

Unit - 8

Status of Women in India through the ages



Learning Objectives

To acquaint ourselves with

- ▶ The position of women in the ancient society
- ▶ Deterioration in the status of women in medieval period
- ▶ The major social evils prevalent in the Indian society
- ▶ The Role of Reformers in the social evils eradication
- ▶ Women emancipation through education
- ▶ Social Legislations and Empowerment



Introduction

Generally human society is constantly changing with additions, assimilations and omissions from within and outside. Women constitute half of the population. Therefore it is imperative to have a historical understanding of the status of women through the ages.

The position of women differed with regional variations. In early Vedic period women were respected. But with the passage of time their status in the society found deteriorated, particularly after the settlement in Gangetic plain commenced. They were subjected to subjugation and subordination. New social practices, customs and systems which crept into the society in turn put limitations and restrictions on the liberty of women.

During the British Raj, many socio-religious reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswathi, Keshab Chandra

Sen, Iswara Chandra VidyaSagar, Pandita Ramabai, Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar, Jyoti rao phule, Periyar E.V.R, Dr. Dharmambal were the prominent leaders who fought for the upliftment of women. Raja Rammohan Roy's efforts led to the abolition of sati in 1829. Vidya sagar's crusade for the improvement in the condition of widows, led to the passing of Widow Remarriage Act in 1856. The reformers rightly realized that female education as an emancipating agent in eradicating social evils. So they started girls' schools in various parts of the country, which brought significant changes in the lives of women.

Women played an important part in Indian Freedom struggle. Until independence, there was no radical changes in the status of women. In independent India, last few decades have witnessed the all round development of women. Women are now making their presence felt in every walk of life.