



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalcra.com>

International Journal of Current Research
Vol. 15, Issue, 03, pp.23947-23950, March, 2023
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.44865.03.2023>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF CURRENT RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF ARYASAMAJ ON THE CONDITION OF WOMEN

¹Seema Gur and ² Dr. Daljit Kaur Gill

¹Seema Gur, Research Scholar, Gill (Assint. Professor, HoD, History)
²Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 14th December, 2022
Received in revised form
27th January, 2023
Accepted 09th February, 2023
Published online 19th March, 2023

ABSTRACT

In this chapter have been briefly analyzed the impact of the Arya Samaj on the Condition of Women in Society. The Arya Samaj create a challenge to the process of Westernization, it was also deeply influenced by the ideology of the rulers, have been written about the efforts made by Arya Samaj in the Emancipation of Women. The period of later half of 19th century was an age of definition and redefinition

Key words:

Tsemafo-Arthur, Choral Music,
Syncopation, Fante, Biographic Concept,
Methodist Church.

*Corresponding Author:
Gurpreet Anand

Copyright©2023, Seema Gur and Dr. Daljit Kaur Gill. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Seema Gur and Dr Daljit Kaur Gill. 2023. "Impact of Aryasamaj on the condition of women". *International Journal of Current Research*, 15, (03), 23947-23950.

INTRODUCTION

The British conquest of India transformed the social setting in India. The destruction of old society and emergence of the new after the British conquest of India was paralleled by the growth of new outlook among the Indian people. During the nineteenth century the pattern of women's lives began to change. Education was one of the items of reform agenda that contributed to the emancipation of women. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the people in Punjab were more oriented towards the social upliftment of the women. The pioneering work of women's education was done by socio-religious reform movements as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna mission, Nirankari movement, Namdhari movement, Sanatan Dharam movement, the Singh Sabha and Christian Missionaries. Even in the early two decades of 1990s local reformers and leaders were more inclined to reforms and were working against social customs like female infanticide, widowhood, 'Purdah' systems, 'Sati' Pratha, child marriage and others. Thus, female education was considered the best medium for women emancipation. In fact these reform movements created a platform for women and slowly various organizations and associations were formed which led the women of the Punjab to come out of their homes to participate in the public sphere¹. One of the most important factors was print media particularly vernacular press which played a significant role for bringing awareness amongst the women.

The appeals of local and national leaders in those issues motivated women to participate in the National struggle. Thus nationalist struggle in India against the British colonial rule brought about the political mobilization of both men and women. It 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 mobilization for the movement. By the end of 19th century there were a number of women who were educated, articulate mobile and increasingly involved in public activities. In the wake of public activities the women associations were organized all over India in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, gave to women a platform to work actively and united for the sake of nation. From 1901-10 some of the women of the Punjab mainly participated in the reformative works. They started their journals with emphasis on highlighting women issues. In this context Bibi Harnam Kaur along with her husband Bhai Takht Singh opened 'Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya' in Ferozepur in 1894. This institution started its educational journal 'Punjabi Bhain'. Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, along with Ram Bhaj Dutt Chaudhary founded Hindu Sahayak Sabha' in Lahore in 1906. Later on 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. Sarla Devi Chaudhrani's the Bharat Stree Mahamandal had its first meeting in Allahabad in 1910. It was planned to open the branches of the Mandal in all parts of India to promote female education to condemn Purdha system. So it developed branches in Lahore, Allahabad, Delhi, Karachi, Amritsar, etc²."

¹K.Rajmohan, *Women Empowerment Through Education*, Regal Publications, New Delhi, 2012, p.10

²*Ibid*, p.11

Another factor which led to the direct and active women's participation in the Punjab was the entry of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian politics. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) returned to India in 1915 as the hero of the South African struggle.³ It was Gandhi who gave a new direction, strength and inspiration to the freedom movement and drew into it women in large numbers. Unlike the social reformers, Gandhi had realized some of negative consequences of colonial rule on women's economic status. This realization strengthened his decision to launch the Khadi movement³. In the words of Gandhi, entire khadi movement depends on the women. The movement would collapse today if the women were to refuse to extend their cooperation to calling Khadi essentially a women's movement served many purposes. It brought the women an income and unleashed women's aspirations to break through *Purdah* and other barriers of inequality. It also enabled Gandhi to challenge the dominant upper caste and middle class values to equate the family status with women's non-involvement in productive work. Therefore a brief account of above mentioned factors played the important role in improving the social, economic condition of women in the Punjab. So it became easy for them to jump into the freedom struggle. The history of the Indian Independence Movement is a saga of heroic deeds of men and women. The uprising of 1857 formed the background of the Freedom struggle. Rani of Jhansi Laxmi Bai blazed a trail of courageous resistance to the British. Thus by the early twentieth century the awakening of women was almost complete. When Mahatma Gandhi called women to leave their hearth and homes and join the Satyagraha then they could not hold them back. They participated in every event of the freedom struggle whether it was revolutionary movements, call of Indian National Congress, Swadeshi Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement or finally the Quit India Movement. The Swadeshi Movement was among other things the outcome of the partition of Bengal, which was announced on 20th July 1905 and went into effect on 16th October 1905. The articulation against the partition of Bengal became the matrix of Swadeshi ideology. So it was the partition of Bengal which galvanized and transformed women's participation in the national movement. Under the patronage of Arya Samaj, the women of Punjab took keen interest in Swadeshi Movement. They formed their own small groups and organized separate meetings of women. The objects of their meetings were purely nationalist not feminists. In the beginning, their activities were confined to collection of funds for the "Samaj" and popularization of indigenous goods⁴.

Many prominent women of the Punjab who assumed the new roles of leadership, were Sarla Devi Chaudhurani, Har Devi, Vero Amolakram, Ramji Wai Hansraj, Poori, Smt. Jamna Bai and Sit. Sushila. Sarladevi Chaudhurani originated the idea of donating one-tenth of ornaments by Hindu women to the "Revenge Fund". For the collection of Revenge Fund, Female committees were formed. It was a striking feature that even the Muslim women also joined the committees of Hindu women. Informal groups of women which owed its origin during the Swadeshi Movement gained momentum. Close acquaintance and mutual exchange of views among the women in these groups nurtured the idea of a formal group. Har Devi, wife of Roshan Lal, a 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. In 1908 she arranged meeting and collected funds for the purpose of assisting revolutionaries under trial. The women workers of the Arya Samaj were also responsible for arousing national spirit among the people. Smt. Purni who was working for the Arya Samaj at Hissar, toured the various districts of the Punjab and advocated the cause of Swadeshi. Women began to define their interests, propose resolutions and take action only after they formed their own association. So in this context Sarladevi Chaudhurani (1872-1954), a Bengali woman is an excellent example of the "new woman" She completed her graduation with honors in English in 1890.

In 1905 she married Rambhaji Dutt from Lahore, a Punjabi nationalist and member of Arya Samaj. Sarladevi, indeed, was an unusual woman of her time. Her organization, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal, played a crucial role in freedom struggle. 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. Though their total number were small, the involvement was extremely important. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 13th April, 1919 had a great catalytic effect upon the political attitude of the people, especially on the women⁵. On the whole the Rowlatt Act and Amritsar massacre both created the ground for the active participation of women in freedom struggle of Punjab. One of the major cause of the popular outburst in the Punjab was one passing of the Rowlatt Acts at the beginning of 1919 prohibiting public protest and suspending civil liberties. This was when Gandhi began to develop a programme for women. On April 6, the day marked for a general strike throughout India, he addressed a meeting of "ladies of all classes and communities" and asked them to join the Satyagraha (peaceful resistance), Punjab also observed complete *hartal* on 6th April 1919. Even women and children participated in the programme and observed fast and recited prayers in their homes. During the *hartal* (*Strike*) on 6th April, 1919, 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 Duni Chand of Ambala), Smt. Pushpa Gujral (wife of A.N. Guiral of Jehlum) and Smt. Guran Devi (wife of L.C. Dutt of Sialkot). After the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, a curfew was imposed in the city. So the women of Amritsar had to suffer from mental torture during the curfew. Bibi Attar Kaur, a six month pregnant lady experienced this traumatic experience. On the death of her husband Bhag Mal Bhatia, who had also gone to Jallianwala Bagh & after the news of firing was heard by his wife Attar Kaur, she went to the Bagh to find him. She saw dead body of her husband was lying between hundreds of brutally killed people and she brought it to her home.

Another lady Rattan Devi, who had also ventured in Bagh despite the curfew order and spent the whole night with her husband's cold head in her lap. This tragic scenario of Amritsar massacre was one of the major factors which forced Mahatma Gandhi to start a peaceful non-violent movement of non-cooperation and declared Swaraj as the ultimate goal. Besides the Khilafat issue of Muslims they also started Khilafat Movement against the imperialist government. So both non-cooperation movement and Khilafat Movement were going simultaneously under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He appealed to the people to surrender their titles, to boycott government educational institutions, boycott legislative councils, boycott of British goods and propagation of Swadeshi and stress was laid upon the use of Charkha and Khadi⁶. During the Noncooperation movement from 1921-1922 Lajawati (wife of Duni Chand of Lahore), Smt. Parbati Devi (daughter of Lala Lajpat Rai) and Smt. Purni Devi (wife of Thakur Dass) all appeared on the public platform. The activities of these women were more or less confined to processions, reciting of national songs, the Swadeshi campaigns and meetings. When the movement was on its peak, Gandhi had to retrace his steps at Bardoli on 11-12 February 1922, due to the outburst of violence took place at Chauri Chaura (U.P.) on 5th February, 1922.³⁰ During the post non-cooperation movement activities in the Punjab, the first ladies meeting held on December 6-7, 1922 which was presided over by Kasturba Gandhi, Radha Devi wife of Lala Lajpat Rai, was the Chairperson of the Reception Committee. She exhorted her country women to support the Swaraj Movement with zeal and courage, characteristics of Punjabi ladies. In the Punjab Sarla Devi Chaudharani was the first woman who was deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophy. She accompanied Gandhi during his whirlwind tours before launching the Noncooperation Movement in 1920.

³Tara Chand, *A History of Freedom Movement in India*, Oxford Press, New Delhi, p.13

⁴Joginder Singh, *Women Education and Sikh Reformers*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 20021, p.27

⁵*Ibid*, p.29

⁶A.R.Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Daman Publishers, Ludhiana, 1993, p.32

Sarla Devi Chaudhurani became an accepted mobiliser of youth in the nationalist cause, and was noted by official intelligence reports as "far more dangerous" to the Raj than her husband, a well-known revolutionary. Another woman who had great influence of Gandhi was Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur (1889-1964), a member of the Ahluwalia royal family of Kapurthala state, served as Gandhi's secretary for sixteen years. She admired Gandhi for his fight for justice⁷. Other women who came under the influence of Gandhi were - Smt. Bhag Devi, wife of Lala Duni Chand, advocate of Ambala, Smt. Chand Bai, wife of Lala Sham Lal, Advocate of Hissar, Amar Kaur, wife of Mohan Lal Ahluwalia, an advocate of Gurdaspur and Smt. Pushpa Gujral, wife of Avtar Narain Gujral a leading advocate of Jhelum. They all actively participated in activities like popularization of Khaddar Spinning and wearing, picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops. Between the suspension of Noncooperation Movement in 1922 and his resumption of a leadership in 1928; Gandhi favored himself is reconstruction. Gandhi 'turned back to politics in 1928 and decided to launch civil- disobedience campaign. Women's participation in Gandhi's another movement i.e: Civil Disobedience Movement differed qualitatively and quantitatively from the early 1920s and won a place in history: ® In Lahore demonstrations against the Simon Commission were marked by violence. The police lathi-charged the demonstrators and struck Lala Lajpat Rai, the great patriot of the Punjab, who died a few months later from his injuries. When congress met in Lahore in 1929, Sardar Bhagat Singh organized the Lahore Students Union⁸.

Lado Rani Zutshi, the wife of Moti Lal Nehru's nephew, and three of her daughters, Manmohini, Shyama and Janak led the movement in Lahore. Manmohini was raised in politics. In 1929, as a student of Government College, she became the first woman President of the Lahore Students Union and served as a volunteer at Lahore Congress. Mahatma Gandhi started his historic March to Dandi on the sea coast on 12th March, 1930 to protest against Salt tax and formally inaugurated the campaign for breaking the Salt Law. To respond the Gandhi's Movement, the women of the Punjab inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement by taking out a procession of five thousand ladies in Lahore in 1930. Processions, meetings, picketing and 'Prabhat Pheris' in defiance of section 144 became their daily routine. Day after day they held demonstration before the gates of the council chambers. The police and their lathi charge had ceased to scare them. The life and soul of the movement were Mrs. Lado Rani Zutshi, Parvati Devi daughter of Lala Lajpat Rai, Smt. Kartar Kaur, Atma Devi and many others. Parvati Devi was a steadfast congress worker and took part in all the programmes of Satyagraha Committee in 1930. She was arrested under Section 124A Criminal Procedure Code⁹. Satyawati Devi, the granddaughter of Swami Shradhanand, became one of the leaders in Delhi. Satyawati, urged the women to join in personal sacrifices for the nation." women that foremen domination is unbearable. Judging for impassioned speeches inflammatory, the authorities moved quickly. They arrested and imprisoned Satyawati Devi, released her, re-arrested her and finally sentenced her two years imprisonment in 1932. Women had deep faith on Gandhi, even a revolutionary woman, Smt. Durga Devi, in spite of being absconder in second Lahore Conspiracy Case, went to meet Gandhi and requested him to make efforts to save Bhagat Singh and his associates from execution which the British Government pronounced on 7th October 1930, condemning Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru to death, but no effort could save Bhagat Singh and his associates. They were executed on 23rd March 1931, at Borstal Jail, Lahore. In the end of March 1931, Gandhi came to Karachi to attend the annual session of Indian National Congress. When his train passed through Punjab at almost every station people received him with black badges but women shouted at him, "Bring our Bhagat Singh back". They felt ditched as if Gandhi did not make any effort to save

their Bhagat Singh. In March 1931, after considerable negotiations the Gandhi- Irwin Pact was concluded. Under the terms of the pact the government agreed to stop repression and released political prisoners excluding those convicted of violent offences. Gandhi, on his side, consented to withdraw the Civil Disobedience Movement and stood for the participation of the congress in Round Table Conference. The next few years witnessed Gandhi's important campaign - The Individual Satyagraha. In 1939 second world war began and it left a decisive impact on the political scenario of India. The Quit India Movement of 1942 presents perhaps the most important phase of India's struggle for freedom. In August, 1942, the All India Congress Committee passed its famous "Quit India Resolution". Gandhi started the Quit India Movement asking the British to 'Quit India' and gave a call of 'Do or Die' to his countrymen for the achievement of freedom. Mahatma Gandhi and all leading congressmen were arrested. The Punjab energetically responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Students both boys and girls, unhesitatingly came forward. It was the city of Lahore that on November 10, 1942 one hundred and four students were arrested. This number included twenty two girls." During the movement Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Amar Kaur and Pushpa Gujral played an important role. Apart from these, Smt. Lajawati (wife of Hem Ra), Smt. Lakshmi Devi (wife of om Parkash Trikha), Smt. Savitri Devi (wife of Ram Krishan) held a demonstration in Anarkali, Lahore. They due to raising congress slogans and singing national songs were arrested at Lahore by the police while they marched with the national flag. Smt. Satyawati (wife of Achint Ram) was also there and she was also arrested along with her son and twelve year old daughter. Another congress lady worker of Lahore Smt. Parvati Devi was arrested on the same day¹⁰.

During the Second World War, with the aim to attain the independence of India, Indian National Army, commonly known as INA, was organized under the leadership of General Mohan Singh and Subhash Chander Bose. Subhash Chander Bose realized the importance of participation of women in I.N.A. So a women's Regiment was formed, which later popularly known as the Rani Jhansi Regiment'. Therefore some important Punjabi women - Ajaib Kaur, Amar Kaur and Bhagwan Kaur very keenly took part in Indian National Army with the Rani Jhansi Regiment. Ajaib Kaur, wife of Niranjana Singh became the part of section of Indian women as its President and joined the struggle of Independence at Hong Kong. Amar Kaur, wife of Rur Singh, joined I.N.A. in Rani Jhansi Regiment in China and worked for about three years. While Bhagwan Kaur wife of Kesar Singh donated dollars in thousands to INA fund. She too served I.N.A. in the Rani Jhansi Regiment and surrendered to British forces in 1945. It is generally believed that nearly 70% of the I.N.A. personnel belonged to the Punjab. Day by day the differences increased between Indian National Congress and Muslim League. Ultimately, Lord Mountbatten became the viceroy on March 24, 1947. The situation was very tense at this time as a strong agitation for partition was set in motion by the Muslim League. It became evident that the unity of India could not be maintained.'So in the month of June 1947, Lord Mountbatten, announced a plan for the partition of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab. At the end, the plan was accepted by the Indian National Congress and Muslim League. Thus Indian Independence Act was passed by the British Parliament on July 18th, 1947. This Act marked the end of the British rule in India¹¹. On August 15, 1947 India got its independence while Punjab was partitioned into East and West Punjab. During the partition, the Punjabi men and women, who witnessed a great deal of human misery, showed an undaunted spirit of endurance whether it was in the refugee camps or marching in caravans or in the process of rehabilitation. They took the partition as a challenge and started with the task of reconstruction with a new confidence and determination.

⁷Joginder Singh, *Women Education and Sikh Reformers*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, p.65

⁸*Ibid*, p.67

⁹Nazir Anand, *Lecture on Mussalmanon Ki Halat-i-Talam*, Ganga Publication, Agra, 1980, p.30.

¹⁰J.H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society*, California Press, New Delhi, 1968, p.21

¹¹A. Appardorai, *Documents on Political Thought in Modern India*, Oxford University Press, London, 1978, p.43

Thus the awakened Punjabi women were mostly belonging to well-placed political and elite families, took keen interest in the freedom struggle. The striking number of women held responsible positions in independent India. It's one of the best example in the context of the Punjab was Raj Kumari, Amrit Kaur who became Union Health Minister in 1947¹². The Study of society is incomplete if we do not study the position of women. The position of women reflects the standard of civilization, culture and refinement. Before we discuss something about the position of women in the Punjab in the colonial period, it must be stated that the population of Punjab was consisted mainly three communities. These were the Hindu, the Sikh and the Muslim. Though the Christians also formed a part of the population but were in a very small number. Actually, in the early phases of the national movement, the women of Punjab did not play any significant role. Before freedom struggle women were treated as child producing pithiness and cooks. Women were kept quite ignorant consciously about the world around them. Social evils like female infanticide, child marriage, enforced widowhood; Sati and Purdah were the major factors which did prevent them coming out of the shackle. They regarded as sub-servant, inferior species, with no privileges, crushed under the burden of customs and conventions. Due to such pervasive tyranny, the women had lost the will, the courage and the power of independent thinking. Reform Movements and Rise of Political Awakening in Punjab¹³.

Under the British, the Board of Administration for its own purpose, radically changed the economic structure of Punjabi Society, established a centralized state and introduced modern education, modern means of communication and other institutions. The different communities came into existence as a result of the basic economic transformation brought about by these various Acts of the British Government. At the end of 19th century, all the major communities of Punjab i.e. the Hindu, the Sikh and the Muslim of Punjab had developed their own socio-religious reform movements to uplift their concerned societies. In this concern, the Sikh had their Nirankari, Namdhari and Singh Sabha Movement, the Hindu had their Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Muslim started the Anjumans and Ahmadiya Movements; and brought their members into various political areas i.e. local, district, provincial and national. Moreover the imposition of unjust like the Land Alienation Act of 1900, Land Colonization Bill of 1900 and the Canal Colonization Bill of 1907 stimulated an ever growing resentment Electoral Women.

Among the agrarian communities of the Punjab because for them, the possession of land was considered a symbol of prosperity and status. The Punjab which was virtually a peaceful province became ferment during the Agrarian Unrest of 1900-1907 because of the mobilized anti-government opinion and policies. A mass movement was started in the Punjab to protest against the unjust bills, under which public meetings were convened by the prominent leaders of the Punjab to discuss the unjust bills and political situation of the country. In fact the socio-religious movements had given them a common platform for ventilating their grievances. These vigorous social reform movements had a powerful impact upon the elite and educated women of that period. These movements filling them with a great enthusiasm while providing opportunities to organize themselves. A ferment of changes in the social set up brought about by the early reformers in the 19th Century. These Social Reform Movements were the expression of the first national awakening of the Indian masses. The so called socio-religious institutions and even political movements started as under the head of the Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha by the reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Baba Ram Singh, not only worked for the upliftment of social status of women but also encouraged them to participate in the freedom struggle. In this period these reform movements were much more vigorous forces in infusing political awakening among the people of Punjab¹⁴. As regards the Swadeshi movement, Baba Ram Singh was the first who lit the flame of Swadeshi on the soil of the Punjab. He laid a great stress on the use of Khaddar. Arya Samaj also launched a vigorous campaign to popularize the Swadeshi movement. Its most striking feature was the pledge taken by women to use Swadeshi goods.

¹²*Ibid*, p.45

¹³Anil Chandra, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Mukhrjee Depot, Jaipur, 1980, p.13

¹⁴J. H. Broomfield, *Conflict in a Plural Society*, California Press, London, 1968, p.121