

**SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT INDIA**

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**Abstract**

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

**keywords:** *women , ancient India*

**Introduction**

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

Even during the time of the Mauryans, the position of women continued to decline to an even more deplorable level. Despite this, the kings had female bodyguards and spies working for them. It was expected of the women who belonged to higher castes that they would comply with the purdah regime. During this time period, males practised polygamy, and sati was seen to be a perfectly acceptable form of sexual expression. They were not authorised to go anywhere without the approval of their husbands, and they were not permitted to make decisions of their own will. These additional restrictions were put upon them as a result of Arthashastra. Their standing continued to deteriorate during the Gupta period, which is when it

happened. They were subjected to cruelty and indignity at the hands of the Smritishastras. Manu commanded that they should be reliant on their fathers while they were children, on their spouses when they were younger, and on their sons when they were older. In addition to the customs of child marriage and sati, other factors, such as the Devadasi system and prostitution, were responsible for the degrading consequences that were imposed upon the position of women in society. These systems eventually became all-encompassing (Rout, 2016).

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

### **Objectives**

1. To get an understanding of the role that women played in ancient Indian society.
2. To get an understanding of the economic position of women throughout the ancient era.

### **Women in Ancient India:**

Because India is a society that serves many different purposes, it is impossible to speak in generalities about the country's many different regional, religious, social, and economic groupings. Nevertheless, the manner in which Indian women participate in the economy is influenced by a number of the more general situations in which they live. Distinctions between social classes are inextricably bound up in the very nature of human societies. The distinction depending on gender is one of them. Men were expected to bring in the money, while women were expected to take care of the household and produce heirs. However, because it was a patriarchal society, it was required of the women to have boys. This was because the son was the one who carried on the family lineage and performed the rituals associated with death. It was possible for widows to marry again, but only under particular constraints. The morality of women was held to a high standard, despite the fact that men were not held to the same level of faithfulness as was demanded of their wives. During this time period, the practise of getting a divorce was not common. According to the Rig Veda, a widow has the legal authority to remarry with the brother of her deceased husband. The Rig Veda acknowledged the right of unmarried daughters to inherit their father's property, but it excluded married daughters from this privilege. The women's once-preeminent position in the home gradually became less important as a result of the gradual shift in responsibility for religious rituals from the women to the priests. The 'anuloma' system of marriage, in which a man from a higher caste would marry a woman from a lower caste, became prevalent during the Age of the Upanishads. This was the time in which the Upanishads were written.

### **Pre-Vedic Period:**

The arrival of Aryans in India about the 15th century B.C. marked the beginning of documented history in India. At the beginning of the Vedic era, the patriarchal civilization succeeded in wiping out the matriarchal society. It is possible that this event marked the beginning of prejudice against women in India. The historical period that is highlighted by the Rigveda demonstrates that religious concern was prioritised above civic life at that time. Before the advent of Islam in the eighth century, Vedic culture was widely practised throughout the world. In India, the time period that is now regarded to be mediaeval history was also during this time period that patriarchal society was prevalent. This time period follows the Muslim invasion. When compared to the Vedic age, the Islamic era was not all that unlike in terms of the patriarchal order that was maintained within social life. After the reign of the Muslims, the British established their "Raj" in the 18th century. In addition to this, it had a strong patriarchal bias. Patriarchy and patriarchal social organisation have been the norm over the course of the previous few centuries; similarly, gender discrimination has been the norm. An examination of the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and Epics sheds light on the position of women in ancient Indian society as well as their quest for political power. There is a lack of evidence on the position of women in pre-Vedic society. It is generally accepted that prehistoric man, who resided throughout the Paleolithic period, led a nomadic lifestyle. The primary activity consisted of the collection of food. Neolithic man is credited with the development of culture and civilization. During this time period, man gradually transitioned from a food gatherer to a food producer. The first human communities were established in the river valleys. It is believed that the Indus valley civilisation, which is considered to be the first known civilization in India, was at its peak around the 25th century B.C. The people of this civilisation appear to have worshipped the natural forces of the world around them, and their allusions to divine beings were predominantly feminine, according to historical data. Many people refer to nature as their mother. The people who lived in the Indus Valley civilisation revered their mother goddess as their first and foremost divinity. Based on these discoveries, we might reach the conclusion that the Indus community was predominately matriarchal. Mothers often took the role of primary carers. The mother maintained dominance over her offspring. The tradition of having only one spouse was not widespread until much later in human history, and it was uncommon to acknowledge a man's paternal responsibility in a woman's offspring. There is evidence to support the hypothesis that in ancient India there was no such thing as gender bias or discrimination. In the matriarchal societies of pre-historic India, polyandry was a fairly prevalent practise. Women were thought to be the masters of the house, demanding the respect of children and young adults, during a time when the involvement of the father in the birthing process was unknown. For the same reason, several ancient civilizations from all over the world followed a matriarchal social structure. In prehistoric times, societies did not remain permanently rooted in one location; rather, they wandered from place to place in search of food, which occupied the majority of their waking hours. Food collection was the sole economic activity available to the people, and both men and women participated in it.

### **Women in Vedic Literature:**

The nomadic way of life gave way to a more established way of life during the Vedic period, which was an important historical time for the development of human civilization. There is evidence to suggest that women were accorded a certain level of respect and possibilities in household life throughout the early Vedic period. She was seen as her children's creator, guardian, and educator all at the same time. Together with their husbands, women were given the opportunity to participate in the offering of sacrifices. Without the support of his wife, a man is unable to realise his full potential on a spiritual level. It was believed that the gods would not accept the items that were presented by a bachelor. During this time period, sati did not exist. The moms who had lost their husbands were guarded by their sons. The culture and civilization of the early invaders to India, who were for the most part nomads, are brought to light by the Rigveda, which is

the first Vedic script. Farming has not yet become a stable occupation for the society. They were mostly hunters and gatherers of food. The Rig-Vedic era was characterised by a mostly pastoral way of life, and the society during that time did not generate sufficient surplus to for any sector to be entirely subordinated or withdrawn from the process of production. Gathering food was a task that was shared by both the men and the women, and both genders contributed equally to the fight to stay alive. There was no gender-based labour stratification or economic specialisation since each family operated as a single economic unit. In all of the political, economic, and religious activities, men and women were able to engage on an equal level because the systems that were in place to organise and run them were quite straightforward. This might be one of the possible explanations for why women were in a somewhat better position during the Vedic period in terms of access to education, religious liberties, freedom of movement, and so on. There is evidence of a gradual shift away from a matriarchal system to a patriarchal rule within the culture. Her level of social, political, and religious freedom was constrained by the guidelines laid down in Vedic books like as Brahmanas and Upanishads. It was expected of women that they would conduct their lives in accordance with the religious precepts. The Upanishads laid the groundwork for the oldest forms of Hindu culture and custom, which, up until the middle century, dictated how Indian women should spend their lives. The Upanishads played a significant part in the formation of a beautiful archetype of the Indian lady. According to Yajnavalkya, who is quoted in the Brhadarranyaka Upanishad, women should be honoured by their husbands, brother-in-laws, and maternal relatives by bestowing upon them decorations, garments, and food. It is expected that a woman's spouse will fulfil all of her needs. She satisfies her responsibility and grows to her fullest potential by developing her dedication and affection for him. The laborious job of motherhood is a woman's most important and moral responsibility. Brahmanas and Upanishads were added as appendices to the Vedas, and their content reflects life during the later Vedic period. Brahmanas are representative of a transitional stage in the advancement of the status of women, which limited the role that women played in the social life of the society, with the exception of the performance of religious sacrifices. Her independence on both the social and political fronts was restricted. The lifestyles of women gradually became limited to the confines of their own homes as society progressed. Both the Aitreya Brahmana and the Maitrayani Samhita have sections that indicate that it was against the law for women to participate in the assembly. During the Vedic time, sati was already well recognised. During the later Vedic period, the practise of Sati gained popularity. During this time, widows were either given the option to jump into the funeral pyre of their husbands voluntarily or were coerced into doing so. This was done so that the widows would not be ruined by other people after their husbands' deaths. To protect the integrity of the tribe and its traditions, it took some time, but eventually it became an accepted practise. The birth of a girl, which did not cause the father any cause for concern during the Vedic time, became a cause for concern during the post-Vedic phase. Consequently, it was stated that the birth of a boy is the embodiment of happiness, but the birth of a daughter is the source of the family's suffering. The Sutras are contemporaneous to the Upanishads. The period of time between 500 and 200 B.C. saw the development of the Sutra literature. It has been a significant factor in the evolution of the conventional picture of an Indian woman. According to the Dharma Sutra, which is an expansion of the Grihya Sutras, the wedding ceremony was performed in front of Agni, who is regarded as the "ultimate reality." "Woman's existence merged with that of a man through the performance of the couple to carry this supreme witness along with them and cherish it in their home with ardent devotion all through their lives," and "at death the body was to be consumed by this sacred fire." "Woman's existence merged with that of a man through the performance of the couple to carry this supreme witness along with them and cherish it in their home with ardent It is impossible for us to overlook the opposing depiction of women that is found in the same ancient Vedic scriptures from India. When we study additional works from the Vedic canon, it becomes very evident that there is a double standard regarding the status of women. The

woman should at all times, throughout her life, be treated with respect and reverence, according to Manu. Manu begins with the fundamental idea that the men of a family are responsible for keeping their wives and daughters under control at all times of the day and night. A woman is never ready to live alone because her father protects her when she is a kid, her husband protects her when she is a young adult, and her sons protect her when she is an old adult. He claims that the creator instilled carnal appetites, a love for decoration, unclean desires, anger, dishonesty, malice, and improper behaviour in them. Manu describes the conditions in which a woman is more prone to wander from her husband. The six things that led to her demise were drinking, hanging out with immoral people, spending time apart from her marriage, staying up late sleeping, and cohabitating with other men. Even when the husband is a nasty person who is looking for pleasure elsewhere, he is still required to be worshipped as god by a devoted wife. Manu goes on to explain that a wicked husband is required to be worshipped, while a bad wife may at any moment be replaced by another wife. In the eighth year, a woman who does not bear any children can be replaced; in the tenth year, a wife who gives birth to exclusively daughters can be replaced; in the eleventh year, a wife who is argumentative can be replaced without delay. "A wife who, being superseded, in the wrath goes from her husband's house must either be quickly detained or thrown off in front of the family," the proverb says. "A wife who, being superseded, in the rage departs from her husband's house." to think that men and women participated equally in the economic life of the community.

### **Women during the Period of Dharmashatras and Purans:**

The position of women in society experienced a fundamental shift throughout the time of the Dharmasastras and the Puranas. This shift occurred gradually over time. The girls were not given the opportunity to participate in formal schooling. Daughters were considered to be citizens of a lower social level. There was a restriction placed on the freedom of women. The importance of sons was emphasised more than that of daughters. Girls were not allowed to study the Vedas or become Brahma charinis in ancient times. According to Manu, the founder of Indian society's legal system, women are required to submit to their fathers while they are children, their husbands when they are young, and their sons when they are elderly. At no point throughout the process will she be allowed to be free. On the other hand, he countered this with the declaration that a society that does not honour women will inevitably be doomed to damnation. Some issues began to emerge as a direct result of the numerous confinements that were placed on the independence of women. A woman's husband was given the status of God, education was totally denied to women, the custom of 'Sati' became increasingly prevalent, the purdah system came into vogue, and the practise of polygene came to be tolerated. These are just some of the social issues that arose as a result of Islam's spread. Other issues included the marriage of children before they reached puberty, the prohibition of widow remarriage, the elevation of a woman's husband to Because it was believed that a wife and a slave could not jointly hold property, a woman's claim to any portion of her husband's wealth was completely denied in the realm of economics. In the realm of religion, it was illegal for her to pray, perform sacrifices, conduct penance, or go on pilgrimages.

### **Women in the Buddhist Period:**

Even though there was not a significant shift in their position, the status of women saw a slight improvement throughout the Buddhist period. The caste system is responsible for the imposition of several rigidities and prohibitions, some of which have been reduced. Buddha was an advocate for gender equality, and he worked to advance women's cultural, educational, and religious standings throughout his lifetime. Women were able to restore some of their lost independence and position as a result of the more open-minded mentality that prevailed during the reign of prominent Buddhist monarchs like as Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, and Sri

Harsha, amongst others. This was made possible by the Buddhist religion. Women were not just restricted to working in the home; if they so wished, they may also pursue a career in education. This was not the case in the past. Within the realm of religion, women eventually attained a position that was unique from that of males. Women were allowed to join the order of the "Sanyasis." There were many women who held prominent positions in Buddhist monastic life. Women had their own sangha, which was known as the Bhikshuni Sangha. Members of this sangha were governed by the same rules and regulations as the monks. They were given access to the sangha, which allowed them to participate in cultural events, engage in social work, and take advantage of numerous possibilities to participate in public life. However, their political and economic standing did not alter at all during this time.

### **Ancient Women and Education**

Ancient India's education was influenced by religion. Indian schooling reflects the Aryan mind. Emotional and material Dravidians fostered aesthetic and vocational elements. During the Vedic (2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.) and post-Vedic (1000 B.C. to 200 B.C.) eras, women and girls' education changed. Vedic women had considerable prestige. Ancient people believed education would help them live better. People believed education would help them live a fuller life (Roy, 2017). Individuals must be aware of morals, ethics, academic ideas, culture, religion, norms, values, standards, and principles to improve their living situations.

Because they were accountable for the family and community, women were encouraged to get an education. They contributed to areas such as home responsibility, health care, child development, elder care, and environmental preservation. Women were tasked with teaching values and ethics to others. To coordinate all these responsibilities and functions, women must gain knowledge and improve their talents. Women gained dignity and respect via education. In society, learned women were respected. With knowledge, women gained self-confidence and could protect themselves from violence.

The Vedic period was the best for women. If women wanted an education and didn't want to marry, they could do it without constraint. Most well-off girls were educated. Girls and boys participated in the Upanayana ritual. During the Aryan, or poetical, period, women's education was recognised. Women's education wasn't prejudiced. People worried about women's social righteousness. The Vedas show that the Aryan race was cooperative in promulgating regulations and laws and raising women. It contributed greatly to mass creativity. Aryans were not unaware of female power dynamics and disputes. Society was still growing at the period (Roy, 2017).

Vedic women academics were numerous. They knew Vedas and scriptures. They penned hymns, learned music, and danced. Lower-caste women learned spinning, weaving, embroidery, and needlework. Vedic poets and thinkers were many. Apala, Ghosha, and Visvavara attained to the level of sages or rishis during the Vedic period through creating mantras. Lopamudra is supposed to have preached 179 hymns of the first book of the Rig Veda alongside sage Agasthya. Women and male instructors were given equal opportunity in school to exhibit their talents. This extended to schooling and social routines (Roy, 2017).

Pre-Vedic women and spouses participated in sacred events and sacrifices. Girls and women were expected to recite mantras and poetry when they received formal schooling. Many Vedic women intellectuals overcome obstacles. In Vedic times, they had equal educational possibilities. Apala, Atreyiand, and Ghosha were notable women scholars at this time. In wealthy households, tutors teach dance, singing, garland-making, painting, mending, sewing, magic, poem-writing, and toy-making, among other talents. In some well-educated houses, girls learned from young pupils' lessons. Thus, society had power and respected

women. They joined their spouses in religious, social, and cultural events. High social morals and amicable relationships were preserved (Roy, 2017).

Ancient Indian women were well-educated and knowledgeable. The educated women were categorised as Brahnavadinis or ladies who never married and studied the Vedas. Lifelong philosophers and theologians, Brahnavadinis. Sadyodvahas studied Vedas until marriage. These women studied until they were 15 or 16 then married. Paninis were Veda-studying ladies. Upadhyaya or upadhyayi were female instructors. Buddhist nuns wrote hymns. Women wrote Sanskrit plays and poetry and excelled in art, singing, and painting. Rulers and monarchs were aware of women's education and educated their offspring, male or female (Rout, 2016).

### **Ancient Women and Politics**

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

Between 2500 and 1500 B.C., the Indus valley served as the epicentre of India's earliest known civilisation, which dates back to that region. As a result of Pakistan's independence and the partition that took place in 1947, the majority of these cities, which are of archaeological importance, are now located in Pakistan. This is the case in the present day. Despite the fact that the ancient city-state of Lothal may be found in Gujarat, it was. The extensive ruins found at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and Lothal point to an affluent and well-organized civilization in ancient India. The majority of the people were involved in agriculture as their primary occupation. The people were engaged in business transactions with many other organisations in the region of the middle east. The most well-known representation of a historical figure is that of a young woman of little build who is striking an assured pose. The discovery of several toys suggested that society acknowledged the importance of family life to a considerable degree at the time. despite the fact that the true meanings of their inscriptions on their seals have not yet been decoded. The discovery of several depictions of women lends credence to the idea that goddesses played a significant part. The gods and goddesses who play an important role in increasing agricultural output are collectively referred to as fertility gods and goddesses (Rout, 2016).

It would appear that this ancient civilisation was subjected to natural calamities, which resulted in alterations to the flow of the river Indus. It was believed that the Aryans who invaded the land conquered the native inhabitants, but in reality, the Indus civilisation was already in a condition of decline when the Aryans arrived. In particular, around the time when nomads arrived from the Hindu Kush. In the course of time, these Aryans subjected the indigenous people to slavery and imposed their will upon them, which resulted in the development of a caste system (Rout, 2016). In ancient India, the caste system was deeply ingrained

in society. The Brahmins were at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy and their primary occupations were those of teachers and priests. Next came the Kshatriyas, who held the positions of kings and warriors. The Vaishyas and the Shudras were the castes that were responsible for commerce and trade, respectively. Women who were members of the ruling classes were largely involved in political and administrative activities for the state. They not only held sufficient information but also took part in the deliberation and decision-making processes.

A brief reference was made through the satisfactory system, which was conveyed through the caste system, with the primary objective of evaluating the part that women played in politics and their place in the ancient society. This was done through the varna system. According to the varna principle, the members of society can be divided into one of four groups: brahmins, vaishyas, kshatriyas, and shudras. In both a ritualistic and an intellectual sense, the highest positions of power and authority were held by Brahmins. The idea of social stratification came to have normative meaning, which helped legitimise the Brahmins' position as overlords. The varna system was demonstrated factually through the many different caste groupings. The adaptation of the system to the requirements of the society may be seen in these several groupings. The beginning of the caste system is the subject of a significant amount of debate due to its complex nature. Regarding the beginning of the system of social stratification, academics have a variety of opinions and points of view, which has resulted in a split among them. This structure has had an impact on the religious practises as well as the secular pursuits that have always been an essential component of Indian civilization. The theory that refers to the origin of the Aryan invasion in India and forms a link to the process by which the invaders were able to subordinate the indigenous inhabitants and integrate them as peasants and slaves within the stratified society is the one that has garnered the most support and is currently the most widely held belief. This theory is also the most popular and widely prevalent. It is for this reason that the twice-born castes are considered to be descendants of non-Aryans (Status of Women in India, n.d.).

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

The depictions of a maiden and a bride in the Rig Veda can tell us a great deal about the ideal role that women should play in society. Appreciation was shown to the daughters as well as the maidens for the qualities of brilliance and the alluring ornamentation that they possessed. This term hints at an interest in sensuality associated with femininity as well as the young child's potential to carry children. When young women attend events and festivals that are organised, they have the opportunity to meet eligible males. Then, after some time had passed, the arrangement of wedding ceremonies took place, with the consent of the couple's parents. When the ladies were married, their parents counselled them that within their marital

homes, they needed to demonstrate the qualities of morals and ethics and should not become angry at anybody. This counselling was offered to them after the wedding (Rout, 2016). Therefore, it was essential for women to render a significant contribution towards promoting the welfare of the community and nation when it came to the implementation of political functions. This could be done by making the appropriate decisions and carrying out the administrative functions in an appropriate manner.

## Conclusion

Ancient India reorganised women's life and gave them important positions, but also imposed limitations. Upper-caste and wealthy women contributed to their families' and the community's wellbeing. They were given the chance to deepen their education, teach industry professionals, and improve their administrative and political abilities. One explanation for the drop in females was the predominance of criminal practises and efforts and programmes to prevent them. The number of girls dropped. Variables impacted women's health in several ways. Illiteracy, purdah, polygamy, sati, and forced child marriages were common. They couldn't make judgements and had to rely on the men for everything. Ancient India's women's status had some positive and negative effects. Despite opportunities, they faced prejudice. Status and economic situation of women were related. This depends on economic involvement rights and opportunities. Most Indians earned their living through agriculture. Men and women participated in weaving, handicrafts, pottery making, and other economic pursuits. Because of this, women were often married off early, denied an education, and expected to run the home and care for family members. As housekeepers, women seldom left the house. They also worked in production and manufacturing to support the family.

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