in 1947. Out of these twenty sessions, only one session was held in Punjab in 1931 at Lahore under the Presidentship of Muthulakshmi Reddi and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala acted as the Chairperson. Three sessions were held near the neighbouring provinces of Punjab, that is, 1928 and 1938 session at Delhi and 1934 session at Karachi. Many women of Punjab also presided these AIWC Sessions. The eighth session of Calcutta in 1933 was presided by Lady Abdul Qadir of Lahore. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala was the President and Chairperson of the twelfth session at Nagpur in December 1937. And Amrit Kaur acted as a chairperson of thirteenth session of Delhi in 1938. Rameshwari Nehru also presided and acted the Chairperson of Bangalore session of December, 1941.⁸³

At the first meeting of the Conference in 1927 there were eighty-seven members from the local reception committee, fifty eight delegates from local conferences and over two thousand observers (men and women). Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekwad of Baroda

83 "Appendix 9 : Past Presidents, Chairpersons and Hon. General Secretaries," Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle*, pp. 214-217.

was the first President of AIWC.⁸⁴ Mrs. Sarla Devi Chaudharani represented Punjab and participated in this first Session. Begum Shah Nawaz was enlisted as one of the delegate but she was not able to attend the session due to some reasons.⁸⁵ The first session of AIWC concluded on the 8 January, beginning on 5 January, 1927 and adopted several resolutions urging addition of fine arts, advanced domestic science, journalism, social service and architecture as optional subjects to the college curricula and that scholarships be offered to women students to attract them to take up law, medicine, social science and fine arts.⁸⁶

The Second conference was held in Delhi under the Presidentship of Begum of Bhopal in February 1928. In January 1929, Patna was the venue of the third conference under Rani of Mandi as President. The fourth conference was held in Bombay with Sarojini Naidu as the President. In all these sessions Sarla Devi Chaudharani and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur represented Punjab.⁸⁷

The fifth session of AIWC was held at the capital of Punjab, Lahore, Muthulakshmi Reddi presided the session and Lady Abdul Qadir of Lahore was President of the Reception committee. Abdul Qadir delivered her lecture regarding the female education and also

84 Geraldine Forbes, *Women In Modern India*, p. 79.

85 "Appendix 8 : Inaugural Session of AIWC, Poona, Jan. 1927," Aparna Basu and Bharti Ray, *Women's Struggle*, pp. 210-213.

86 *The Indian Quarterly Register*, vol. I, Jan-June, 1927, Calcutta, The Annual Register Office, 1927, p. 427.

87 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, vol. I. 1935, pp. 377-378.

spoke on ill effects of the purdah system.⁸⁸ As the session was in Punjab, many women from Punjab participated in this session. Many resolutions were also proposed by these Punjabi women. “Mrs. Kamla Kaul moved the resolution regarding the appointment of at least one women magistrate in courts where the cases of the minor were to be decided.⁸⁹ Another Punjabi lady Sardarni Pritam Kaur proposed the resolution to pressurize the government by all the reform sabhas and Samajs regarding the cleaning of villages, towns and cities in different parts of the country.⁹⁰ Begum Mamdot of Ferozepur condemned the purdah system and gave her example of leaving purdah against her family traditions and proposed a resolution against purdah which was passed unanimously.⁹¹ Rajkumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala proposed the resolution regarding the Pachmari scheme of opening Central Home Science Institute at Delhi. And this resolution was also passed unanimously and about rupees one lakh were collected for that cause.⁹² Hence, the Lahore session of AIWC witnessed various Punjabi women participation and these women proposed various resolutions on important issues.

The sixth session of Madras commenced from 28 December, 1931 to 1 January, 1932. Mrs. P.K. Roy presided the session and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur acted as the Chairperson. Miss Khadija Begum

88 *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur, Jan. 1931, pp. 3-4.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

91 *Ibid.*, pp.8 -9

92 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Ferozuddin of Lahore, Mrs. Miles Irwin and Begum Shah Nawaz of Lahore represented the women of Punjab during the session.⁹³ Begum Ferozuddin supporting the resolution of physical training in girls' schools said that it was a crying need of the day and if one wants the progress of nation then physical training was a must in the schools.⁹⁴ Mrs. Miles Irwin and Begum Ferozuddin also supported the resolution proposed by Srimati Chellammal of Madras regarding the appointment of women teachers in all private and public bodies dealing with education.⁹⁵

During the seventh session of 1933 at Lucknow under Lady Vidyagaur Nilkanth as the President, it was decided to send Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur on the behalf of AIWC to speak to the government of India for the Indian women's demand for right to vote.⁹⁶

The eight session of AIWC of December, 1933 at Calcutta witnessed a Punjabi lady as the President.⁹⁷ Lady Abdul Qadir, apart from having done signal service in the cause of the education of Muslim girls in the Punjab, she founded an Industrial School for women in Lahore and gave her time and energy to all movements of a beneficial and cosmopolitan nature without distinction of caste, creed or colour.⁹⁸ Mrs. Brijlal Nehru of Lahore and Sardarni Pritam Kaur of

93 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-December, 1931, Vol. II, Calcutta, pp. 274-287.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 280.

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

96 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, 1933, Vol. I, p. 28.

97 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, 1933, Vol. I, p. 28.

98 "Address of Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University," *Report of AIWC 1934*, p. 37.

Ambala also attended the session.⁹⁹ Miss Sushila Sethi, Mrs. S.K. Datta, Miss Shakuntala Bhandari, Miss P. Thaper, Miss K. Sehgal, Miss D. Sehgal, Mrs. Chopra and Mrs. Hiralal were the delegates from the Central part of Punjab. Miss Hassan and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur represented the eastern part of Punjab in this session of 1934.¹⁰⁰ Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur proposed the following resolution in the second day session of conference on 28 December.

“Believing that the welfare of nations and classes depends on the building of a new order.” She said the new order was based on unity, patriotism and love of humanity.¹⁰¹ This resolution was unanimously passed. ‘The Resolution proposed by Mrs. N.C. Sen about the appeal to all Indian men and women to eradicate the evil of untouchability from Society’¹⁰² was supported by Miss Sushila Sethi with other delegates of the conference. She said that ‘it is genuinely seen that ladies are more particular about caste and creed than men. So the women should try to enter the lives of untouchables as one of them and should invite them to our houses now and again. And all of us resolve to give our active help to the removal of untouchability which is a great blot on the fair name of our Motherland.’¹⁰³ Thus, in each session of AIWC women from different parts of Punjab were actively participating and used to discuss all the burning issues regarding women as well as other social evils of the society.

99 *Report of AIWC, 1934, p. 5.*

100 *Ibid., p. 9.*

101 *Ibid., pp. 59-60.*

102 *Ibid., p. 129.*

103 *Ibid., pp. 134-135.*

The ninth session of the conference was opened on the 29 December, 1934 at the Khali Kdina Hall, Karachi.¹⁰⁴ The session was presided by Hilla Rustamji Fardoonji. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur represented Punjab and Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali came from Delhi. Begum Shah Nawaz of Lahore and Mrs. Brijlal Nehru also attended the session.¹⁰⁵ Amrit Kaur read her paper on the report of the Liaison Officer. She discussed how she tried to establish contact with women's organisation abroad and how she tried to secure their support and interest in Indian affairs. And due to her efforts two British ladies came to India and participated in this session - Dr. Maude Royden and Mrs. Corbett Ashby.¹⁰⁶ The resolution introduced by Mrs. Janaki Charry of Trauancore claiming co-education as the only way to improve the slow progress of Indian women was rejected by Mrs. Kalandarali Khan of Punjab (Central) and Dr. (Miss) Ferozuddin of Lahore. They both favoured separate schools for both the sexes. But Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur supported this resolution. However, this resolution due to lack of supporting votes was not passed in the session.¹⁰⁷ This indicated that women of Punjab were becoming aware day by day and were able to discuss the pros and cons of the issues discussed in the sessions of conference.

104 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-December, 1934, Vol. II, p. 353.

105 *Ibid.*, pp. 353-354.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 356.

107 *Ibid.*, pp.359-360.

All India Women's Conference's tenth session was held in Trivandrum from 28 December, 1935 to 2 January, 1936. In this session, the President Her Highness Maharani Sethu Parbathi Bai of Travancore stressed that the fundamental problem of women was not political and social but economic.¹⁰⁸ Amrit Kaur and Shah Nawaz agreed with the President and laid stress on economic independence of women and appealed to girl students to opt more for professional and vocational courses, so that they could earn their livelihood.¹⁰⁹ In this session, Amrit Kaur was also elected as the Vice-President of AIWC for 1936.¹¹⁰

Amrit Kaur was the active member of the later sessions of Ahmedabad (1936), Nagpur (1937), and Delhi (1938). She presided the Nagpur session and was chairperson of the Delhi Session.¹¹¹ Begum Shah Nawaz, Manmohini Zutshi of Lahore, Rameshwari Nehru and Sarla Devi Chaudharani were other representatives of Punjab in these session.¹¹²

In the fourteenth session in the Senate Hall of the Allahabad University on 27 January, 1940 under the presidency of Begum Hamid Ali,¹¹³ Brij Lal Nehru, Shah Nawaz and Amrit Kaur discussed

108 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-December, 1935, Vol. II, p. 352.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 364.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 365.

111 Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle*, p. 214.

112 Raj Kumar, Rameshwari Devi and Romila Purthi (eds), *Women and the Indian Freedom Struggle*, vol. VII, Jaipur, Pointer Publishers, 1998, pp. 100-102.

113 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June, 1940, Vol. I, p. 347.

the issue of fixing a national minimum wage for all labour women in India.¹¹⁴ Sardarni Sewa Singh Gill of Punjab propagated in favour of the swadeshi clothes and as far as possible urged to exclude all the foreign goods from the country.¹¹⁵ Manmohini Zutshi was acting General Secretary of the Conference and gave a thanks giving speech in the session.¹¹⁶ Hence Punjabi women were trying their level best to make the conference a success.

The fifteenth session of the All India Women's Conference commenced at Bangalore on the December 27, 1940 and continued for the next three days under the presidency of Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru.¹¹⁷ She spoke against the social evil custom of untouchability and pointed out that it was the duty of all conference members and branches to redouble their efforts for the removal of untouchability. Mrs. B.K. Singh representing Punjab agreed with her.¹¹⁸ Mrs. Vidya Puri (Punjab) and Amrit Kaur showed their affirmation with the resolution of faith in Non-violence moved by Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan of Madras.¹¹⁹ Now the concern of women of Punjab changed from social evils to the freedom struggle and they discussed the methods to attain independence.

114 *Ibid*, p. 349.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 353.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 356.

117 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-Dec., 1940, Vol. II, p. 334.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 339-340.

119 *Ibid*, p. 337.

After the session of 1941, the women of Punjab started working more enthusiastically with AIWC. Amrit Kaur was the most active member of the Conference in the later sessions of Delhi (1942), Bombay (1944), Hyderabad (1945), Akola (1946) and Madras (1947).¹²⁰ Amrit Kaur an eminent social worker in Punjab and joined AIWC in 1929 and became its secretary, president and chairperson. She was elected to the Lok Sabha from Punjab and was the first Health Minister of independent India's.¹²¹

Thus, the women of Punjab who were either born here or settled in Punjab, actively participated in all the sessions of AIWC from 1927-47. They moved from Punjab and reached the venues of the session either in the north of India or in the Southern part of India. This conference mobilized women of the province of Punjab and gave them opportunity to interact with other women of different parts of India. In the beginning the Conference had only the educational aim which was further changed to the forum-speaking against all the social evil customs prevalent in the society and eventually led members of AIWC to participate in the struggle for independence of the nation.

When the women of Punjab first started participating in the sessions of AIWC, they demanded all sort of educational reforms for the girls like change in curriculum, opening of new girl schools, physical training for girls and others. But with the passage of time, as

120 Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle*, pp. 214-215.

121 *Ibid*, p. 218.

the movement for freedom struggle was initiated the women members of AIWC, started encouraging women to participate in the nationalist struggle. They urged their sisters to adopt the constructive programme of Gandhi as to use Swadeshi products and others. AIWC made women politically active in the society. They started as educationalist but eventually became political leaders and activists participating in the struggle for freedom (this issue is discussed in detail in the chapter sixth).

AIWC held their annual sessions at the different parts of India and women delegates of almost all the provinces attended these sessions. The conference also asked the provinces to organize their annual regional sessions in their respective provinces. For this purpose the Punjab province was divided into two parts - Punjab Central and Punjab east. Both of these divisions arranged the provincial conferences every year and the resolutions passed here were discussed in the AIWC Sessions by the delegates of Punjab.

The Annual meeting of the Central Punjab Women's Educational Conference was held on 3 November, 1934 in the Y.W.C.A. Hall Lahore. There was a large gathering of ladies of all communities with Mrs. A. Latifi, wife of the Financial Commissioner, Punjab in the Chair.¹²² In her lecture she said "My ideal for the Punjab is not merely a mass of primary passed or even secondary passed women,

122 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-Dec, 1934, Vol. II, p. 471.

but an army of trained house wives and mothers with well trained captains who will drill and lead the rank and file. Every woman then would be a unit in the hierarchy for the service of the country.¹²³

In the following year in 1935, Punjab again observed the meeting of the Central Punjab branch of AIWC at Lahore on 9 November, 1935 under the presidentship of Lady Shafi.¹²⁴ Mrs. Kohli and Begum Shah Nawaz attended the session and discussed the issue of curriculum for girl students in Schools and Colleges. They suggested to make the subject of home science as mandatory for the girls.¹²⁵

The Punjab Branch of the AIWC arranged their annual session on 21 June, 1943 at Fateh Chand College, Lahore. This session witnessed the participation of large number of women from each and every corner of the Punjab. Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru was the President of the Conference. Other delegates present were Mrs. Ram Saran Das, Mrs. Anand Kumar, Mrs. Rai, Mrs. Buch, Mrs. Maharaj Krishan Kapur, Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram, Mrs. Situ Suri, Mrs. Nazir, Mrs. Bhim Sain Sachar, Mrs. Chatrath, Mrs. Sabberwal, Mrs. Mukand Lal Puri, Mrs. Chopra, Mrs. Godbole and Mrs. Perin Romesh Chandra, besides members of the staff of Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Sir Ganga Ram School and the Fateh Chand College.¹²⁶ All these women members

123 *Ibid.*, p. 472.

124 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-December, 1935, Vol. II, p. 376.

125 *Ibid.*, p. 377.

126 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, 1943, Vol. I, pp. 301-302.

discussed the issues relating to food situation in the country, Hindu succession Bill, condition of orphan children and dearness allowance for the women teachers that is all the burning issues of that time in the society.¹²⁷ Premvati Thapar, Secretary of the Punjab branch presented the report of the work of the branch and said that their activities were all round and of a varied nature. The branch's main motive was to raise the status of women and children and prepare them to be better citizens.¹²⁸

Therefore, these provincial gathering made women aware of the rights and they started demanding higher offices of the government for them. They were able to interact with the women of different parts of Punjab and joined their hands for demanding more and more provisions for the women section.

Indian National Congress (1901-47)

Indian National Congress (also known as the Congress and abbreviated INC) is a major political party in India. It is the largest and oldest democratic political party in the world.¹²⁹ Founded in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Dinshaw Wacha, Womesh Chandra Banerjee, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Manmohan Ghose, Mahadev Govind Ranade¹³⁰ and William Wedderburn, the INC

127 *Ibid*, pp. 302-303.

128 *Ibid*, p. 303.

129 P.N. Rastogi, *The nature and dynamics of factional conflict*, New Delhi, Macmillan Company, 1975, p. 32.

130 Bipan Chandra, Amal Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1972, pp. 52-55.

became the leader of Indian independence movement, with over fifteen million members and over seventy million participants in its struggle against British rule in India.¹³¹

Various national leaders and political activists from almost every part of India were either directly or indirectly linked with the INC. 'Lala Lajpat Rai' as the representative of Punjab province also presided one of the sessions of INC in 1920 at Calcutta. In all the sessions only one woman Mrs. Sarojini Naidu presided the INC Session of 1925 at Cawnpur.¹³² From 1885 to 1947 there were fifty four sessions of the INC. But as the present work is limited from 1901 to 1947, so the number of sessions during this period were thirty eight. And in Punjab out of these thirty eight sessions, only three sessions were held in Punjab at Lahore (1909), Amritsar (1919) and again at Lahore (1929) under the presidency of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru respectively.¹³³ From the first session of INC, there was participation of male members of Punjab but women started participating only from the thirty third session of 1918 at Delhi under Hasan Imam as the President.

The women from Punjab went to the nearby province of Delhi in 1918 and attended the session of INC. Sarla Devi Chaudhurani (wife of Pandit Rambhuj Dutt Choudhry of Lahore) accompanied her

131 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress#cite_note_O.

132 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June 1940, Vol. I, p. 210.

133 *Ganda Singh Collection, File no. 467* (Material collected from the National Archives of India, New Delhi), p. 1.

husband to Delhi. She not only visited there but also initiated a resolution which is as follows :

“That this Congress urges that women possessing the same qualifications as are laid down for men in any part of the scheme, shall not be disqualified on account of their sex.”¹³⁴

The above resolution was supported by another Punjabi lady present at the Session - Shrimati Lakshmi Devi who stated that all the brothers and sisters assembled in the session should have faith in God and try to remove all difficulties in the way of progress of the women. She urged that right to vote should be given to women. And if the men were advancing then their wives who were called as their better halves should also be entitled to go ahead with the men.¹³⁵ Thus, the Punjabi women were becoming aware day by day with the help of their husbands or other male allies about their political rights and were proposing resolutions in the sessions of national political parties like INC.

The next session of INC was held at Amritsar under Pandit Motilal Nehru.¹³⁶ Rai Sahib Lala Ruchi Ram Sahni, R.B. Raizada Bhagat Ram, Maulvi Ghulam Mohyyud Din, Dr. Saif-ud-din Kitchlew, Lala Harkishan Lal, Dr. Maqbool Mahmood, Mr. Bhagat Ram Puri, Rambhuj Dutt Chandhari and others attended and participated in the

134 *Ibid*, p. 214.

135 *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

136 Proceedings of INC Amritsar, 1919, *ibid*, p. 221.

proceedings of the session.¹³⁷ One woman Begum Hasrat Mohini also supported the resolutions discussed in the session. She delivered her speech discussing the work of the Britishers and negated their policy and pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity in India.¹³⁸

Hence, INC also witnessed the participation of women of Punjab. It was not on a large scale but they used to propose and support the resolutions which made their existence felt in INC's proceedings. They spoke on issues relating from their own region like Jallianwala Bagh Massacre to the national issues of Hindu Muslim unity. They proposed resolutions regarding the emancipation of women by either removing social evils or by propagating female education among their fellow delegates.

In the sessions of INC, the women of Punjab also came into the contact of women of other progressive women. They invited them to Punjab and requested them to create awareness amongst their other Punjabi sisters in Punjab. Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Muthulakshmi Reddi and others came to Punjab and pleaded women to rise and work for women emancipation.

Other National and International Conferences

The All India Aryan Women's Conference was held at Ajmer on 19-20 October, 1933. This conference was presided by one of the Punjabi woman Shrimati Shano Devi, Principal Kanya Mahavidyala,

137 *Ibid.*, pp. 247-257.

138 *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

Jalandhar.¹³⁹ The conference was attended by a large number of ladies from far and near, including the girl students of Gurukuls of Dehradun and Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Jalandhar (Punjab) and Baroda.¹⁴⁰ This conference was organized on the occasion of the semi-centenary celebrations of a reformer Swami Dayanand who worked alot for the emancipation of women. In the presidential address, Shano Devi condemned the system of acceptance of dowry for marriages and untouchability, and spoke on the non-preaching of the vedic dharma. She advised the merging of all women's institutions into one All-India Association and control of all these women institutions by women. She even condemned the evil customs of child marriage, purdah, untouchability, caste restrictions and idol worship.¹⁴¹

Thus, in the third decade of the twentieth century there was mobility of women from Punjab to other provinces of India. They represented Punjab and expressed their views regarding all the evil customs and even presided the conferences at all India level. The women of Punjab were becoming aware and were trying to emancipate their fellow sisters.

The women of Punjab also participated in the conferences at the international level. Sarla Devi Chaudharani, resident of Lahore and Begum Shah Nawaz of Lahore went to attend the International

139 *The Indian Annual Register*, July-Dec, 1933, Vol. II, p. 286.

140 *Ibid*, p. 287.

141 *Ibid*, pp. 286-288.

Women's Conference of Calcutta from 30 January, 1936 to 4 February, 1936.¹⁴² Women delegates from Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Romania, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Greece, Holland, Australia, New Zealand and China attended this Conference.¹⁴³ Few women of Punjab mentioned above also got the chance to interact with these foreign delegates. The Maharani of Baroda presided over the session and the Indian delegates came from the provinces of Bombay, Delhi, Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, Burma and Bengal. On the first day of the session Begum Shah Nawaz of Punjab proposed the vote of thanks with Mrs. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya.¹⁴⁴

The Resolution pertaining to the value and necessity of rural work in this country was emphasized at the morning session of the conference on 31 January, 1936. Begum Shah Nawaz suggested village societies and women teachers to work for the villagers in every village and stressed on the great need for the revival of village industries. She urged for the whole hearted support and co-operation of the educated and aware village women in these activities.¹⁴⁵ On the motion favouring this issue by Begum, the Conference adopted the resolution to appoint a special sub-committee to examine and promote rural welfare.

142 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June 1936, Vol. I., p. 336.

143 *Ibid*, p. 367.

144 *Ibid*, p. 367-368.

145 *Ibid*, pp. 368-369.

The Begum also participated in the discussion of various issues dealing with the necessity of including domestic sciences in the curriculum for girls schools, spoke on child welfare and also remarked on the issue of women trafficking in the province of Punjab.¹⁴⁶

Another conference of all India nature witnessed the involvement of a women residing in Punjab. 'Srijukta Sarla Devi Chaudharani presided the All India Social Conference held on Thursday, the 31 December, 1925 in the Albert Institute Hall, Calcutta.¹⁴⁷ In her presidential address, she called upon her countrymen and countrywomen to rally under the flag of social reform. Unless the society was set in order, the country-men could not step out, claim or bear the burden of political rights in their nation and outside the world. Concluding her address, she focussed more on removing the social evils like purdah, untouchability, early marriage, widowhood and others than political participation of the people.¹⁴⁸

Hence, from 1901-47, women participation was not only confined to regional and provincial conferences but they participated in the conferences at the national and international level as well. Here they discussed the social evils and the new development programmes for women as well. It can be seen that during this time women got so

146 *Ibid*, pp. 373-374.

147 *The Indian Quarterly Register*, July-Dec, 1925, Vol. II, p. 397.

148 *Ibid*, pp. 397-398.

aware that they talked of different methods to empower women. They wanted revival of cottage industries and laid stress on the economic dependence of their sisters.

Punjab Legislative Council and Government

The history of the Punjab Legislative Assembly can be traced back to 1861, when for the first time, under the Councils Act of 1861, efforts were made to establish some representative institution in the form of an Executive Council. But it was only under the Government of India Act 1919 that a Legislative Council was set up in Punjab. Later, under the Government of India Act of 1935, the Punjab Legislative Assembly was constituted with one hundred seventy five members. It was summoned for the first time on 1 April, 1937.¹⁴⁹

As there was a political platform for the people of Punjab, so it was obvious that reformist, leaders, educationalist and others went to these political bodies. So the women also did not lag behind and they either joined the Punjab legislative council or showed their presence in the government of Punjab in the third decade of the twentieth century.

On 19 February, 1934, Shrimati Lekhawati Jain took her swearing in oath as the first elected lady member of the Punjab Legislative Council.¹⁵⁰ In the budget session of the council presided by Chaudhri Sir Sahabuddin, Lekhawati debated on the resolution of

149 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_Legislative-Assembly.

150 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan.-June, 1934, Vol. I, p. 208.

women in Local Bodies. She stated that sex disqualification for registration on electoral rolls of Municipalities and District Boards should be removed in respect of women generally and that they should be allowed to stand as candidates for membership of those bodies.¹⁵¹ But this motion was opposed by almost all the members of the council and even the only other woman member of the House Dr. (Mrs.) Shave who preferred women being nominated to local bodies as they would be then gradually prepared to face the mudslinging that elections involved.¹⁵²

Hence in 1934, women were fighting for their rights to vote and to contest election as their male counterparts were enjoying these rights.

In the fourth decade of the twentieth century women were also appointed as the Parliamentary Secretaries in the Government of Punjab under the Governor Sir Henry Duffield Craik. Out of nine parliamentary secretaries only Mrs. Jahanara Shah Nawaz was a women member.¹⁵³ In 1940, the Punjab Legislative Assembly had four women elected members – Mrs. Duni Chand, Mrs. Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, Shrimati Raghbir Kaur and Begum Rashida Latif Baji.¹⁵⁴ In the Budget Session of Lahore on 9 January, 1940. Begum Rashida

151 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

152 *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

153 *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June 1940, Vol. I, p.3.

154 *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

Latif, veiled Muslim woman member of the unionist party, supported the resolution of primary education bill for both the sexes. She said that primary education should be made compulsory for girls with domestic science subject as the compulsory subject.¹⁵⁵ Bibi Raghbir Kaur and Begum Shah Nawaz also gave their consent to Rashida Latif.

These women members always fought for the women rights of education, enfranchisement, equality of sexes and against social evils till they remained the member of these political bodies. These women had a great impact on their fellow sisters and always tried to create awareness among them about the events happening in Punjab and outside the Punjab. These ladies prepared a platform for the ladies of the future who in the twenty first century Punjab are contesting elections and becoming ministers and chief ministers.

To sum up, it may be said that the reform movement of the early nineteenth century tried to remove the social evils of the society and demand for the female education made women of Punjab capable either to participate or to form their own organisations. The annual conferences at both the regional and national level like Sikh Educational Conferences, Punjab Women's Conferences and All India Women's Conferences attracted various women participants from the Punjab and from other parts of India. And these participants started reciting poems, reading papers and even proposing the resolutions on

155 *Ibid*, p. 183.

all the hot issues pertaining to the women of Punjab and India. This public participation had a great impact on their roles and with the passage of time they also moved hand in hand with their male counterparts in the governance of the province. They were appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries and were elected to the Punjab Legislative council. These women started debating on the important issues with other male members in the sessions of these political bodies. And the most important consequence of this public participation was that it cleared the way for the women of Punjab to participate in the nationalist movement of freedom struggle. They courted arrests, did picketing, went on hartals and showed their existence in the society and tried to become the better halves of their husband in the real sense. And after the independence of India they were also given credit for their work and were appointed in the cabinet of the Independent India. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala was the fine example of this as she was appointed as First Health Minister of free India.

Chapter - 6

WOMEN IN THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੇਵੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼!

(ਵਲੋਂ : ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਚਮਨ ਲਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬੀ.ਏ. ਬੈਰਿਸਟਰ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਲੈਜਿਸਲੇਟਿਵ ਅਸੈਂਬਲੀ)

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਓ ਦੇਵੀਓ! ਐਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੇਸ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਤੱਕੜੀ ਜੁੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਭਾਰ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਸੁੱਟਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਕੀ? ਦੇਸ ਦਾ ਅੱਗਾ।

ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬਣਾਂ, ਅਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੂਜੀਆਂ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਸਫਾਈ, ਦੇਹ ਅਰੋਗਤਾ, ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਸੱਥਾ ਪੜਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਤੱਕਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਿਆਇ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਜਹਾਦ ਕਰਦਿਆ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ ਦਾ ਅੱਗਾ ਸੱਚ ਮੁੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀਆਂ ਝੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ।¹

The above mentioned extract is taken from the article 'Punjabi Deviyan Nu Sandesa' by Chaman Lal, B.A. Barrister, Member Legislative Assembly, Punjab. He gave a message to the women of Punjab through the columns of 'Pritam - Masik Pattar', in which he saw the future of India in the hands of women. He hoped to see women of Punjab leading women of other provinces, and teaching the lessons of cleanliness, sound health, bravery and good moral character. He wanted to see women of Punjab declaring 'Jehad-a holy war' against the oppression, tyranny, atrocity and injustice done by the British. And he believed that the women of India could act as tools in the process of nation building.

1 *Pritam-Masik Pattar*, Lahore, October, 1927, pp. 10-11.

“Women is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he..... By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have.”²

“Since resistance in Satyagraha is offered through self-suffering. It is a weapon pre-eminently open to women..... She can become the leader in Satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does not require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.”³

The above mentioned extracts are taken from the issues of ‘Young India’ of Mahatma Gandhi of July 26, 1918 and January 14, 1930 respectively. In these extracts Gandhi discussed the importance of women in social revolution, reconstruction and in the nationalist struggle. He wanted the women to join the struggle for freedom at the appropriate time.

Similarly, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya⁴ also tried to rouse the entire womanhood of the country to come forward to take their place in the society and in the body politic as an equal partner of man. She said, “The politics of the nation are the supreme need of humanity in

2 *Toward Equality*, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, New Delhi, Government of India Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1974, p. 284.

3 *Ibid*, p. 284.

4 Kamala Devi was India's most dynamic women, she took part in salt Satyagraha, was a valiant freedom fighter and was one of the founder of AIWC.

its attempt to scale the ladder of freedom. No one sex can build up a nation. Woman has her own unique contribution to make for the purpose of enriching life so that it may fulfill its own divine mission to perfection, so in the struggle for freedom they are destined to play their legitimate part and bear their share of the responsibility in breaking the chains that weigh heavily on people.”⁵

Thus, it can be seen from the above mentioned examples of a few leaders of the twentieth century who regarded the co-operation and participation of women in the struggle for freedom very important. They encouraged their women to join this struggle in either active or in passive way. The political leaders, social reformers and other activists appealed to the women to join the struggle and knew that without women the freedom movement could not be complete.

Responding to the calls of local and national leaders, women of different communities and from all walks of life came out to join the struggle, marches and demonstrations, as constructive workers, participating in and often taking charge of the village reconstruction programmes, as workers in the cause of social, economic justice working for the removal of social evils and other forms of social oppression. The highly educated and the not so well educated joined hands to spread literacy and develop self reliance among the people.

5 *The People*, Lahore, 19 December, 1929, pp. 370-371.

Women who had spent their lives behind purdah came out to fight orthodoxy, superstition and communal separatism.⁶

In the province of Punjab, both national and international politics affected the regional politics of Punjab. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the people in Punjab were more oriented towards the social upliftment of the women. As discussed in the earlier chapters various educational institutions, widow ashrams and reformative organisations were opened. Even in the early two decades of 1900s local reformers and leaders were more inclined to reforms and were working against social customs like female infanticide, widowhood, purdah system, sati system, child marriage and others. Thus, female education was considered the best medium for women emancipation. Various organisations and associations were formed which led the women of Punjab to come out of their homes to participate in the public sphere.

'Participation of Women in the public life' made them aware about the other provinces of India; and events happening in these provinces. And most important, print media particularly vernacular press played a significant role. The appeals of local and national leaders in these issues motivated women to participate in the Nationalist struggle.

The Nationalist struggle in India against the British colonial rule brought about the political mobilisation of both men and women. It

6 *Toward Equality*, p. 284.

encouraged middle-class and elite women to adopt new models in the public domain and to engage in the range of activities such as social reform spreading the nationalist message and mobilisation for the movement.⁷ From liberal homes and conservative families, urban centres and rural districts, women-single and married, young and old-came forward and joined the struggle against colonial rule. Women's participation called into question the British right to rule, legitimized the Indian nationalist movement and won for activist women, at least for a time, the approval of Indian men.⁸

Politics completely altered the goals and activities of the organized women. Education, social reform and women's rights appealed to some progressive women but the movement to rid the country of its foreign rulers attracted people from all classes, communities, and ideological persuasions.⁹

The participation of the women of Punjab in the nationalist movement can be divided into five phases from 1901-10, 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40 and 1941-47. Only important events are taken into account and women's participation is discussed.

In the early years of 1900s that is, from 1901-10, some of the women of Punjab mainly participated in the reformative works. They started their journals with emphasis on highlighting women issues.

7 Suruchi Thapar - Bjorkert, *Women in the Indian National Movement : Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices, 1930-42*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2006, p. 40.

8 Geraldine Fobres, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1998., p. 121.

9 *Ibid*, p. 121.

Bibi Harnam Kaur along with her husband Bhai Takht Singh opened 'Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya in Ferozepur in 1894 and in 1907, this institution started its educational journal 'Punjabi Bhain'.¹⁰ Sarla Debi Chaudharni¹¹ along with Rambhuj Dutt Chaudhari founded 'Hindu-Sahayak Sabha' in Lahore in 1906. Later branches of this Sabha were founded in Multan, Jhang, Sialkot, Lyallpur and Gujranwala. The Sabhas were opened to make men and women physically fit as they were taught gymnastics, swordplay, Gatka fights and other activities.¹² Sarladevi worked for women's education in the villages around Lahore and had larger plans for the education of purdah women. In 1910, she founded Bharat Stree Mahamandal at Lahore with branches in many Indian cities and village for imparting education to purdah women.¹³

On 16, October 1905, Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal and leaders of Bengal announced that day as 'a day of National Mourning.' A general hartal was announced in Bengal and people fasted and went bare foot to take bath in the Ganga.¹⁴ There Swaraj, Swadeshi and National Education became the slogans of the Nationalist.¹⁵ Meetings

10 Bhai Suraj Singh, *Sri Mata Bibi Harnam Kaur : Adbhut Jeevan*, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1908, pp. 26-28.

11 S.P. Sen (ed), *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. I (A-D), Calcutta, Institute of Historical studies, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 289-290.

12 Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing : An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women Rights and Feminism 1800-1990*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1993, p. 41.

13 S.P. Sen (ed), *Dictionary of National Biography*, p. 290.

14 Bipan Chandra, Amales Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1927, p. 82.

15 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement (1857-1947)*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1968, p. 96.

were arranged by the ladies in their streets and spinning wheels were introduced in the Zenana.¹⁶

The partition of Bengal infused a new spirit of patriotism in the women of Punjab. And Punjabi nationalists welcomed the Bengali Swadeshi movement, the women in Punjab also stepped into the political arena.¹⁷ Thus, the political incidents happening in the other provinces of India influenced the women of Punjab and provided a fillip to the Swadeshism. 'In Lahore, women organized a Ladies Section at the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition of 1909'.¹⁸ Smt. Sushila Devi of Sialkot delivered a series of lectures in which she attacked the government and exhorted the women to rise to the occasion. Har Devi, wife of Roshan Lal, Barrister of Lahore, who was a great social reformer and editor of a Hindi Magazine 'The Bharat Bhagini', also joined the ranks of the political workers. She arranged meetings and collected funds for the purpose of assisting anarchists under trial. Smt. Purani Devi, an Arya Samaj worker of Hisar toured the various districts of Punjab and advocated the cause of swadeshi.¹⁹

Agyavati of Delhi was also a freedom fighter. She started a Vidhwa Ashram where widows and other women received political training and were taught to preach without the distinction of caste and creed.²⁰

16 Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, London, 1926, p. 103.

17 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement 1857-1947*, p. 98.

18 Radha Kumar, *History of Doing*, p. 42.

19 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement, 1857-1947*, p. 98.

20 Usha Bala, *Indian Women Freedom Fighters 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Manmohan Publishers, 1986, p. 99.

All these women helped in circulating revolutionary leaflets and literature and in maintaining liason between different revolutionary and national leaders. But still the participation of women was limited. There were no women leaders (with the possible exception of Sarla devi), girls were not included in the samities or volunteer movements, the prevailing ideology of the time was still too conservative to allow women to participate on an equal basis with men.²¹

Thus, in the first decade from 1901-10, there was a kind of participation of the women in Punjab which was more or less passive in nature in political affairs, where women were more concerned with women's problems and evil customs. Education was foremost on their list, followed by child marriage and the problems of widows and dowry.

The second decade from 1911-20 witnessed many ups and downs in the involvement of women in the political sphere of Punjab. The most important event of the decade was the first World War (1914-18). It brought about crucial changes in the political life and socio-economic conditions of India.²²

The declaration of war by Great Britain against Germany in 1914 automatically drew India into its vortex. The Indians had not been consulted either before the declaration of war or before the

21 Aparna Basu, "The Role of Women in the Indian Struggle for Freedom," B.R. Nanda (ed), *Indian Women : From Purdah to Modernity*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1976, p. 18.

22 Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India : 1885-1947*, Madras, Macmillan India Press, 1983, p. 147.

government committed the Indian people and Indian resources to fighting the war primarily for British imperial interests. The contribution of India, although not voluntary, was considerable. More than one million Indians were sent to different theatres of war from France to China. One in ten became a casualty. The total war expenditure ran to more than dollar one hundred and twenty seven million, India's national debt increased by thirty percent and a good part of it was forced on the people.²³

At the beginning Indian leaders declared their sympathy and support for Britain. Various Indians were sent to fight for Britain. Even the women of Punjab and other provinces were trying to collect money for the war debt. In July 1918, women of Sindh and Karachi were trying hard to help the government. A meeting was organised in Karachi by the women and rupees one lakh and twenty five thousand were collected and given to the government officials.²⁴

Even the vernacular journals like 'Bhujangan Pattar', Kairon published their articles favouring the Britishers. In the article 'Jung, Europe Ate Sikh Deviyān Di Sewa' of the September issue, it encouraged the Punjabi people to support the Britishers whole heartedly.²⁵

23 Bipan Chandra, Amale Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, p. 108.

24 *Sughar Saheli*, Amritsar, July, 1918, p. 22.

25 *Bhujangan Pattar*, Kairon, 1 Sep., 1917, p. 19.

During this time some people of Punjab were pro-British and not against the policies of British. One woman of Ludhiana whose husband was a police constable (he was already participating in the war), encouraged people of her locality to recruit in the army for helping the British government. Similarly, in August, 1917, one widow of Ferozepur district voluntarily came out on the call of Lieut Governor for recruiting Punjabis in the army. She wanted her son to serve the government.²⁶

However, during this period from 1914-18, women of Punjab and other provinces were influenced by various women leaders like Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Madam Bhikaji Rustom K.R. Cama. These women spoke in public about the free India. They used to get their articles published in vernacular newspapers and journals. *Sughar Saheli*, Amritsar, a journal of Punjab published the article of Annie Besant and her home Rule League in the October issue of 1916. In that article she encouraged women to participate against the government and fight for their own Home Rule.²⁷

Another important factor which led to the direct and active women's participation in Punjab was the entry of Mahatma Gandhi. 'Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) returned to India in 1915 as the hero of the South African struggle.'²⁸ It was Gandhi who

26 *Ibid*, p. 20.

27 *Sughar Saheli*, Amritsar, October, 1916, p. 17.

28 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 124.

gave a new direction, strength and inspiration to the freedom movement and drew into it women in large numbers. With his experience of South Africa behind him he was aware of the potentialities of women as passive resisters.²⁹

Thus, in the decade 1911-20, women of Punjab became active participants in the politics. The immediate factor which led to this participation was the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy of 1919. From 1914-18, some were either pro British or against British. Entry of Gandhi gave a fillip to this involvement but the Rowlatt Act and the Amritsar massacre set the stage for the active participation of women.

The Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, No. I of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill, No. II of 1919 were unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of community, as a whole and the state itself, was based.³⁰ The Bill No. II was finally passed on the 18th March 1919 known as the Rowlatt Act.³¹ It contained forty three sections and was divided into five parts. It was expedient to make provision that the ordinary criminal law was to be supplemented and the emergency powers were exercisable by the government for the purpose of dealing with anarchical and revolutionary movements.³² In other words, this act

29 Aparna Basu, "The Role of Women in the Indian Struggle for Freedom" in B.R. Nanda (ed), *From Purdah to Modernity*, p. 20.

30 *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-committee of the Indian National Congress*, Lahore, 1920, p. 26.

31 *Ibid*, p. 31.

32 *Ibid*, pp. 31, 32.

was designed to give the government power to crush popular liberties, to arrest and detain suspected persons without showing any cause and warrant to imprison them without trial.³³

People were against this act and wanted the government to repeal this act as they had shown loyalty to the British government during the first World War. They expected rewards instead of this act. This act was met with the protest all over the nation with a popular cry of 'na wakil, na dalil, na appeal'.³⁴ In Punjab, protest meetings were held at various places in the month of February, 1919³⁵ against the bills. As a protest, even Mahatma Gandhi declared the observance of fast, prayer and suspension of all work for one day - the April 6th, 1919. He suggested that the second Sunday after the publication of the viceregal assent to Bill No. II of 1919 to be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer.³⁶ Thus on 23 March 1919, Gandhi issued his hartal manifesto to observe an All India Hartal Day on 6th April 1919.³⁷ He also appealed to the women of India to join this Satyagraha Movement in large numbers and co-operate with the men in the constitutional fight which they were waging against the Rowlatt legislation.³⁸

33 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, New Delhi, Abhijeet Publications, 2003, p. 32.

34 N.N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, vol. I, Jan-June 1920, Calcutta, The Annual Register Office, 1920, p. 33.

35 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, p. 32.

36 *Report of Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress, 1920*, p. 40.

37 *The Indian Annual Register*, vol. I, 1920, p. 36.

38 *The collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 15, New Delhi, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1964, p. 189.

But earlier the date of this All India Hartal was fixed on 30th March but later fixed on the 6th April.³⁹ As the news of change of date could not reach in due time to some places in the Punjab, so a complete hartal was observed on 30th March, 1919 at Amritsar, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur, Jhang, Karnal, Multan and Muzaffargarh.⁴⁰ On 31st March 1919, a meeting of women protesting against the Rowlatt Act was held in the Arya Samaj Temple, where the daughter of Munshi Ram of Delhi addressed some women and spoke against the Act.⁴¹

Punjab observed complete hartal on 6th April. On that day, the leaders and the people seemed to act in complete union. There was complete fraternization between Hindus and Muhammadans. Resolutions were passed all over, protesting against the Rowlat Act and demanding its repeal.⁴² Even women and children participated in the programme and observed fast and recited prayers in their homes. The wives, daughters and sisters of the prominent Congress leaders also came forward. Smt. Satyawati (wife of Lala Achint Ram of Lahore), Smt. Bhag Devi (wife of Lala Dhuni Chand of Ambala), Smt. Pushpa Gujral (wife of A.N. Gujral of Jhelum) and Smt. Guran Devi (wife of L.C. Dutt of Sialkot). Even the village women of Sanghoi in the Punjab observed fast along with their men and admired Mahatma.⁴³

39 *Report of Disorders Inquiry Committee*, Delhi, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1920, p. 1.

40 *Selections from the Report on the Punjab Disturbances, April 1919*, Delhi, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1920, pp. 53-54.

41 *Ibid*, p. 54.

42 *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab sub-committee of the Indian National Congress*, p. 43.

43 Manju Verma, *The Role of women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, p. 34.

The 9th April was the day of Ram Naumi and this Hindu festival was largely participated in by Muslims and along with the usual shouts and political cries were freely raised “Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai”, “Hindu Musalman Ki Jai”.⁴⁴ On the evening of 9th April, Gandhi who was on his way from Bombay to Delhi was stopped at a small station, Palwal in the Punjab and was confined to the Bombay Presidency.⁴⁵ Even the orders of the local government for the deportation of Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal reached the Deputy Commissioner on the evening of the 9th April. They were to be removed quietly to Dharamshala.⁴⁶ These three leaders were arrested on 10th April and these arrests aroused great excitement and ignited the political atmosphere in the province. The people observed hartals, organised meeting and took out processions.⁴⁷

In order to stop all these happenings, on the morning of the 13th April, General Michael O'Dwyer at Amritsar made a proclamation read out by the naib-tehsildar. It was proclaimed that no person was allowed to leave the city without pass and not to leave house after eight. No procession and gathering was allowed and if some one did so he was to be treated with the force of arms. A counter-proclamation was made to the effect that the meeting would be held in

44 *Report of disorders Inquiry Committee*, p. 20.

45 *Ibid*, p. 3.

46 *Ibid*, p. 21.

47 *Ibid*, p. 32.

afternoon in the Jallianwala Bagh at 4:30 p.m.⁴⁸ Thus, a meeting was held in Jallianwala Bagh including twenty thousand men, women and children. General Dyer entered the Bagh, ordered his troops to fire at the unarmed peaceful gathering, leaving as many as three hundred and seventy nine dead and twelve hundred wounded as official records.⁴⁹

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 13th April 1919 had a great catalytic effect upon the political attitude of the people,⁵⁰ especially on the women. Earlier women were helping their male counterparts and were working on the advise of these men. But now when they lost their husbands, fathers and sons in this tragedy they got infuriated.

After the firing a curfew was imposed in the city and this curfew obliged a number of women in Amritsar to suffer from mental torture as they could not get any help for locating their husbands, sons and other relatives who lay parched, weltering in their own blood and mangled limbs.⁵¹ Bibi Attar Kaur, six month pregnant lady experienced this traumatic experience on the death of her husband Bhag Mal Bhatia. Bhatia also had gone to Jallianwala Bagh and after the firing when his wife went to the Bagh to find him, she saw dead bodies of children and men all over the Bagh. And later she saw dead

48 *Ibid*, p. 30.

49 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, pp. 35, 36.

50 Nina Puri, *Political Elite and Society in the Punjab*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1985, p. 158.

51 Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History : Images, Identities and Roles of North Indian Women with Special reference to Panjab*, Delhi, Aakar Book, 2007, p. 163.

body of her husband and brought it to her home.⁵² Another Lady Rattan Devi, who had also ventured into the Bagh despite the curfew order and spent the whole night with her husband's cold head in her lap.⁵³

Instead of having sympathy with the people of Punjab, martial law was enforced and for long the Punjab was almost cut off from the rest of the world.⁵⁴ Martial law was imposed from 15 April to June 1919 in Amritsar, Gujranwala, Lahore, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Jhelum, Ludhiana, Rawalpindi, Rohtak, Sialkot, Gujrat, Hoshiarpur, Lyallpur and other districts in Punjab.⁵⁵

The intention behind this Marital law was not only punishing the alleged rioters but also the political agitators. All type of atrocities were done on the inhabitants and women were also directly and indirectly affected. 'In Amritsar the innocent men and women were made to crawl like worms on their bellies.'⁵⁶ Public flogging was done. Even the innocent women were humiliated. Gurdevi of Manianwala gave evidence before the committee of Indian National Congress and said that women of their area were ordered to come out of their houses and beaten with sticks, foulest language was used and were

52 Ganda Singh Collection, File NO. 661, Jallianwala Bagh Massacre especially Bhag Mal Bhatia File. also see *Rozana Nawan Jamana*, Jullundhar, 15 Aug., 1959.

53 Kamlesh Mohan, *Towards Gender History*, p. 163.

54 Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, "Presidential Address on 27th Dec. 1919", *Report of the Indian National Congress, Amritsar, 1919*, p. 21.

55 *Selections from the Report on the Punjab Disturbances, April 1919*, pp. 71 to 83.

56 M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story or My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House, 1940, p. 358.

asked to undergo the torture of holding their ears by passing their arms under and round the legs, while being bent double. Women were abused as “She - assess, bitches, flies and swine.” This statement was also supported by other women of Manianwala.⁵⁷

Another women Jawali, wife of Kahan Singh of Nawan Pind stated that her husband, seventy years old was arrested and she was not allowed to give food to him without payment. Rupees one per day per head was paid.⁵⁸ Women were ordered to produce their husbands; otherwise their houses would be burnt and lands confiscated at chuharkhana village.⁵⁹ In Sheikhupura, houses were locked and women along with their children were turned out.⁶⁰ The male relatives of those women, who were unable to bribe the police, were arrested.⁶¹ In Hafizabad, Hukma Devi's son was locked up in jail because she was not able to find money to bribe the police.⁶²

Thus, the Rowlatt agitation disturbed the public mind and shook public confidence in the good will of the government.⁶³ Further, Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Martial law acted as a stimulant or catalyst of women's conciousness in Punjab and in the whole of India. This incident motivated women of Punjab to participate directly

57 *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-committee of the Indian national Congress*, pp. 128-129.

58 *Ibid*, p. 134.

59 *Ibid*, p. 139.

60 *Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 18, pp. 17, 25.

61 *Ibid*, p. 27.

62 *Report the Commissioners*, p. 120.

63 *Ibid*, p. 157.

in the nationalist struggle for freedom. Women got active in the Non-cooperation movement of Gandhi from 1920-22 on his call.

Later the incidents of 1919 in Punjab led the government to announce the Hunter Committee in connection with the Punjab government's doings under the martial law.⁶⁴ But this committee was boycotted by the people and the leaders of India. So it was decided to appoint a non-official Inquiry Committee, to hold almost a parallel inquiry on the behalf of Indian Nation Congress on 14th November 1919. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, M.K. Gandhi, C.R. Das, Abbas Tayabji and M.R. Jayakar were appointed as the commissioners.⁶⁵ To prepare the report, the commissioners were required to visit Punjab. So during this time M.K. Gandhi made acquaintance with the women of the Punjab and this led the women's participation in the next movement of Non-Cooperation.

Gandhi visited the province when the ban on his entry was withdrawn in October 1919.⁶⁶ He went to all the affected districts. There he met the grieved people, consoled the women over the death of their kith and kin in the different tragedies of Punjab. And appealed to all the women to adopt Swadeshi; he felt satisfaction over their contribution to the spinning-wheel.⁶⁷ During this visit, the wives of Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Satyapal and Diwan Mangalsen of Gujranwala met

64 M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 361.

65 *Ibid*, p. 362.

66 *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 16, p. 261.

67 *Ibid*, pp. 286, 316, 328-32.

him.⁶⁸ At Lahore he stayed at Rambhuj Dutt Chaudhary's (who was in jail at that time) house and his wife Sarla Devi Chaudharani acted as a perfect hostess. She travelled with him extensively and was the first to use Khadi Sari as a Swadeshi message given to women by Gandhi.⁶⁹

In the mean while, the Khilafat Question arose out of the Muslim's anger at the harsh treatment towards Turkey by the allied powers after the war. Turkey was dispossessed of her imperial territories some of which were regarded as sacred by the Indian Muslims. These Indian Muslims protested against this action of the British Government and decided to support Indian National Congress in any agitation against the Government.⁷⁰

The All India Congress Session was held in the last week of December 1919 and there Punjab authorities and Khilafat question were discussed and criticized.⁷¹ So by persistent cultivation of Hindu - Muslim unity and incorporation of Khilafat, Punjab grievances and swaraj into his political creed,⁷² M.K. Gandhi on 1st August 1920 gave the signal for the non-cooperation campaign.⁷³ Under this campaign, people were asked to boycott the law courts, government schools; to

68 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, pp. 39-40.

69 Girja Kumar, *Brahmacharya Gandhi and His Women Associates*, New Delhi, Vitasta Publishers, 2006, pp. 217-218.

70 Darshan Lal Chaudhary, *Violence in the Freedom Movement of Punjab*, New Delhi, B.R. Publishers, 1953, p. 76.

71 *Ibid*, p. 77.

72 Ganda Singh Collection, *File number 493, The Non-cooperation Programme 1920-21*, p. 24.

73 Darshal Lal Chaudhary, *Violence in the Freedom Movement of Punjab*, p. 77.

purchase only swadeshi goods especially cloth; to abstain from liquor and intoxicating drugs.⁷⁴ A large number of Punjabi Women also participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Gandhi's non-violent programme of spinning - weaving, khadi, boycott of foreign cloth, removal of untouchability and promotion of communal harmony gave women immense opportunities to show their calibre.⁷⁵

In April 1920, a meeting of the Punjab Provincial Conference was held at Jalandhar. About sixteen hundred delegates, including one hundred and fifty women delegates attended the session.⁷⁶ Kumari Lajjawati (Principal of Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jullundur) was also one of the delegates and praised the participation of women in the Conference.⁷⁷

Lahore was the centre of all the political meetings organized during the Movement. After the 1st August 1920, the women in Punjab organized a meeting at Lahore under the Chairmanship of Lado Rani Zutshi. Here various other women from different parts of Punjab gave their speeches regarding the political conditions of the country.⁷⁸ Sarla Devi Chaudharani, an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi established 'A Swaraj Ashram' in her home at Lahore.⁷⁹ Here she worked on the concept of Swadeshism and encouraged women to make khadi cloth and propagated for Swaraj.

74 Ganda Singh Collection, *File number 493*, p. 25.

75 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, p. 48.

76 *The Tribune*, Lahore, April 6, 1920, p. 3.

77 *Ibid*, April 11, 1920, p. 5.

78 *The Tribune*, August 8 1920, p. 8.

79 *Ibid*, October 26, 1920, p. 3.

From 1921 to 1922 the wife of Duni Chand of Lahore, Kumari Lajjawati, Shrimati Parbati Devi (daughter of Lala Lajpat Rai) and Shrimati Puran Devi (wife of Thakur Dass) all appeared on the public platform. The first activities of these women were more or less confined to processions, national songs, the Swadeshi campaign and meetings.⁸⁰

Efforts were made to enlist more and more lady volunteers for the propaganda work. Separate Ladies Congress Committees were organized at some places in the Punjab with the efforts of women leadership. The women leaders extensively toured the province along with the other members and delivered speeches. This led to the formation of various Congress Committees and women started becoming their members.

In May 1921, five hundred ladies enrolled themselves as the members of the Rawalpindi Congress Committee. In the end of the month, the number of members rose to thirty five hundred including thousand women members.⁸¹ Thus, it can be seen that women were becoming active day by day in a single month in a district where thousand women enlisted in the Congress Committee.

These committee members delivered their speeches at every place in the Punjab. Prem Kaur of Ambala accused the government of tempering with religion. Shrimati Roop Kaur of Amritsar made

80 *Ganda Singh Collection, file Number 493, pp. 61-63.*

81 *The Tribune, June 23, 1921, p. 5.*

offensive speeches in the Rohtak district. At Layalpur, Mussammat Maqbul Begum (wife of Siraj-ud-din) spoke against the government and their policies. At Gurdaspur, Shrimati Bhagmati Devi distinguished herself by the violent language and encouraged her fellow sisters to fight against the foreign government.⁸²

The year 1921 brought no respite from the political agitation. The Congress Movement with its programme of Non-Cooperation, and establishment of Congress Committees was pushed on vigorously, especially by means of public meeting and processions. 'The speeches were entirely unrestrained'.⁸³ The year 1922 of the Non-Cooperation Movement witnessed much more political activity of the people in the Province. There had been a number of demonstrations in almost every district.

In January 1922, Smt. Parmeshwari Devi, wife of Chaudhary Ake Singh of Bhiwani, highlighted the importance of Swadeshi before the women in a public meeting and organized a procession.⁸⁴ Women were also engaged in picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor shops to stop the sale of foreign cloth by the dealers and to stop the use of liquor. The picketing was entrusted to the women by Gandhi and no buyer dared to come near the shops where women picketers were seen and even the shopkeepers used to behave well with the women

82 *Ganda Singh Collection, File No. 493, p. 62.*

83 *Punjab Administrative Report, 1921-22, vol. II, Lahore, Government of Punjab, 1923, p. 1.*

84 *The Tribune, January 7, 1922, p. 6.*

volunteers. The shopkeepers always compromised with the situation. 'On 17th January 1922 Kumari Lajjawati of Jalandhar did picketing in Lahore escorted by the other women volunteers and it was a complete success.'⁸⁵

The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee in its meeting held on 18th January 1922, placed on record its sincere appreciation of the tremendous impetus which the province had received from the noble and inspiring participation of women of the Punjab in India's battle for freedom.⁸⁶ When the movement was at its peak, Gandhi had to retrace his steps at Bardoli on 11-12 February, 1922, due to the eruption of violence at Chaura Chauri (UP) on 4th February 1922.⁸⁷ The movement was withdrawn by Gandhi, but still the women of Punjab were busy in all the activities.

On 22 October 1922 Shrimati Parbati of Kamalia in Gurdaspur said, "No one should obey the orders of white devils (Britishers) and that all persons above the age of eighteen should join the Congress." And for this she was sentenced at Meerut on 4th December 1922. Kasturba Gandhi (wife of Gandhi) visited Punjab in 1922 and Bi Amman (mother of Ali brothers) also made an extensive tour in the months of August and September, 1922.⁸⁸

85 *Indian Annual Register, Jan-June 1922, vol. I, p. 71.*

86 *The Tribune, January 21, 1922, p. 5.*

87 *Indian Annual Register, Jan-June, 1922, vol. I, p. 14.*

88 *Ganda Singh Collection, File Number 493, pp. 61-63.*

During the decade 1921-30, the women of Punjab participated in the non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22). They held the meetings, led the processions, boycotted foreign goods, adopted the slogan of Swadeshi and indulged in the picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor shops.

This participation of women in large numbers proved beyond doubt, the freedom movement was in the process of becoming a mass movement. 'Sarala Devi Chaudhrani, Smt. Parvati Devi of Kamalia, Smt. Puran Devi, Smt. Gauran Devi, Mrs. Duni Chand, Smt. Amar Kaur, Smt. Luxmi Arya, Smt. Pushpa Gujral, Smt. Chand Bai, Smt. Lal Devi, Kumari Lajjavati and Lado Rani Zutshi were the names of few women who participated in this movement. This participation was a sort of training programme for the future Satyagraha programmes of 1930-34 and 1940-42.⁸⁹ Even after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922, women were still engaged in the constructive programme of Gandhi.

The 1930s saw the freedom struggle take many steps forward. The decade began with the Civil Disobedience movement; it ended with the beginning of the second World War and the Congress ministeries in the Provinces resigning as a protest against India being involved in the War without her consent.⁹⁰ Gandhi launched a movement in 1930 that attracted large number of women. Women's

89 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Struggle of Punjab*, pp. 60, 61.

90 Bipan Chandra, Amales Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, p. 148.

participation in Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32 differed quantitatively and qualitatively from their involvement in the early 1920s and won them a place in history. It was the women's organizations and networks, developed between 1925 and 1930, that laid the ground work for their positive reaction to Gandhi's call.⁹¹

The year 1930 began with the pledge of independence and in March, Gandhi opened the new phase of Satyagraha by announcing that he would break the salt law.⁹² The failure of the government to take up the Nehru Report and take note of the demand of the people within the stipulated period forced the Indian National Congress to proceed with its plans of launching Satyagraha as had been decided at its session in December 1928 at Calcutta.⁹³

So, in the annual session of the Congress at Lahore in the last week of December 1929⁹⁴, the resolution of complete independence or Poorna Swarajaya for India was adopted. The Congress also decided to launch the programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes.⁹⁵ This session was attended by four hundred delegates from Punjab out of twenty five hundred.⁹⁶ Shiama Zutshi (daughter of Lado Rani Zutshi), Miss Shakuntala, Swadesh and

91 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Colonial India : Essays on Politics, Medicine and Historiography*, New Delhi, Chronicle Books, 2005, , p. 44.

92 Aparna Basu, "The Role of Women in the Indian Struggle for Freedom in B.R. Nanda (ed), *Indian Women : From Purdah to Modernity*, p. 23.

93 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement 1857-1947*, p. 167.

94 *The Tribune*, Lahore, 4 January, 1930, p. 1.

95 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, p. 71.

96 *The Tribune*, Lahore, 4 January 1930, p. 1.

Adarsh (daughters of Lala Pindi Dass), Jaya (daughter of Badri Dass), Kumari Lajjawati (Principal of Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar), Lado Rani Zutshi, Kumari Shiv Dua, Pushpa Gujral and Sarla Devi Chaudharani were some prominent women to attend this session.⁹⁷ 26th January 1930 was celebrated as an Independence Day all over India. Several persons in Lahore hoisted national flags over houses and many of them had illuminations at night. Processions were taken out and women also joined these processions. Smt. Parvati Devi (daughter of Lala Lajpat Rai) along with other prominent Congress workers of Punjab, read out the Independence resolutions.⁹⁸

Gandhi started his historic march to Dandi from Sabarmati Ashram on 12 March, 1930 and formally inaugurated the civil disobedience campaign. As a result of breaking the salt law he was arrested on the 6th April.⁹⁹ In the Young India on 30 April, Gandhi had appealed to Indian women to take up spinning yarn on the Charkha and to come out of their household seclusion and picket shops selling foreign goods or liquor and Government institutions.¹⁰⁰ At first he didn't want women to participate as he thought they would complicate matters but later they were permitted to take part in all phases of the campaign.

97 Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, p. 70.

98 *The Tribune*, 28 January, 1930, p.1.

99 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement, 1857-1947*, p 167.

100 Bipan Chandra, Amales Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, pp. 160-161.

In Punjab the women inaugurated the movement by taking out a processions, meetings, picketing and prabhat pheries. In Lahore five thousand ladies took out a procession. The life and soul of the movement were Mrs. Lado Rani Zutshi, Parvati Devi, Smt. Kartar Kaur, Atma Devi and many others.¹⁰¹ On 23rd March 1930, thousands of ladies clad in Khaddar assembled in Sari Sehglan, Rawalpindi where a meeting of ladies was held under the presidentship of Shrimati Gopal Devi (Mrs. Gurdasram Sahani). These ladies took vow solemnly declaring not to buy foreign cloth in future.¹⁰² On 30th March 1930, Kumari Lajjawati delivered a lecture during the 'All India Martyr's Day' celebration at Lahore and appealed to everyone, especially women to join the non-violent struggle.¹⁰³ The Satyagraha campaign against the salt law was inaugurated at Jullundar on 17 April 1930 by Raizada Hans Raj. A procession consisting four hundred women and twenty thousand men marched and then women performed Tilak Ceremony and volunteers manufactured salt.¹⁰⁴

As the women were participating in all these activities of the campaign, the government also started arresting these women participants. In February 1932, eight women including Mrs. Hariram

101 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement 1857-1947*, p. 188.

102 *The Tribune*, 26 March, 1930, p. 4.

103 *Ibid*, April, 1930, p. 3.

104 *Ibid*, 19 April, 1930, p. 6.

(daughter-in-law of Sir Gangaram of Lahore), Mrs. Sahni (of mother Mr Devraj) and Gyandevi (wife of Mr. Jung Bahadur) were sentenced in Lahore for four months.¹⁰⁵ On 20th February, Shrimati Pritamdevi, a prominent Congress worker was arrested under Section 108 and ordered to furnish two securities amounting to rupees one thousand or undergo one year's imprisonment. She preferred jail.¹⁰⁶ 1st March 1932 witnessed Mrs. Leelavathi Munshi's imprisonment to one year and rupees three hundred fine.¹⁰⁷ At Lahore Miss Zutshi, dictator of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Miss Satyavati, Mrs. Pindidass, Mrs. Jat Narayan, Mrs. Ganga Ram, Mrs. Tarachand and Mrs. Chatterjee were arrested while marching in a procession to celebrate the inaugural day of the "Gandhi Week" on 6th April.¹⁰⁸

During this campaign the women of Punjab were busy in the Salt Satyagraha; boycott of foreign clothes, articles and liquor; picketing of foreign cloth shops; picketing of religious places; picketing of Legislative Assembly; picketing of elections; picketing of Educational Institutions and worked for Swadeshi. 'One of the most significant feature of four years 1930 to 1934 was the participation of women in the nationalist movement on an unprecedented scale.'¹⁰⁹

105 Nipendra Nath Mitra (ed), *The Indian Annual Register*, vol. I, Jan-June, 1932, Calcutta, The Annual Register Office, 1932, p. 9.

106 *Ibid*, p. 12.

107 *Ibid*, p. 13.

108 *Ibid*, p. 17.

109 Vijay Agnew, *Elite women in Indian Politics*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1979, p. 48.

Hoads of women poured out of their homes. Women of all classes and castes, high and low gave their support to the national movement. The processions taken by the women, their untiring picketing of cloth and liquor shops, their persuasive appeals for swadeshi are even today marvelled at.¹¹⁰

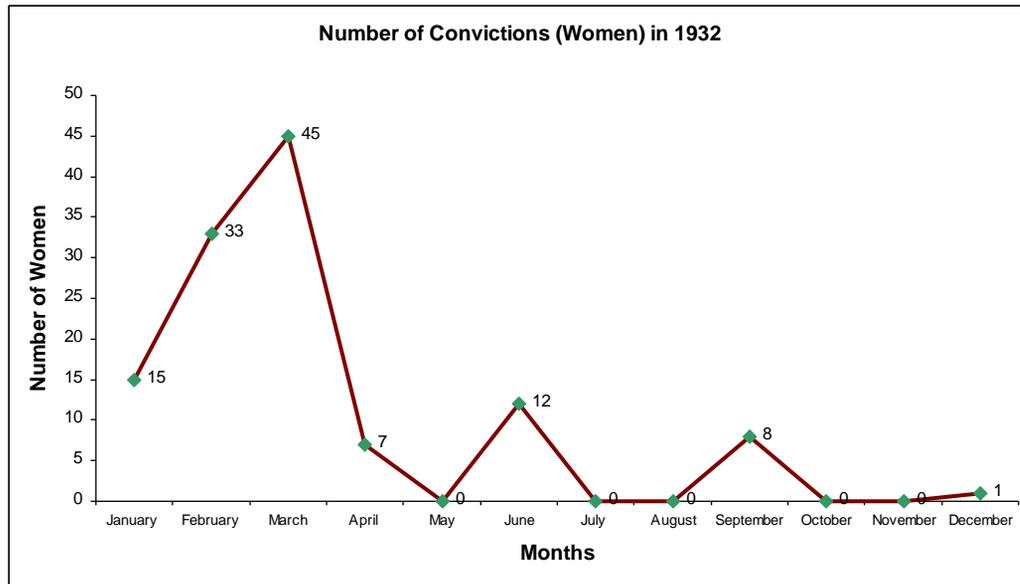
The participation of women in Punjab can be judged from the following graph showing total number of women convictions in 1932.¹¹¹

Table 4
Number of Convictions (Women)

| Months of 1932 | Number |
|----------------|--------|
| January | 15 |
| February | 33 |
| March | 45 |
| April | 7 |
| May | 0 |
| June | 12 |
| July | 0 |
| August | 0 |
| September | 8 |
| October | 0 |
| November | 0 |
| December | 1 |

110 Suruchi Thapar - Bjorkert, *Women in the Indian National Movement*, p. 70.

111 *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72.



The graph shows the number of women convictions month wise in the year 1932 of the campaign. It shows that on an average ten women were convicted every month. In India, the province like Punjab where women were not so aware as of Bengal, Madras and other provinces, were politically active and were trying to show their existence in the campaign of 1930-34.

The next few years of 1940s witnessed the third important campaign of M.K. Gandhi – The Individual Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement from 1940-1944. In these two movements, again a large number of Punjabi women participated and helped their male counterparts. During this time, the Second World War began from 1939-1945 and it had a decisive impact on the political scenario of India.

Before Second World War, under the Government Act of 1935, all the political parties of India in the different provinces swept into power and in 1937 they formed their ministries in the provinces with Indian National Congress in majority. 'But these Congress Ministries were to resign in 1939 after two years on the issue of not consulting them when government the joined the war.¹¹² The war was declared on 3rd September 1939. After resignations, the working committee of Indian National Congress demanded from the government a clear declaration of its war objectives and a promise for independence for India. However, these demands were rejected so the Congress then decided to propagate against and obstruct people from rendering any help in the war effort.¹¹³

By this time women were members and some were even leaders of the student associations, peasant movements and labor unions like Lado Rani Zutshi, Shah Nawaz and others. The presence of women in the various movements of the day was as significant of the anti-British movement during the war years as was their election to legislative seats and their appointment to positions of power and authority.¹¹⁴ In Punjab Lado Rani Zutshi was the leader of the Student Association of Lahore, Begum Shah Nawaz and Lekhwati Jain were related to the Legislative Council of Punjab. Sarladevi was directly linked with

112 Suruchi Thapar - Bjorkert, *Women in the Indian National Movement*, p. 123.

113 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, p. 210.

114 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 203.

Gandhi's working. And Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was an active member of All India Women's Conference and she always wanted her organisation to work for political gains.

So in protest against the government, Gandhi launched an Individual Satyagraha in October 1940. It was to “carry on non-violently and openly anti-war propaganda” and “to preach non-cooperation with the government in their war efforts.” So Vinoba Bhave opened this campaign on 17th October 1940, during which about thirty thousand men and women courted arrest.¹¹⁵ Even Gandhi appealed to women to participate and he expected more women than men.¹¹⁶

In Punjab, Satyagraha was initiated by Mian Iftikhar-ud-din, President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee on 25th November, 1940 and he went to visit Gandhi in Wardha.¹¹⁷ Bibi Raghbir Kaur, member of the Legislative assembly Punjab started Satyagraha on 8th December 1940.¹¹⁸ During this Satyagraha movement, many men and women were arrested. ‘Mrs. Duni Chand, MLA was the lady to be arrested in the Punjab at Lahore on 5 December and she was representing the Lahore Women (General) constituency.¹¹⁹ Another women Mrs. Bedi, (wife of Mr. B.P.L. Bedi) graduate of the Oxford

115 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, p. 210.

116 *The Tribune*, 19 Nov., 1940, p. 13.

117 *Ibid*, 24 November, 1940, p. 7.

118 *Ibid*, 29 November, 1940, p.1.

119 *Ibid*, 6 December, 1940, p. 2.

University and the head of English department in the Fateh Chand College for women in Lahore also offered Satyagraha.¹²⁰ Amar Kaur (wife of Mohan Lal advocate of Gurdaspur, who renounced his practice in 1921 and entered public life) offered Satyagraha at Kasur in Lahore district and was arrested and later released in September 1942.¹²¹ Pushpa Gujral of Jhelum was sentenced to six months imprisonment for offering Satyagraha.¹²² Smt. Vidya Kumari (wife of Malik Ram Bheja Mal of Lahore), Smt. Parvati Devi of Kamalia, Smt. Kasturi Bai of Rohtak, Smt. Puran Devi and Smt. Savitri Devi of Ludhiana, Chandar Wati of Ferozepur and many others participated in the movement of Individual Satyagraha.¹²³

In the Individual Satyagraha from October 1940 to December 1941, various women offered Satyagraha and were arrested. In the month of February 1941, about nine women were arrested at the various places in the province.¹²⁴ The number of satyagrahis was increasing every day. Upto the month of April, the total strength of the Congress members enrolled in the Punjab were One lakh thirteen thousand two hundred and seventy seven. Among them four thousand two hundred and fifty six were women Congress members.¹²⁵

120 *Ibid*, 7 December, 1940, p. 2.

121 *Ibid*, Lahore, 30 September, 1940, p. 9.

122 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, p. 221.

123 Manju Verma, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, pp. 122-126.

124 *The Tribune*, March 1, 1940, p. 3.

125 *Ibid*, March 9, 1941, p. 5.

Every month number of women were taking permission from Gandhi to participate in the Individual Satyagraha. But the participation of the Punjabi women was limited as only a few women of prominence chosen by Gandhi were given the right to offer Satyagraha. Like Shanno Devi, Smt. Rameshwari Devi and others were not allowed by Gandhi to court arrest and instead were asked to participate in the constructive programme.

Finally on 8th August 1942, the All India Congress Committee in its historic session at Bombay, ratified the "Quit India" resolution of 14th July 1942 passed at Wardha by the Congress working committee by an overwhelming majority.¹²⁶ Gandhi called on all Indians to begin to feel that they are free and he asked teachers and students to be ready to get out.¹²⁷

Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur along with Rameshwari Nehru and Aruna Asaf Ali, representing the All India Women's conference appealed to the government to settle the problem of India's political demand of independence and quit India,¹²⁸ And during this Quit India movement of 1942, Shrimati Lajyawati (Mrs. Hemraj), Shrimati Lakshmi Devi (Mrs. Om Prakash trikha), Smt. Savitri Devi (Mrs. Ram Krishan), who it was stated held a demonstration in Anarkali on 26 August by raising Congress slogan and singing national songs were

126 *Ibid*, p. 132.

127 *The Tribune*, 9 August, 1942, p. 1.

128 *Ibid*, 17 August, 1942, p. 8.

arrested at Lahore by the police while they marched with the national flag. Smt. Satyawati (Mrs. Achint Ram) was also there and was arrested along with her son and twelve year old daughter.¹²⁹ Another Congress lady worker of Lahore Smt. Parbati Devi was also arrested on the same day.¹³⁰

Smt. Rameshwari Nehru, ex-president of the AIWC, president of the Central Punjab branch of the AIWC, Vice president of the Punjab Harijan Sewak Sang was also put into jail on 29 August and she had been appointed as second 'dictator' of the Punjab Provincial congress Committee by Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din.¹³¹ And later she was released on 31 August with restrictions on her movement.¹³²

Sucheta Majumdar Kriplani (born in Ambala, Punjab and did her studies from Punjab and Delhi and was married to Acharaya Kriplani of Allahabad) was chosen to organize women's wing of the Indian National Congress in 1940. The department used to work for raising the political consciousness of women and identify Congress with social change that benefited women.¹³³ A trusted lieutenant of Gandhiji, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur took up the task of the uplift of women on her shoulders and was very active during the Quit India movement in 1942.¹³⁴ She led processions day after day. One

129 *Ibid*, 27 August, 1942, p. 5.

130 *Ibid*, p. 5.

131 *Ibid*, 30 August, 1942, p. 5.

132 *Ibid*, 1 September, 1942, p. 9.

133 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 208.

134 *Personalities : A Comprehensive and Authentic Biographical Dictionary of Men who Matter in India*, New Delhi, Arunam and Sheel Publishers, p. 25.

procession was subjected to ruthless lathi charge in Simla. From 9 August to 16 August the processions led by her were subject to lathi charge fifteen times.¹³⁵

The women of Punjab organised spontaneous hartals and demonstrations in several cities of the province to protest against the Britishers. The young girls were also not lagging behind. In Amritsar, about three dozen young college girls hoisted the tri-colour flag as a mark of 'Gandhi Jayanti' celebrations in Chowk Phuharawala on October 2, 1942. They also took out a procession. But the police reached there and to disperse the crowd, the police lathi charged and removed the girls to some unknown place. The arrested girls were let off after few hours of detention.¹³⁶

During this movement everyday hartals were observed and educational institutions were closed. Processions were organised despite prohibitory orders of the Government. Girl students took a prominent part in these processions and in distribution of anti-government literature.

Some of the women even started working secretly in the underground organisations to evade police arrests. 'Smt. Subhadra Joshi was one of them who undertook the work of editing an cyclostyled paper *Hamara Sangram*. This paper was published in

135 Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, pp. 218, 219.

136 *The Tribune*, October, 1942, p. 9.

Hindi from Delhi. She became target of the C.I.D. officials and was later arrested.¹³⁷ Luxmi Arya of Rohtak was also involved in the underground activities. She joined these underground political activities after taking leave from her school. She went from place to place and carried the message of the Congress from door to door hiding at her personal risk to avoid detention, so that movement could be kept alive outside the jail among the masses.¹³⁸

The political active women leaders were arrested and the treatment meted out to them was vindictive and far from satisfactory. Pattabhi Sitaramayya commented, "The treatment with women was not good and this is a tale that the nation would never forget...."¹³⁹ Rajkumari Amrit Kaur when arrested at Kalka for leading processions was kept in Ambala Jail like an ordinary prisoner for a month. She was not allowed to carry her suitcase of clothes. There was no arrangement for bathing and food given was bad, unclean and uncooked.

Sometimes women were also kept in solitary confinements to pressurize them to leave the movement. Smt. Shakuntala Rishi was kept in Gurdaspur jail in a solitary cell for quite some time. Their relatives were not allowed to meet them. And at the time of illness,

137 Personal interview with Smt. Subhadra Joshi cited in Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*.

138 Personal interview with Smt. Luxmi Arya cited in Manju Verma, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*.

139 Pattabhi Sitarmayya, *History of the Indian National Congress, vol. II*, New Delhi, S. Chand and Company, 1969, p. 761.

women were not given proper medical facilities. Inadequate medical treatment and bad food of the jail affected the health of women political prisoners.

Thus, during the Individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement, women from every nook and corner of the Punjab participated. Young girl students did not lag behind. They courted arrests and when they were in jails they happily accepted all the harsh treatment of the Britishers.

In this campaign Gandhi asked women to use the previously sanctioned techniques of salt making, boycotts of courts and schools, picketing cloth and liquor shops and non-payment of taxes. People were asked to court arrests. The movement began in the province with strikes, demonstrations and processions. Women participated in the initial strikes and demonstrations in cities, were among the radical students who organised peasant movements, and, when protest was suppressed, joined the secret underground movements.

Hence, the participation of women of Punjab in the nationalist movement succeeded step by step from 1901-10, 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40 and 1941-47. In 1901-10, political upheavals in the province of Bengal affected Punjabi women and few women showed their sympathy with the Bengali people. The decade 1911-20 was the most important decade as the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the Martial law of 1919 acted as a catalyst for creating women consciousness for

fighting for the freedom of India. Then these women victims and other sympathetic women directly jumped into the Non-Cooperation movement of 1920. The decade 1921-30, witnessed the direct involvement of women of Punjab in the freedom struggle and these women came into the contact of M.K. Gandhi. The decade 1931-40 was the period of civil disobedience and women of Punjab did not sit back at their homes and got active in disobeying the government by following the non-violent methods of Gandhi from 1930-34. The last seven years from 1941 to 47 were those when the women of Punjab province came forward and fought alongside men and suffered the same consequences as the men suffered. These activist women were so caught up in this struggle, that they ignored gender issues or put them aside until independence had been achieved. And in the end in 1947 after the achievement of independence, the women of Punjab were given credit to their deeds as Rajkumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala, Punjab was appointed as the first women health minister of the free Independent India.

Chapter - 7

CONCLUSION

Men and women are two inseparable parts of human society and they have always shared sorrows and joys together. If men have endeavoured to free themselves from slavery, women have not lagged behind. But still they are not accorded the equal status to men in the society. The position and status of women varied from time to time in the different societies.

The early Vedic times of the ancient period were free from many of the social evils that harmed the Indian society in the later eras. At that time women were assigned high status in the society. But during the post-vedic period, women lost that status which she once enjoyed in society. She became a subject of protection. The period after 300 B.C. witnessed a succession of invasions and influx of foreigners such as the Greeks, the Sythians, the Parthian, the Kushans and others. The political misfortunes, the war atrocities followed by long spells of anarchy and lawlessness had disastrous effect on the society. Sons were valued higher than the daughters because of the need for fighting males in order to survive the waves of onslaught. It was imperative to protect women from abductors. It therefore became necessary to curtail women's freedom and movements. Early marriage was perhaps employed as a part of those defensive measures. The education of the girl child was no longer a priority. Shastras too

compromised by accepting marriage as a substitute for upanayanan and education. The neglect of education, imposing seclusion and insecurity that gripped their lives, had disastrous consequences upon the esteem and status of women.

During the medieval age, condition of women was again degrading. Muslim attacks made people to protect their ladies and compelled them to shut the weaker sex behind the four walls of the houses. Purdah system, polygamy, child marriage and other evils started creeping into the society which affected the condition of women. But still during that time many socio-religious movements like Sufism and Bhakti movement and the birth of Sikhism in Punjab tried to emancipate women. The Sikh Gurus became social reformers, acknowledged the importance of woman and voiced their opinion against the prejudices of society like child marriage, sati system, purdah, enforced widowhood and others.

After the annexation of Punjab by the Britishers in 1849, various changes occurred in the modern era of the Punjab. The Board of Administration was formed by the Britishers and they started working for their vested interests which in return had some positive impact on the society of Punjab. Some socio-religious reform movements began to develop in Punjab during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and played a significant role in the history of Punjab. Singh Sabha, Namdhari, Arya Samaj, Kukas and others

raised voice for women emancipation. They all fought against social evils like sati system, female infanticide, child marriage, purdah system, widowhood, polygamy, prejudices against female education and many more. These social reformers opened various schools, colleges, gurukuls for girls in the different parts of Punjab.

Various accounts were also written during that time. But it is only in the nineteenth century that Indian women started attracting historians attention as objects of history and getting acknowledged in the historical accounts. The effects of the colonial period in Punjab were viewed by various historians and many historical accounts were written. Women history was given special notice and different ideologies emerged through the different historical works. Most of the writings of the missionaries, colonial administrators or social reformers were the narrative of women's slow but progressive march towards modernity following a period of stagnation. These accounts gave importance to women's biological differences, specification of their nature, the role played by them and categorized them into a single strata irrespective of their class, caste and hierarchies of their age. Attention was not paid to regional and cultural specifications of women which define women's life and their experiences. Only those women were picked or mentioned whose accomplishments were considered remarkable of recording from the male point of view.

Only those issues were taken into account which were vital from the male point of view. The early works revolved mainly around the issues like sati, infanticide, child marriage, widowhood, polygamy, polyandry and the education of women. The primacy was given to only those selective aspect of women's life which formed the agenda of socio-religious reform movements and other issues like print media, occupation, public participation, Punjabi women's role in the freedom struggle and others were sidelined. Thus the present dissertation is mainly concerned with other issues like the importance of print media, occupation, formation of organisations and associations, public participation of women in colonial Punjab from 1901-1947.

The Britishers and the reformers started using print media to make people aware about the condition of women. And the vernacular press of Punjab was the first public self expression of women's ideas and opinions and a rich medium through which the conflicts and ambiguities about the role of women in the society and nation were traced out. A concerted effort was made by the vernacular press especially magazines, journals and newspapers through their editorials, articles, essays and others to motivate and encourage women who were having a segregated existence in the society. All these magazines and newspapers were extremely critical of the prevalent evils, social customs of child marriage, inhuman treatment of widows, female illiteracy, purdah system and sati pratha. They

linked social reform with its comprehensive agenda of revolution. The readership of these magazines was not limited to Punjab only but also outside Punjab as regular articles were published of the contributors residing in Burma and other places.

The contribution of nine magazines and journals such as *Azad Bhain*, *Istri*, *Istri Rattan*, *Istri Samachar*, *Istri Satsang*, *Istri Sudhar*, *Phuleran*, *Punjabi Bhain* and *Sughar Saheli* have been discussed in this dissertation. The main aim of these was to cultivate the minds of women and to make them conscious of various social evils and political events occurring in the society. The major issues and themes such as female education, purdah system, widow remarriage, sati system, child marriage and women trafficking were discussed in these magazines and newspapers. Female education was given importance and stress was laid on the domestic household work for girls in the early decades of 1900s.

The print media had significant impact on gender relations and encouraged the re-examination of women's roles and place in society. Right conduct for women and control over their sexuality were viewed as hallmarks by the contributors of the journals and newspapers along with emphasis laid on the development of women through the mode of education. Regular articles and editorials were published regarding the importance of female education. A new woman was portrayed through the columns of these modes of print media. A new

woman-educated, free from the shackle of purdah, accomplished in domestic skills, devoted to the husband and family, an intelligent companion, an ideal mother, producer and nurturer of a strong masculine race and custodian of tradition, was portrayed through the columns of these newspapers, journals and magazines.

Female education was one of the most important issue sculpting the new woman and also for defining the limits of her modernity. Earlier the women were asked to be given strictly supervised limited education to enhance their abilities and accomplishments in the domestic arena but in the later issues of 1930s onwards stress was also laid on the women's economic independence and participation in the public sphere. The articles and editorials published regularly debated on the curriculum of the education for girls. The Britishers wanted the same curriculum for boys and girls whereas social reformers laid emphasis on separate curriculum along with separate schools for girls and boys.

The vernacular print media tried to raise the public consciousness about women's appropriate behaviour, attitude and position in society and the role education was to play in the sculpting of that role. This medium also motivated women to write articles about various social evils pertaining to women in the society. Women even started their own journals like *Istri Rattan* and others and tried to cultivate the minds of the fellow sisters and mothers in the society.

The press became a mode for different educational institutions to announce their scholarships for girls. New courses relating to the teacher training were also regularly published. Scholarships for girls in higher education were regularly published. Articles relating to the social evils were also published, people were appealed to leave their old orthodox thinking and matrimonials regarding the widows and widowers were advertised. Girl students even sent to the editors their poems mentioning the ill-effects of child marriage. The vernacular print media succeeded in its mission of transforming the consciousness that is self image, world views, ideals, aspirations and goals of the urban Indian women especially of colonial Punjab.

The vernacular print media even made women to come out of their houses and participate in the various national and international conferences and meetings. Women were encouraged to write articles, poems and essays which were regularly published in these magazines. The women even started their own journals like *Istri*, *Istri Sudhar* and many more. Hence, the media led the women to think about themselves.

The print media played an important role in discussing the importance of female education. After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, vast strides were made in the field of education. Earlier education for girls was mainly religious and traditional. But

during the colonial rule, this education got transformed into the professional education and a journey from education to occupation was crossed by the women.

After the formation of the Department of Public Instruction in Punjab in 1856, the major obstacles in the field of education of girls were discussed – the conservatism and prejudice of the people, purdah system and child marriage. The Britishers further took steps of opening co-education schools and then separate schools for girls. They even invited missionaries to open schools, firstly, due to lack of teachers, secondly for the spread of Christianity. The second excuse made social reformers of Punjab conscious and due to this they started opening their own schools for girls. The social reformers welcomed the British policies with open arms which were suitable to them. But when the government favoured the same curriculum for the boys and girls, the debate was initiated between them and the reformers. The notion of purity and religious education and the home bound nature of womanhood were integral aspect of reformers where as Britishers not only wanted domestic education for the girls but also favoured them to be aware of their society and surroundings.

The government tried to examine the measures which were to be taken to promote primary, secondary, college and technical education for the girls. Provincial government; Local bodies, District and Municipal boards; and private agencies were allied in the

administration of the girls' schools. The efforts of three groups – the British rulers, Indian male reformers, and educated Indian women promoted female education and literacy became as the parameter for weddings. Rich and higher classes wanted to educate their girls as the education became eligibility for their marriages, on the other hand, the poor and middle class people needed bread winners for their family.

The journey from education to occupation by the girls in Punjab was crossed. When the girls started studying in order to do jobs later on, then importance began to be laid on the skilled education. Hence, the emphasis was laid on medical, legal, teaching, and other professions. New teacher training institutes were opened by the government in the form of Normal schools and the reformers also started teacher training courses in their respective schools like in 1914 Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Ferozepur started teacher training courses. The Britishers also took steps regarding medical aid and education and opened many medical colleges in the different parts of India. Entrance exams were conducted by the government for admission in medical and law colleges.

The education made the women enlightened and they joined new professions and some of them also used print media to discuss their viewpoints. The education and occupation made women to achieve a high and equivalent status to men in the society.

The educated men and women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century started establishing their new organisations and associations for the women emancipation. The educational experiments of the government and reformers produced a "new woman" with interests that were beyond the household. The main objectives of their associations was to make society evil free and gave special attention to the female upliftment.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan of Amritsar was established in 1902 to promote the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, educational and economic welfare of the people. In 1903, Diwan's weekly newspaper *Khalsa Advocate* and in 1905 *The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan* was started to make the organisation successful and to react to masses. The Central Khalsa Anathalaya was established under the Diwan to give shelter to the orphans. The girls of orphanage were sent to different schools in Punjab for getting education. The Central Vidwa Ashram for the welfare of widows was also established where they were imparted technical and vocational education. The Sikh Educational Conferences were also conducted annually by the Diwan from 1908. From 1908 to 1947, thirty three sessions of the conference were held and all the issues dealing with female education were regularly discussed.

The Youngmen Sikh Association in Punjab was established by Bhai Sunder Singh Majithia and Bhai Vir Singh. The association, through its journal, *The Khalsa Youngmen's Magazine* discussed the

ill-effects of social evils pertaining to women. The Bhujangan council of Kairon was working with the Chief Khalsa Diwan and was headed by Bibi Livleen Kaur and Bibi Milap Kaur. *Bhujangan Pattar* was a monthly journal of the council and various tracts, books and poems were published by the council. It also organized the Sikh Istri Conferences on regular basis whose membership was only open to the females. Here the women used to present their papers on education, cleanliness, child hygiene and others.

The All India Muslim Ladies conference worked on the same concept of female emancipation. Even the national level organisations like the Indian National Congress, the All India Women Conference, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal worked for the women, some of them opened schools for girls and started their journals having sometimes female editors.

These organisations made women of Punjab to come forward and they began to communicate with their counterparts outside their families and local communities. These later became a platform for the women to participate in public life and the freedom struggle for India.

As the new organisations were formed by the men and women for emancipation of the weaker sex, so the weaker sex remained no more weaker and started putting forward their own demands, needs and ideas in the society. Thus the public participation of the women gained momentum. The organisations established witnessed

commendable presence of women in almost all the sessions of conferences held in the different parts of Punjab.

The sessions of the Sikh Educational Conference from 1908 to 1947 witnessed the active participation of women. Women were enrolled as members, fellows, delegates and visitors. The women initially started participating in these conferences as mere visitors and then began to present their papers and finally even started to initiate the resolutions for women emancipation in the conferences. At the end of 1947, the women delegates were even successful in attaining special sitting arrangement in the sessions and girl students regularly represented their respective schools. They came into contact with the women of other provinces and communication gaps were further reduced.

The Sikh Women Conferences were organised by the Bhujangan Ashram of Kairon. The female participants laid stress on the society free from all sorts of useless superstitions, black magic, fasts, and other old customs and traditions which the ladies were following. The topics on the child care and healthy life were also debated. Some of the participants were pro-British and used to thank the government for their advantageous policies for girls in terms of education and eradication of social evils. The royal women of the different princely states like Nabha, Patiala, Jind and others were the patrons of the conference.

The All India Women's Conference was first organized in 1927 at Poona. The women of Punjab also participated in the twenty sessions of the conference from 1927-47. The participation was so important that one of the sessions of the conference was held at Lahore in 1931. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala was a very active participant from Punjab in the conference. The conference was also presided once by a Muslim lady of Punjab – Lady Abdul Qadir of Lahore in 1933. Sarla Devi Chaudharani also represented Punjab and initiated various resolutions during the period of freedom movement in India. The organisation when formed was initially educational but with passage of time it even started discussing the political events occurring in India. The All India Women Conference not only encouraged the women of Punjab to open new schools and worked for female education but also initiated the women members to participate in the nationalist struggle. It urged them to adopt the constructive programme of Gandhi as to use swadeshi products and made them politically active in the society.

The Punjab Branch of the conference under Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru along with Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram, Begum Shah Nawaz, Mrs. B.K. Singh, Mrs. Vidya Puri and others discussed the issues relating to food situation in the country, Hindu succession Bill, the condition of orphan children, social evils, need of female teachers, doctors and others. They even demanded high offices of the government for the ladies like in the Department of Education, Health and many more.

The women from Punjab also participated in some of the sessions of Indian National Congress and went to the different venues of the sessions. Women of other provinces also came to Punjab to enlighten their fellow sisters like Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Muthulakshmi Reddi and others.

The active women were even appointed as parliamentary secretaries and were elected to the Punjab Legislative Council. Shrimati Lekhawati Jain (the first elected lady member of the Punjab Legislative Council), Mrs. Jahahara Shah Nawaz, Mrs. Duni Chand, Shrimati Raghubir Kaur were the few other elected members. The most important consequence of this public participation was that it cleared the way for the women of Punjab to show presence in the nationalist movement of India. They courted arrests, did picketing, went on hartals and raised slogans of independence.

The national leaders of India and the freedom fighters of Punjab also appealed to the women to participate in the freedom struggle along with the representation in the organisations and associations. On the appeals of their fellow partners, the women of different communities and from all walks of life came out to join the struggle, marches and demonstrations, as constructive workers, participating in and often taking charge of the village reconstruction programmes, as workers in the cause of social, economic justice and working for the removal of social evils and other forms of social oppression.

Politics completely altered the goals and activities of the organized women. Education, social reform and women's rights appealed to some progressive women but the movement to rid the country from its foreign rulers attracted people from all classes, communities and ideological persuasions.

In the present thesis, the participation of the women of Punjab in the nationalist movement from 1901-47 is divided into five phases from 1901-10, 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40 and 1941-47. Only important events are discussed and women participation is analysed.

From 1901-10, some of the women of Punjab mainly participated in the reformative works. They started their journals with emphasis on highlighting women issues. But when there was partition of Bengal in 1905, it infused a new spirit of patriotism in the Punjabi women and motivated them to enter political arena. The women organised meetings and collected funds for the victims of the Bengal partition and the participation was more or less passive in nature.

The second decade 1911-20 saw the most crucial change in the political participation of ladies. During the first World War, many Punjabi women favoured the recruitment of their sons, husbands as soldiers. Even vernacular journal like *Bhujangar Pattar* supported the British policies and appealed for more and more recruitment in the army. But the Jallianawala Bagh Tragedy of 1919 gave a great shock to the people of Punjab and indirect victims of that incident were

mostly the women. So immediately after that women got infuriated and started openly propagating against the government. Hence Jallianawala Bagh Massacre gave an impetus and acted as a catalyst in creating women consciousness for the struggle of freedom.

The entry of Mahatma Gandhi and the Jallianawala Bagh tragedy of 1919 made women of Punjab to directly participate in the Non-cooperation Movement of 1920-22. They held the meetings, led the processions, boycotted foreign goods, adopted the slogan of swadeshi and indulged in the picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor shops. Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, Parvati Devi of Kamalia, Puran Devi, Gauran Devi, Mrs. Duni Chand, Kumari Lajjavati, Lado Rani Zutshi were the few names who participated in the movement of 1920-22.

The participation of 1920-22 was a sort of training programme for the future Satyagraha programmes of 1930-34 and 1940-42. Women's participation in Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-32 differed quantitatively and qualitatively from their involvement in the early 1920s and won them a place in history. As the Dandi March was initiated by Gandhi in 1930, women of Punjab inaugurated the movement by taking out processions, prabhat pheris and holding meetings. Regular processions were led by women like in Lahore the life and soul of the movement was Lado Rani Zutshi, Parvati Devi, Kartar Kaur, Atma Devi and many others. As the women were

participating in all these activities of the campaign, the government also started arresting these women participants. In the year 1932, that is, in the mid of the movement the number of women convictions in Punjab was gradually increasing and on average ten women were convicted every month.

Before the last phase of the struggle 1940-47, many of the women in Punjab were members and some were even leaders of the student associations (Lado Rani Zutshi in Lahore), and other political movements. In the individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement of 1942-44, a large number of the women participants led demonstrations and courted arrests. Rameshwari Nehru, Lekhawati Jain, Savitri Devi and many others were imprisoned. In this movement, even girl students did not lag behind. In Amritsar, about three dozen young girls hoisted the tri-colour flag on 2 October, 1942. Luxmi Arya of Rohtak went from place to place and carried the message of boycott of the government from door to door hiding at her personal risk to avoid detention.

The women of Punjab in the nationalist struggle for freedom fought alongside men and suffered the same consequences as the men. These activist women were so caught up in this struggle, that they ignored gender issues or put them aside until independence had been achieved.

To sum up, we may conclude that the thesis primarily analyses the role played by the vernacular print media, female education, especially, professional, associations and organisations formed by them and their male counterparts in creating awareness amongst women and paving the way for female emancipation. The articles and editorials published in the vernacular press encouraged women to get education and enlighten themselves against the prejudices in the society. The enlightenment of women paved the way for them to adopt new professions especially in the field of law, medicine and teaching. As the women came out of their homes, new organisations and associations were established by them and their male counterparts for their further emancipation. Women played a positive role in these organisations and voiced their opinion on the various issues pertaining to them. These confident women then openly entered public life and national movement. As a consequence there is a marked difference between the woman of 1901 and 1947. As the thesis covers only the British Punjab, it would be interesting to study the role and status of the women in the princely states of Punjab which requires further investigation and research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

English

Administration Reports

Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1849-51, Lahore, Punjab Government Press, 1853.

Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1901-02, Lahore, Punjab Government Press, 1902.

Punjab Administrative Report, 1921-22, Vol. III, Lahore, Government of Punjab, 1923.

Education Reports and Proceedings

Mr. Arnold, Report on Public Instruction for the year 1856-57, The Beginning of Western Education in the Punjab, Lahore Punjab Government Press, 1857.

Review of Education in India in 1886, Calcutta, 1888.

Quinquennial Review of Education in India, 1907-12, London, 1914.

Sharp H., *Report on the Progress of Education in India (1912-17), Seventh Quinquennial Review, Vol. I, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1918.*

Richey, J.A., *Report on the Progress of Education in India (1917-22), Eighth Quinquennial Review, Vol. I, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1923.*

Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab for the year 1918-19, Lahore, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1919.

Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab 1919-20, Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1920.

Proceedings of Punjab Education Conference and Exhibition. 1926, Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1927.

Sergeant Sir John, *Progress of Education in India, 1937-47, Vol. I, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1948.*

Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab during the Quinquennium Ending, 1941-42, Lahore, 1942.

Other Reports and Proceedings

Selections from the Report on the Punjab Disturbances, April 1919, Delhi, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1920.

Proceedings of Indian National Congress, Amritsar, 1919.

Report of the Commissions appointed by the Punjab sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress, Lahore, 1920.

Report of Disorders Inquiry Committee, Delhi, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1920.

Report of the Punjab Temperance Federation, Amritsar, 1925.

Report of All India Women's Conference, Eighth Session, 1934, Calcutta.

Towards Equality, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, New Delhi, Government of India Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1974.

Ganda Singh Collection, (File No. 467) Material Collected from the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Ganda Singh Collection, (File Number 493), The Non Cooperation Programme, 1920-21.

Ganda Singh Collection, (File No. 661), Jallianwala Bagh Massacre especially Bhag Mal Bhatia File.

Nripendra Nath Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register, Calcutta, the Annual Register Office, (1919 to 1947).*

Reed Sir Stanley (ed.), *The Indian Year Book, 1914 : A Statistical and Historical Annual of the Indian Empire with an explanation of the Principal topics of the day, Calcutta, Coleman & Co., 1915.*

Proceedings of Annual Conferences of Non-Government Schools, Punjab, Lahore, 1928.

Rules and Regulations of the Chief Khalsa Diwan by Honorary Secretary, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.

Census Reports

Rose H.A., *Census of India, 1901, Vol. XVII, Punjab, Part-I, Report, Calcutta, Government of India, 1902.*

Gait, E.A., *Census of India, 1911, Vol. I, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1913.*

Kaul Harkishan, *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Part-I, Report, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1912.*

Marten, J.T. *Census of India, 1921, Vol. I, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1924.*

Middleton, L. and Jacob S.M., *Census of India, 1921, Vol. XV, Punjab and Delhi, Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1923.*

Khan Ahmad Hasan, *Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVII, Punjab, Part-I, Report, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933.*

Gazetteers

Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Oxford, Clanderon Press, 1909.

Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XIX-A : Multan district, 1901-02, Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1903.

Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XIV - A : Jalandhar district, 1904,
Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1905.

Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XIII - A : Hoshiarpur District, 1904,
Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1905.

Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XXX-A : Lahore district with maps, 1916,
Lahore, Civil and Military Press, 1917.

Lincoln Edward. H., *Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XXIV-A, Gujranwala district, Part-A, 1935,* **Lahore, Punjab Government, 1936.**

Punjabi

Reports of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana

Rules and Regulations of Central Khalsa Aathalaya (Yateemkhana),
Chief Khalsa Diwan, **Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1906.**

Report of Central Khalsa Yateemkhana, Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1912,
Amritsar, Coronation Press, 1914.

Central Khalsa Yateemkhana, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar Di Report
Babat, 1916, **Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1917.**

Central Khalsa Yateemkhana Di Report Babat 1935, Amritsar, **Wazir**
Hind Press, 1935.

Central Khalsa Yateemkhana Di Report, **Amritsar, Chief Khalsa Diwan,**
1936.

Reports of Sikh Educational Conferences

Educational Committee Chief Khalsa Diwan Di Report Babat of 1909,
1913, 1914.

The Report of the Proceedings of the first Sikh Educational Conference
held at Gujranwala April, 1908, **Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press,**
1908.

Educational Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan Di Karwayi Di Report Babat 1910, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1911.

Panjivi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwayi Di Report Jo 1912, Sialkot wich Hoyi, Amritsar, Wazhir Hind Press, 1912.

Educational Committee Di Satvi Salana Report Babat 1914-15, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1915.

Educational Committee Di Gyarvin Salana Report Babat 1918-19, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1920.

Educational Committee Di Gyarvin Salana Report 1919-1920, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1921.

Chaudvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwayi Di Report Delhi 1922, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1923.

Educational Committee Di Starvin Salana Report Babat 1925, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1926.

Solvin Sikh Educational Conference Di Report Babat 1926, Amritsar, Panthank Press, 1926.

Univi Sikh Educational Conference Di Report Jo Montgomery wich 1928 Nu Hoyi, Amritsar, Panthak Press, 1928.

Educational Committee Di Beenvi Salana Report, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1928.

Report of the Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan for the Year 1928, Amritsar, Panthic Press, 1929.

The Brief Report of the Educational Committee of Chief Khalsa Diwan of the Year 1928, Amritsar, Panthank Press, 1929.

Educational Committee Di Bayinvi Salana Report, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1931.

Bayinvi Sikh Educational Conference Lahore Di Report Babat 1932, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1932.

Educational Committee Di Salana Report Babat 1932, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1933.

Educational Committee Chief Khalsa Diwan Di Report Babat 1934, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1935.

Stayinvi Sikh Educational Conference Di Karwayi Di Report Babat 1938, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1939.

Other Reports

Guru Singh Sabha Bagbanpur Lahore De Niyam, 15 April' 1929, Amritsar, Khalsa Press, 1929.

Mutfarak Kavita Ate Lekh Jo Ferozepur Ashram, Kairon Ashram, Bhai Hira Singh Ate Diwan Chand Ne Panjivi Sikh Educational Conference Layi Likhe, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1912.

Kavita Jo Chenvi Sikh Educational Conference Wich Padiyan Jan Layi Tayaar Hoyiarn : Krit Dr. Harnam Singh, Babu Jagjeet Singh, Bibi Chattar Kaur and Bhai Duni Chand, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1913.

The Sikh Education – a paper written by Bibi Savitri Devi for the Seventh Sikh Educational Conference Jalandhar, Amritsar, Coronation Press, 1914.

Shrimati Bibi Agya Kaur Ji Da Vikhyan, (not defined).

Singh Bhai Suraj, Srimata Bibi Harnam : Adbhut Jeevan, Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1908.

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS*English**Economic and Political Weekly**Modern Review, **Calcutta****Panjab Past and Present**The People, **Lahore****The Tribune, **Lahore. (1919 to 1947)****Punjabi**Azad Bhain, **Rawalpindi****Bhujangan Pattar Kairon, **Amritsar****Huq Bulletein, **Lahore****Istri Rattan, **Layalpur****Istri Samachar, **Quetta****Istri Satsang, **Amritsar****Istri, **Amritsar****Khalsa Advocate, **Amritsar****Phuleran, **Amritsar****Pritam-Masik Pattar, **Lahore****Ranjeet Nagara, **Lahore****Rozana Nawa Jamana, **Jalandhar****Sughar Saheli, **Amritsar****The Khalsa Youngmen's, **Amritsar****The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan, **Amritsar****The Punjab, **Amritsar***

SECONDARY SOURCES

Contemporary

Balfour, Margaret and Young, Ruth, *The Work of Medical Women in India*, 1929.

Bell, Major Evans, *The Annexation of the Punjab and the Maharaja Duleep Singh*, 1882, **Delhi, Shree Publishing House, 1983.**

Caton, A.R., *The Key of Progress : A survey of the Status and Conditions of Women in India*, **London, Oxford University Press, 1930.**

Chirol, Valentine, *Indian Unrest*, **London, 1926.**

Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, **New Delhi, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1964.**

Devi, Sushila, *The Gaekwar Prize Eassy : The Ideal of Hindu Womanhood with Practical Suggestions for its Realisation*, **Lahore, Civil and Military Gazettee Press, 1907.**

Douie, Sir James, *The Punjab, North-West and Kashmir*, **London, Cambridge University Press, 1916.**

Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, **New York, The Macmillan Company, 1915.**

Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography or The Story or My Experiments with Truth*, **Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House, 1940.**

Gedge, Evelyn C. and Choksi, Mitan (eds.), *Women in Modern India : Fifteen Papers by Indian Women Writers*, **Bombay, Taraporewala Sons & Co., 1929.**

Greenfield, M. Rose, *Five Years in Ludhiana or Work Amongst Our Indian Sisters*, **London, S.W. Patridge and Company, 1886.**

Rai, Lala Lajpat, *The Arya Samaj*, **Bombay, Longmans Green and Company, 1915.**

Sastri, Sivnath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, **Vol. I, Calcutta, R. Chatterji Publishers, 1911.**

Sen, Ela, *Testament of India*, **London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1939.**

Singh, Bhai Suraj, *Srimata Bibi Harnam Kaur : Adbhut Jeevan*, **Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1908.**

Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*, **London, Penguin, 1945.**

Others

Agnew Vijay, *Elite Women in Indian Politics*, **New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1979.**

Altekar, A.S., *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization – From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, **New Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, 1959.**

Bala, Usha, *Indian Freedom Fighters 1857-1947*, **New Dehli, Manohar Publishers, 1986.**

Basu, Sparna and Ray, Bharati, *Women's Struggle : A History of the All India Women's Conference 1927-1990*, **New Delhi, Manohar, 1990.**

Bjorkert, Suruchi Thapar, *Women in the Indian National Movement : Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices, 1930-42*, **New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2006.**

Chandra Bipan, Tripathi Amales and De Barun, *Freedom Struggle*, **New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1972.**

Chattopadhyay, Kamla Devi, *Indian Women's Battle for Freedom*, **New Delhi, Abhinav Publishers, 1983.**

Chaudhary, Darshan Lal, *Violence in the Freedom Movement of Punjab*, **New Delhi, B.R. Publishers, 1953.**

Chhabra, G.S., *Advanced History of the Punjab, Vol. II*, **Ludhiana, Prakash Brothers Publishers, 1973.**

Chowdhry, Prem, *The Veiled Women : Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana 1880-1990*, **Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1994.**

Das. S., *Purdah : The Status of Indian Women*, **New Delhi, Ess Ess Publications, 1979.**

Forbes, Geraldine, *The New Cambridge History of India : Women in Modern India*, **New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1996.**

Forbes, Geraldine, *Women in Colonial India : Essays on Politics, Medicine and Historiography*, **New Delhi, Chronicle Books, 2005.**

Golden Jubilee Book, Educational Committee, 1908-58, **Amritsar, Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1958.**

Gulati, Leela and Bagchi, Jasodhara (eds.), *A Space of Her Own : Personal Narratives of Twelve Women*, **New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2005.**

Jokobsh, Doris R., *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, **New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003.**

Jones, Kenneth W., *The New Cambridge History of India : Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, **New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1994.**

- Jones, Kenneth. W.**, *Arya Dharma : Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab*, **Delhi, Manohar, 1976.**
- Kaur, Manmohan**, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement (1857-1947)*, **New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1968.**
- Kumar, Girja**, *Brahamcharya Gandhi and His Women Associates*, **New Delhi, Vitasta Publishers, 2006.**
- Kumar, Radha**, *The History of Doing : An Illustrated Accounts of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990*, **New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1993.**
- Kumar, Raj, Devi, Rameshwari and Purthi, Romila (eds.)**, *Women and the Indian Freedom Struggle, Vol. VII*, **Jaipur, Pointer Publishers, 1998.**
- Lal, Malashri and Kumar, Paul (eds.)**, *Women's Studies in India : Contours of Change*, **Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 2002.**
- Mathur, Y.B.**, *Women Education in India 1813-1966*, **Bombay, Asia Publishing, 1973.**
- Minault, Gail (ed.)**, *The Extended Family : Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, **Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1981.**
- Mohan, Kamlesh**, *Towards Gender History : Images, Identities and Role of North Indian Women with Special References to Punjab*, **New Delhi, Aakar Book, 2007.**
- Nanda, B.R. (ed.)**, *Indian Women : From Purdah to Modernity*, **New Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1976.**
- Nijjar, Bakshish Singh**, *History of the United Panjab, Vol. I*, **New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers, 1996.**

Personalities : A Comprehensive and Authentic Biographical Dictionary of Men who matter in India, **New Delhi, Anunam and Sheel Publishers (not defined).**

Powell, Avril A. and Hurley, Siobhan Lambert (eds.), *Rhetoric and Reality : Gender and Colonial Experience in South Asia*, **New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006.**

Puri, Nina, *Political Elite And Society in the Punjab*, **New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1985.**

Rastogi, P.N., *The Nature and Dynamics of Factional Conflict*, **New Delhi, Macmillan Company, 1975.**

Ray, Bharati (ed.), *From the Seams of History : Essays on Indian Women*, **Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.**

Ruwel, Mehar Singh, *Doctor Sir Sunder Singh Majithia : Life, Aim and Contribution*, **Amritsar, Arora Bans Press, 1977.**

Sangari, Kumkum and Vaid, Sudesh (eds.), *Recasting Women : Essays in Colonial History*, **Delhi, Kali For Women, 1989.**

Sarkar, Sumit and Sarkar, Tanika (eds.), *Women and Social Reform in Modern India : A Reader*, **Vol. II, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2007.**

Sarkar, Sumit, *Modern India : 1885-1947*, **Madras Macmillan India Press, 1983.**

Sen, S.P. (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. I (A-D)*, **Historical Studies, Calcutta, 1972.**

Singh, Khushwant, *A History of the Sikhs, Vol. II, 1839-1964*, **New Jersey, Prinston University Press, 1996.**

Sitaramayya, Patabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. II*, **New Delhi, S. Chand and Co., 1969.**

Suri, V.S., *Panjab Through the Ages: Historical Survey of Political, Territorial and Administrative Changes in North-Western India from the Earliest Times upto 1966*, **Chandigarh, Panjab Itihas Prakashan, 1971.**

Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages : A Historical Survey of the Position of Women and the Institutions of Marriage and Family in India from Remote Antiquity to the Present Day*, **New York, Asia Publishing, 1964.**

Verma, Manju, *The Role of Women in the Freedom Movement in Punjab*, **New Delhi, Abhijeet Publications, 2003.**

Wehmeir, Salley (ed.), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, **New York, Oxford University Press, 2000.**

REFERENCES FROM THE NET

**http://www.iwrawp.org/aboutus/pdf/FPwomen_and_pol_pal_pax.pdf.
(Report on women and Political participation in India, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla)**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress#cite_note-0.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_Legislative_Assembly.