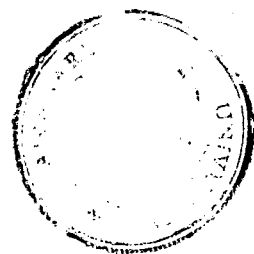


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**Some Socio-Cultural Factors in Education :  
A Case Study of the Impact of PARDĀ on  
the Education of Women in U. P. (1927-47)**

A Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment for the Degree of  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**  
(Sociology of Education)

By  
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## DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled, "Some Socio-Cultural Factors in Education : A Case Study of the Impact of Parda on the Education of Women in U.P. (1927-47)", submitted by Nandita Singh, is in fulfilment of eight credits for the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this University or any other University and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*19/7/85*

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( NANDITA SINGH )

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

The history of education in India is also the history of social inequalities. Divisions of caste, class, community and sex have distinct correlations with the distribution of education. Of these, the one single factor that has dramatically influenced the course of education in India is the division based on sex. Over the ages, women have been curtailed in their access to society's reward to power, prestige and privileges. The case of women's education reinforces these disparities. An ample proof of these inequalities is evident from the statement of the current National policy of education, according to which, "the education of girls should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation"<sup>1</sup>.

Despite reiteration of the importance of education for both sexes, the rate of literacy for males was 46.74% and for females 24.83% according to the 1981 census. The lower educational level of women vis-a-vis men as well as the manifest disparity in their education, is a continuation of an established

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1. Educational Development of Women in India, Ministry of Education and Culture, Govt. of India, New Delhi. 1982. p. 18.

trend of the history of education in India<sup>2</sup>. This is evident from the investigations of the Department of public instruction beginning from the late 19th century to the early half of the 20th century, as well as the census records in the pre and post independence era.

### Why early 20th century ?

The wide gap between the education of males and females as well as the distinctly lower educational level of women necessitates a socio-historical analysis of the efforts for educating women and the response to it. An investigation of the position of the education of women in the early half of the 20th century, would enable us to view it at a time, when the Government of India had realised the extremely backward condition of female education and even admitted the need to foster female education in every legitimate way<sup>3</sup>. A study of female education at the beginning of this century would also provide a relevant background for a query of the contemporary predicament of women's education.

### Why U.P. ?

The education of women varied regionally in India. As far back as 1897 it was noted that, "the North-Western Provinces and

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2. Report of the National Committee on Women's education  
Ministry of Education 1959. p. 28.

3. The Report of the India Education Commission, 1882.

Oudh have made far less progress in female education than any other part of India"<sup>4</sup>.

Even after the standardization of the literacy test in 1911<sup>5</sup>, the census noted that U.P. was amongst the backward states in women's education. The all India rate of female literacy was 1%, while U.P. had only .5% literate females. On the other hand, while the all India rate of male literacy was 10.6%, U.P. had only 6.1% literate males<sup>6</sup>. The 1921 census noted improvement in the relative position of female education in U.P.<sup>7</sup>

	1921		1911	
	M	F	M	F
India	13.9	2.1	10.6	1.0
U.P.	7.3	0.7	6.1	0.5

Reports of the progress of education in India as well as consecutive censuses noted, that in the early half of the twentieth century the Madras, Bombay and Bengal Presidencies performed better than the United Provinces in the education of women. An examination of the social framework of these Presidencies reveals that, though sex-segregation was universal the nature of its manifestation was distinctly different in U.P. and Bengal as compared with Madras and Bombay Presidencies, while pardā<sup>8</sup>.

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4. The Report of the progress of education in India 1893-97, p. 307. (Henceforth referred to as PEI).

5. Census of India 1911, Pt. 1. Report. p. 295.

6. Ibid., 1911, Pt.1. Report. p. 295.

7. Census of India 1921, Report. p. 182; Also see n. 5.

8. Pardā will be spelled as such throughout this thesis.



characterized Northern India. Madras and Bombay presidencies were relatively free of these practices. It is significant to note that the latter two presidencies also had a higher female literacy rate vis-a-vis the pardā dominated presidencies, despite rampant prejudices to women's education. The 1911 census pointed out :

"it would seem as if the diffusion of female education varies inversely with the prevalence of the pardā system. In the south of India the influence of matriarchiate, or the custom of tracing descent through the female heir, has also to be reckoned with. Where this custom prevails, women occupy a higher position than elsewhere and this appears to have influenced the educational facilities afforded to them. The proportion of literate females is highest in Burma, where there is no seclusion of women and in Cochin and Travancore, where also they move about fairly freely and where, in addition, there is a large Indian Christian community and many of the castes recognise matrilinear decent" 9.

The response to women's education within the United Provinces, significantly, showed a differential achievement. Western U.P. offered relatively more suitable grounds for literacy than Eastern U.P., on account of being relatively more urbanised and industrialized. However, disparities between the education of the sexes continued to exist in the relatively urbanised and industrialized Western U.P. as well as the relatively rural, non-urban and non-industrial Eastern U.P. Significantly, both the 1921 and 1951 censuses point to 'social reasons' for the

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9. Census of India 1911, Vol. I, Part I. p. 294.

relatively higher female literacy rate in the Western Himalayan region. The absence of pardā, specially was cited as a reason for better response to women's education. The presence of pardā implied to have hindered female education. The connection between women's education and the social milieu, specifically the practice of pardā, seems highly potent and hence forms the focus of this contextual study of one of the most educationally backward states of India - U.P.

Before we discuss the social context of women's education and especially the concept of pardā, and investigate its impact on women's education in U.P., it would be relevant to survey the origins of female education in India.

Origins of women's education :  
A brief historical account.

Despite many references to educated women in ancient and medieval India, the degree and level to which women as a whole were formally educated, remains controversial.

The pioneering work in the field of women's formal education was undertaken by missionary enterprise through the zenānā system of instruction. The zenānā schools started in the early nineteenth century were exclusively girls' schools and were staffed wholly by women. Though initially set up for the children of Christian converts, they, subsequently, catered to the education

of non-Christian girls also. They introduced domestic instruction in the families of the middle and higher classes. By the early half of the twentieth century missionaries had also opened day schools for Indian girls.

Britishers, as well as other foreigners and the Indian social reformers and revivalists made significant contributions to female education in India<sup>10</sup>. They worked either through voluntary organisations or independently. Women's education received a tremendous fillip through Englishmen who realised the necessity of placing it firmly on a secular basis and organising it through indigenous effort. Among them, were David Hare, who established a school for girls in 1820 in Calcutta, and conducted it at his own expense<sup>11</sup>. Prof. Patton of the Elphinstone College, Bombay was responsible for the establishment of the students' literary and scientific society, in 1848, which organised a number of girls' schools in the city<sup>12</sup>. J.E.D. Bethune, a member of the council of the Governor General and the President of the Council of Education in Bengal, established a girls' school at Calcutta and maintained it from his own funds till his death in 1851. It was then taken over by Lord Dalhousie who also paid for its maintenance from his private purse for nearly 5 years<sup>13</sup>

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10. S. Nurullah & J.P. Naik: A history of education in India (during the British Period) 2nd ed' Delhi, Macmillan, 1951. p.164.

11. S. Nurullah & J.P. Naik, ibid., p. 184.

12. S. Nurullah & J.P. Naik, ibid., p. 189.

13. S. Nurullah & J.P. Naik, ibid., p. 187.

A major contribution to female education was made by Mary Carpenter, an American missionary, who visited India in 1886. She suggested that the main obstacle in the promotion of female education was the lack of trained female teachers. She advocated the establishment of female normal training schools<sup>14</sup>. Miss Carpenter also founded the National India Association in aid of social progress and education in India. Its chief objective was to promote education among the women on non-missionary principles, partly by sending out teachers to the zenānā and partly by grant-in-aid and scholarships to schools for girls and female students.<sup>15</sup>

Several Indian also began to lend their support for the organisation of special schools for girls and to break down the traditional popular resistance against the education of women. Notable among them was Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He played a significant role in raising the status and improving the lot of women and in emphasizing the need for their education. Similarly, Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was responsible for the establishment of a number of girls' schools in the late 19th century in Bengal<sup>16</sup>. He believed in making full use of any loopholes provided in the Shāstras to arouse a social conscience. Pandit Madan Mohan Tarkalankar one of the pandits of the Sanskrit College at Calcutta,

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14. S. Nurullah & J.P. Naik, ibid., p. 390.

15. R. Saraswati : The High caste Hindu Woman, 1984 reprint. New Delhi Inter - India Publication, p. 110.

16. Y.B. Mathur: Women's education in India (1813-1966). Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1973. p. 25.

compiled a series of elementary Bengali books specially designed for the education of women<sup>17</sup>. Under the inspiration of Swami Dayanand, the Arya Samajists established schools and colleges for the education of girls in Northern India in the late 19th century. Similarly, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati declared that it was her duty to the very end of her life to maintain the cause of women's education. Ramabai Saraswati's advocacy of female education manifested itself in the Bombay Presidency and she formed the Arya Mahila Samaj in Poona, to promote education among native women. Its branch societies were set up throughout the Bombay Presidency<sup>18</sup>.

By the second half of the 19th century, the Government moved from neutrality and indifference to financial assistance and concrete efforts to educate girls and women. The policy of the Indian Government first laid down in the 1854 despatch stated:

" the importance of female education in India cannot be overrated, and we have observed with pleasure the evidence, which is now afforded of an increased desire on the part of many of the natives to give a good education to their daughters.... Our Governor General in Council has declared in a communication to the Government of Bengal that the Government ought to give to native female education in India, its frank and cordial support; in this we heartily concur"<sup>19</sup>.

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17. Y.B. Mathur, ibid., p. 24.

18. R. Saraswati, op.cit., p. xvi.

19. Selections from Educational Records, Part II, Calcutta, 1922.

On the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1882, higher grants were given to girls' schools than to boys' schools and on easier terms. Also recommended was a concession in fees, award of prizes and scholarships, especially for girls above 12 years of age, as well as training schools for women. A liberal aid was promised to those under private management. Inducements were to be offered to the wives of school masters and to widows to qualify themselves as teachers. Grants to the zenānā agencies and to local institutions and associations for the promotion of women's education, for an increase in the number of female inspecting agencies, for the revision of text books and for the establishment of an alternative standard for High schools corresponding to the matriculation examination were also recommended.<sup>20</sup>

#### Motivations :

The foreign missionaries had aimed at increasing the ranks of Christians, whether it were the Protestant Missions or the Roman Catholic Missions. They looked forward to a complete transformation of Indian life on an English model and men such as Macaulay and Trevelyan in fact carried the missionary impulse into every area of society<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand a chauvanistically

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20. Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882., pp. 545-8.

21. F. Hutchins : The illusion of permanence, Princeton University Press, 1967., p. 7.

Hindu organisation, the Arya Samaj, which dominated Northern India in the early 20th century zealously guarded its Hindu ranks and with an equivalent anti-Christian missionaries fervour, supported and worked for female education and women's rights. Various local Samaj's founded girls' schools and sponsored lectures on the status of women<sup>22</sup>.

The educated Indians and foreigners, too, realised the need to awaken the Indian society. They also realised that the key to a successful progress of India would be in educating the Indians without discrimination of the sexes. The need for education among girls as much as among boys was recognised as a cardinal need of progress - a sine qua non of national progress, by 1927<sup>23</sup>.

The Government's motivation towards female education may be seen in the actual fruitition of the efforts of several conscious people and organisations towards educating women, as well as the existence of a section of public opinion not averse to female education. This is confirmed by Sir Alfred Lyall's opinion that, "mere establishment of schools would do little towards the spread of education among women; before any considerable progress is obtained, the natives must themselves lend their co-operation and full assent to the administrative measures of

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22. Jones. Arya Dharma : Hindu Consciousness in 19th century Punjab. New Delhi. Manohar, 1976.,pp. 103, 107.

23. Rani Sahib of Sangli, Report of All India Women's Conference 1927.

Government, and a public opinion less indifferent to the education of women must be formed"<sup>24</sup>. The Government declared that through the education of women, "..... a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the educational and moral tone of the people than by the education of men"<sup>25</sup>.

Thus, the impetus to educate the female population of India was matched by a distinct effort. It was motivated by a proselytising zeal, by philanthropic and enlightened convictions, and by pragmatic decisions of Indians and foreigners.

#### Prejudices to women's education :

While efforts to impart education to women were evident from various quarters, educational records refer to prejudices against female education which were dominant in society. The notions prevalent were that, a literate girl would become a widow, that educating a girl was like putting a knife in her hands, that with education a girl became 'dushta' that she would become wayward and disobedient<sup>26</sup>, that, in fact, if parents did not marry off their daughters before the age of ten, the parents would be cast into hell<sup>27</sup>. Abbe Dubois had noted that, "the

24. Review of Education in India. 1886., p. 279.

25. PEI, 1897-1902, Vol. I, Pt.I., p. 298.

26. PEI, 1897-1902- 1937-47.

27. B.M. Dayanand. A Study in Hinduism, Hoshiarpur. 1962., p. 194.



immodest girls who are employed in the worship of the idols, and other public prostitutes are the only women taught to read, to sing and to dance. It would be thought the mark of an irregular education if a modest woman was found capable of reading. She herself would conceal it out of shame"<sup>28</sup>. Education for women was taken to mean a 'social revolution', "the extent of which could not be foreseen". It was believed, that while the lessons of emancipation were being learnt and stability had not yet been reached, i.e., while society was slowly struggling to adjust itself to the new conditions, the period of transition would be marked by "the loosening of social ties, the upheaval of customary ways and prolonged and severe domestic embarrassment"<sup>29</sup>.

Obstacles to women's education :

It is evident that these prejudices to female education presented major obstacles to the progress of the education of girls and women and were related to a wider framework of social norms. The records on education constantly refer to the indifference on the part of the people, to powerful opposing social customs and to lack of facilities<sup>30</sup>. It was noted by the Director of public instruction that,

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28. Census of India 1911, Vol. I. Pt.I., p. 295.

29. Ibid., 1911. Vol. I. Pt. I., p. 295.

30. PEI., 1892-97., pp. 307-308.

"it is part and parcel of a conviction that a woman's place is in her home, and that home duties are enough fully to occupy her time from morning to night, if they are properly performed; while education would bring her into touch with the outside world and give her interests beyond the home, which would only distract her attention from her heaven appointed task....In considering the education of girls, the people of this country rightly attach great importance to their moral welfare and believe that in their own homes they are safer from evil influences, than they would be in a school where the prime object is mental development rather than direct formation of character. It is obvious that other hinderances to progress are found in the social customs of the people such as the observance of pardā in varying degrees of strictness, and early marriage.."31

The report on the progress of education in India for 1907-1912 noted that, "the natural and laudable desire for education as an end in itself which is evinced by the upper and middle classes as regards their sons, is no match for the conservative instincts of the Muhamuddans, the system of early marriage among the Hindus, and the rigid seclusion of women which is characteristic of both<sup>32</sup>. It was also noted that in U.P., apathy was taking the place of antagonism with many, and the education of girls was being linked up with their marriage prospects<sup>33</sup>. The census of 1921 stated that,

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31. PEI., 1897-1902. Vol. I., Pt.I., p. 31.

32. PEI., 1907-1912.,p. 211.

33. Ibid., 1907-1912., p. 211.

"the spirit both of Brahmanism and of Islam is distinctly opposed to the education of the female sex, and there is little doubt that the women of India owe the growing facilities offered to them for acquiring literacy to the influence on the male section of the community of foreign standards and ideals. That the education of women is unnecessary, unorthodox and dangerous, is still the standpoint of a large section of Indian society. It is still the predominant attitude of the Muhamaddans and Jains of the better class, though, in the case of their men, the ability to read and write is for the former a religious obligation, and for the latter, a professional necessity. The scheme of life which orthodox tradition imposes on the women of India presents obstacles to education, which, if not insuperable, are at least formidable" 34.

An analysis of the social context within which the educational system for women was functioning would therefore provide significant insights.

The social milieu of women's education:

As is evident from the comments of the Directors of public instruction and Inspectresses of education, as well as the reasons for the relatively backward female education in U.P., one of the most crucial factors in the Social milieu of U.P. which influenced women's education was the practice of pardā. Pardā and seclusion practices in fact, stand out as the more stifling tentacles of the social system in Northern India than for example, early marriage. It is thus imperative to analyse the concept of pardā.

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34. Census of India 1921. Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 180.

Pardā :

Pardā has been conventionally referred to, in South Asia, as the seclusion and veiling of women. The indigenous pardā literally means a 'curtain'. However, the word pardā is widely used throughout the subcontinent to refer to modes of secluding the women from the sight of others, whether by delimiting the boundaries of her world i.e. by confining her within an enclosed space with the help of a curtain wall, screen, or by manipulating her clothing. The symbolism of clothing is perhaps the most striking device to ensure and maintain social segregation of the sexes, as well as the seclusion of women. The actual mobility of the woman was also restricted and curtailed by a spatial segregation. Pardā, as a manipulation of clothing and visual separation buttressed by spatial allocation to men and women, forms only one aspect of pardā. Another aspect of pardā, lies in the necessity to conform to a code of conduct and behaviour expected of the woman, who is required to observe physical pardā. The behavioural norms serve to ideologically circumscribe the female. The ethical ideal of female conduct is hence possible DESPITE the absence of a physical provision of pardā.

The purpose of pardā can be seen as demarcating the world of women as separate from men and providing a symbolic shelter for women.

Two distinct pardā systems, the Hindu pardā system and the Muslim pardā system have been delineated by Papanek<sup>35</sup>. The Muslim

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35. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed) Separate Worlds, Studies of Purdah in South Asia. Delhi: Chanakya Publications 1982,

system of pardā was believed to deal with the relationship of women with the outsiders. Pardā, was hence to be observed from the males outside the trusted circle of kinsmen. The Hindu pardā system on the other hand, was believed to control women inside the family and kindred. It was thus related to the respect relations among affines, particularly between the women's natal and conjugal kin.

Specificity of pardā :

It is important to note that the pardā complex manifests itself variously in different communities and quite different ideological justifications may be cited. Thus, the observance of seclusion is seen by many Muslims as an indication of Islamic orthodoxy and therefore, it has a religious value which it does not have for Hindus, among whom it confers mainly secular prestige. In the case of Hindus and Muslims, pardā norms have essentially the same effect i.e. they limit the women's activities, outside the domestic sphere in varying degrees.

The all encompassing nature of pardā, needs to be stressed here. Literally the adherence to pardā meant public invisibility of the women and for the women, i.e., pardā confined the women within their homes or even their zenānās. In ideological terms, too, it implied circumventing the scope of the non-domestic sphere. The ideology of pardā guided the different stages of life. Parda determined their marriage and relative status, as well as a related gamut of practices like sati, enforced widowhood, child marriages, polygamy and kulinism.

Social reformers' focus on pardā and other practices affecting women :

The negative effects of the comprehensive practice of pardā on the lives of women, were in fact some of the crucial issues which the social reformers in India, sought to tackle.

Indian social reformers in the second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M.G. Ranade, D.K. Karve, Dayanand Saraswati, Vivekananda and Gandhi, spoke out strongly against the treatment meted out to women in Indian society.

Ram Mohan Roy discovered that, the Hindu society with caste, polygamy, Kulīnism, suttee, female infanticide and other evils was rotten to its core. Deprived of education, confined to the zenānās and treated as dependents and inferiors, women were scarcely better than slaves. Roy advocated a complete reversal of this position so that women could lead a life of dignity and freedom. Above all he pressed for their education.<sup>36</sup>

Keshub Chandra Sen felt, that one of aspects of Indian Society which denied human unity was the low status of women. He felt, that the zenānā required thorough reform. Sen, advocated legislation and education as the means of elevating women. The objective of the Female improvement section of the Indian Reform Association, was to promote the intellectual, moral and social

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36. T. Chand : The history of freedom movement in India .  
Vol. II. Delhi. Publication Division, Ministry of Information  
and Broadcasting 1967., pp. 54-255.

improvement of native women. The means which it proposed to employ for the attainment of this objective, were, the establishment of girls' schools, adult schools and normal schools, the publication of books and periodicals adapted to the female mind and conversational meetings. Dayanand Saraswati too, advocated equal rights for men and women in education, marriage and the holding of property<sup>37</sup>. Amongst other things, Ranade too, persistently advocated the repudiation of the seclusion of women and the promotion of women's education. Lashing out against the old institutions and customs, he asked "what shall we revive" ? Shall we revive the sati and infanticide customs"<sup>38</sup> ?

Urging for a more just and equal social order and combating social injustice on women, Gandhi, enjoined society to tear down pardāh "Chastity is not a hot house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of pardā. Men to be men, must be able to trust their women folk, even as the latter are compelled to trust them. Let us not live with one limb paralysed"<sup>39</sup>.

That the social reformers did not concentrate particularly on the Hindus or the Muslims, or for that matter any other

37. Bahadur Mal : op.cit., p. 28.

38. M.B. Kolaskar (Comp): Ranade, Religious and social reform. Bombay, pp. 170-71.

39. M.K. Gandhi: Women and social injustice. Ahmedabad. Navjivan Trust, 1947.

specific community, indicates the permeation of the pardā norm and ideology in society. This further substantiates justification for the focus of this study on pardā.

Pardā and women's education :

It has been mentioned earlier that the social milieu specifically, the practice of pardā was potently linked to the education of women. This aspect shall now be examined.

A common modus operandi with almost all missions was the system of zenānā education. Women, who for reasons of pardā or respectability, could not be sent out to public schools, could be educated at home by mission teachers<sup>40</sup>. The Indian Education Commission stated that "public sentiments keep them (women) secluded in zenānās, many from their infancy and many more from the age of eleven or twelve. From this it follows that the education of girls of the better classes cannot be carried on in schools to anything like completion, and that, in the case of many it cannot even be begun"<sup>41</sup>. Thus in many cases zenānā teachers imparted instruction to those who otherwise may have been wholly debarred from it.<sup>42</sup>

40. S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik (ed), op.cit., p. 168.

41. S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik (ed) ibid., pp. 394-395.

42. S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik (ed) ibid., pp. 394-395.



Apart from zenānā instruction, the ordinary school instruction was also made available to female students. However, the conscious efforts to streamline this education specially for girls, shows the operation of a pardā ideology.

The existent educational system in the early half of the half of the 20th century reveals, a differential attitude to the education of girls and boys. The curriculum of study for both sexes reflects the dominant values of society. Girls were viewed in their familial roles i.e., as mothers and wives. Education for them was seen in terms of the benefits to a family and not to the individual. Thus, home science, needle work, fine arts and hygiene came to be regarded as exclusively girl's subjects. Either, there was no provision to teach the girls science and mathematics or these subjects were kept optional. The teaching of arts subjects, took the first place followed by the apparently more technical science and professional subjects, at the higher levels of education<sup>43</sup>.

The stronghold of pardā on the lives of women was acknowledged by the government and efforts were to be made to structure educational facilities accordingly. It was declared that "in future, schools should be so organised as to meet, on the one hand, the needs of the majority who will spend their lives

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43. PEI (1897-1902 to 1937-47).

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in the zenānā and whose education will cease at an early age, and on the other hand, those of the small but important minority who will take to professional service or play, a part in the progressive section of Indian Society". Even for the "girls of the second type" it was considered that the standard of attainment should correspond with that of boys' schools as far as it was possible<sup>44</sup>, thereby indicating that the standards of educational attainment in the boys' and girls' schools were distinctly different.

However, official declarations regarding women's education also helped to institutionalize pardā. The despatch of 1915 noted that "the oppressive effect of examination upon girls has been a matter of constant complaint. The Government of India, endorsed the view of the commission, that in the case of pardānashīn schools, there should be some form of examination at the end of the course, but, that it should not be compulsory, and that it should be differentiated from the corresponding examination for boys and conducted in part through oral tests, by competent visiting women examiners; and that in non-pardā schools, it would be the duty of the secondary and intermediate Board to ensure that the standards of attainment represented by the examination correspond to those of the examination for the

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44. Despatch from the Secretary of State for India No. 191  
5th Nov. 1915.

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boys, though, this would not imply the use of identical papers"<sup>45</sup>. The view that examinations were oppressive for girls and that a separate set of papers were necessary for the examinations of girls, underlined the notions of the girls or women as the weaker sex, or as the sex which required the paternalistic umbrella in the field of education.

In a similar view, can be seen the occasional shorter hours of instruction for girls. Some schools, paid attention to physical training. A special course of callisthenics was prescribed in place of drill and gymnastics<sup>46</sup>.

There were lofty official proclamations in favour of female education. But, the importance accorded to female education, in practice or implementation is evident by the facilities extended to it. Very often, buildings condemned as unfit to house boys' schools were considered good enough for a girls' school and old teachers past their pedagogic utility were transferred to girls' schools<sup>47</sup>.

In fact, the dearth of competent teachers for girls' education was a serious problem. While pardā had prevented a substantial number of women from receiving education, it also prevented competent young male teachers from providing their services for girls' education.

45. Despatch from the Secretary of State for India ibid., p. 7.

46. Y.B. Mathur, op.cit., p. 52.

47. PEI (1897-1902 to 1937-47)

Co-education was a feature of the education system. However, it was most popular only at the primary level, i.e. only for the younger age groups, who did not come under the sweep of pardā. Special scholarships had to be offered to foster and even create a desire for the education of girls. Hostel facilities were also essential. The services of sympathetic and well qualified inspectresses were as necessary as female teachers and escorts to bring female students to school. Thus, the maintenance of a girl's school was more expensive than that of boys' schools - to the extent that rates of aid, even when 50% higher than those for boys failed to cover the additional expenditure which was required.

Social reformers and women's education :

The efforts of social reformers and their relative success in the cause of women's education struck a promising note and indeed remains praiseworthy. However, social reformers never ventured beyond the perimeters of the traditionally sanctioned ideals of women. The attempts and goals of social reformers to educate women, highlight the degree to which the notions of the traditional role of women was entrenched. The establishment of girls' school by the reformers marked no radical departure from the principle of sex-segregation. Pardā was to be observed in

schools, 'if not more strictly than that observed at home'<sup>48</sup>. To attract girls to schools, Arya Samajists even advocated a minimum distance of five kos between the schools for boys and the schools for girls. .

Proponents of education stressed, that the vernacular education would enable girls to fulfill their duties better in the household. Such an education obviously would have offered no threat to the male order. English education for girls was opposed as they feared that this would draw girls away from the ideas and traditions of the household, towards the anglicised world. The fears that this anticipated drawing away of girls from the household or the extension of female education created is evident from the statement of Lala Sunder Dass, an Arya Samaj social reformer. He stated, "the education given to our girls should not unsex them"<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, Gandhi wrote, "Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married couple and thereof, it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of women and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of

48. G. Minault, (1982) Purdah's Progress : The Beginnings of School Education for Indian Muslim women in J.Sharma (ed) Individuals and Ideas in Modern India, Calcutta, KLM Publishers, Calcutta, p. 91.

49. Tribune, April 11, 1894, p. 5.

children, women ought to have more knowledge. Unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminatory appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of men and women cannot be developed<sup>50</sup>. Gandhi's call for women's participation in the political struggle brought forth a response, unprecedented in the annals of Indian history. However, it was made within the framework of a woman's traditional role of a mother and wife i.e. the framework which guided the education and social interaction of women.

Evidently, pardā was a crucial variable in determining, not only whether women would receive education at all, the level of education they were to be permitted to and the venue of schooling, but also the kind of education they were to receive in terms of quality and content.

#### Relevant literature :

The theme of the dilectics of pardā and women's education, is thus crucially valid in the field of education in India. However, the paucity of literature on this theme hinders a clear understanding or a wider perspective of the problem in India. Therefore, Minault's work on pardā and Muslim women's education deserves special citation.

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50. M.K. Gandhi : op.cit.

Minault<sup>51</sup>, critically discusses some of the early efforts to promote women's education among Indian Muslims, the obstacles they encountered and the justifications they offered. Minault, critically discusses the subject in the context of general British (including missionary) endeavours to introduce western education into India. She also notes the ideas and activities which had a bearing on Muslim women's education of notable men such as Khwaja Hali, Sir Sayyid, Iman Shafi, Shaikh Abdullah, the Ali brothers and prominent women such as Begum Shah Nawaz, Begum Abdullah and Begum Ali 'Ala bi'.

The author points out, that the role of women's education was seen in its potentiality to strengthen Islam as a faith and as a social order. Thus, she argues that pardā may have been granted a new respectability and a new lease of life by being institutionalized behind the high walls of girls' schools, with detailed rules for pardā observation. Minault infers, that if "pardā acted as a drag upon the engine of progress, it also provided opportunities - and the justification - for women's service to other women", which explained their involvement in professions such as education and medicine.

Carrolls' study<sup>52</sup> of women, religion and development in the third world, mentions the importance of Muslim women's perception of

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51. G. Minault : ibid, 1982, pp.70-77.

52. T.F. Carrolls : Women, religion and development in the third world. New York. Praeger. 1983.

the relationship between Islam, pardā and education. She points out that the belief exists, that Islam stipulates pardā. This belief prevents breaking of the bonds of pardā and helps keep the women ignorant.

Mathur<sup>53</sup> and Mishra<sup>54</sup> focus on the history of education of women, in general and cursorily mention pardā and other social evils as obstacles in the progress of women's education.

In the context of studying the 'woman' question, it is imperative to note, that the existent literature in Indian history does not even implicitly recognise gender differences in society. Women, are referred to only under specific headings of 'social conditions' of a historical period. Thus, for instance, the policies of the colonialists regarding land reforms, as well as the consequences of the disruption of traditional economy, and the development of modern industries are seen in terms of affecting the mass of the Indian population in terms of their class and caste and even religion, but the population is implicitly regarded as a unisexual - 'He', 'Him' or 'His'. That, the changes may have had strong and far-reaching but different repercussions for men and women is not considered at all even in recent publications. Examining the Indian economy under British rule,

53. Y.B. Mathur : op.cit.

54. L. Mishra : Education of women in India 1921-1966.  
Bombay, MacMillan (1966).



Rothermund<sup>55</sup>, notes that British rulers introduced their laws and courts in India, enabled the rise of a pseudo bourgeoisie and drove peasants into the hands of the money-lenders. He also notes that, the educational system gave rise to a substantial educated elite but failed to mention that repercussions on women would be different. Similar omissions can be pointed out in D.N. Jha's study<sup>56</sup> of early Indian economic history, and Dewey and Hopkins' study<sup>57</sup> of the economic aspect of the 'imperial impact on Africa and India, Dharma Kumar and Megnad Desai edited voluminous work<sup>58</sup> on the economic history of India which barely mentions women. The importance of this neglected aspect is demonstrated by Rogers' study<sup>59</sup> of discrimination in developing societies. She highlights a deliberate domestication of women. Rogers, reasons that accumulation of wealth was channeled through men as the heads of households, which set in motion a deliberate legal discrimination between the two sexes.

Arguing against the academic marginalization of one sex of the total population, as well as issues intricately connected with it, Sharma states<sup>60</sup> that 'in so far as pardā contributes to

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55. D. Rothermund: Indian economy under British rule and other essays, New Delhi, Manohar. 1983.
56. D.N. Jha : Studies in the early Indian economic history, Delhi, Anupma Pub. 1980.
57. C.Dewey and A.G. Hopkins (ed). The imperial impact: Studies in the economic history of Africa and India London, Athlone press 1978.
58. D. Kumar & M. Desai (ed): Cambridge Economic History of India, Bombay, Macmillan, 1982.
59. B. Rogers : The domestication of women. Discrimination in developing societies. London, Tavistock, 1980.
60. U.Sharma: Women, work & property in North-West India. London, Tavistock. 1980.

the ordering of the political and economic life of the village, it needs to be discussed alongside such institutions as caste and factions, and not merely in the context of sex roles and domestic organisation<sup>61</sup>. That this view is not readily acceptable is evident from the response of those not conducting research on "women" in a talk at the NMML<sup>61</sup> in March'84. A historian's line of argument was, that different policies of the British had repercussions for the population as a whole and hence there was no reason to see the population divided in terms of sex. The fear voiced was, that at this rate there would be demands for a separate chapter on women's oppression even in studies of peasants' struggles. Such notions are characteristic of the general academicians until their research is specifically connected with the "woman" question. Papanek refers to this as the "purdāh" of scholarship<sup>62</sup>. In the context of research efforts concerning women in India she quotes Raj Krishna that, it has not yet become an area of general concern. The grooves of academics have yet to admit the need for concern.

At another level probably, it can be reasoned that women never did form the significant portion of public actors so as to be a subject of concern for historians. But, if history is to be

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61. Nehru Memorial Museum and library, New Delhi.

62. H. Papanek : False specialization of the purdah of scholarship. Centre for Asian Development Studies. Boston University. January 1984.

regarded as E.H. Carr<sup>63</sup> states, a social process in which individuals (i.e. men and women) are engaged as social beings, there is much to be reinspected and analysed in what has been written.

In a similar view, Mill<sup>64</sup>, points out that "...every individual lives from one generation to the next, in some society, that he lives out a biography and that he lives out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however, minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push or shove"<sup>64</sup>. Mill reasons that sociological imagination is crucial in any study of society. The implications point to the importance of every individual, male or female, in any society.

The whole complex of values as they affect men and women also required a clarification. Marx (1852) noted that, "men make their own history, but they do not make it, just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves....."<sup>65</sup> "Mills (1959)<sup>66</sup>, rightly points out that

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63. E.H. Carr : What is History ? England, Pelican Books. 1961.

64. C.W. Mills : The Sociological imagination. Reprint 1980 Penguin Books. 1959. p. 6.

65. K.Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Jowis Bonaparte Reprint 1969, New York. International Publication 1852. p. 15.

66. C.W. Mills, op.cit., . 15.

in the post-modern climate of development in economics, politics and violence, the chance for conscious human agency in history making, is uniquely available. However, in the context of cultural orientation atleast as it affected men and women in the early half of the twentieth century, it is possible to agree that men and women make their own history "..... under circumstances.... directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living"<sup>67</sup>.

Banks,<sup>68</sup> demonstrates, that the tradition of feminism which dominated 1920-60 Britain, stemmed from an evangelical tradition of moral reform which believed in the ideal of female superiority. Their superiority was based on their role as wives and mothers, significantly, Britain largely provided the model for India.

In the context of India, Mukherjee and Allen's study<sup>69</sup> of women in India and Nepal, provides a crucial and relevant perspective. The extent of a formative influence which Hindu ideology had on the evaluation of women, in Northern India is analysed. The inherent contradictions in the low ritual status of

67. K. Mark. op.cit., p. 15.

68. O. Banks : Faces of feminism. A study of feminism as a social movement. Oxford Martin Robertson. 1981.

69. M. Allen & S.N. Mukherjee (ed): Women in India and Nepal. Australian University Monograph on South Asia No. 8 ANU. 1982.

women and their revered status as mothers is voted. Studies of women within the framework of conjugal relations and of intellegentsia examined in this volume highlight the importance of the familial role of women to the exclusion of any other. Even the female intellegentsia developed to act as intermediaries between the secluded women and the world outside, in a historical context of the freedom struggle.

Significantly, Chaki Sarkars' study<sup>70</sup> of feminism in a traditional society too, reveals ideological moorings of male superiority. Even though the Meitei ideology does not undermine the female role and the woman's potential autonomy socially and economically and her high ritual status is distinctly evident, they recognise the socio-structural superiority of men.

An improvement of economic conditions or financial independence did not solve the problem of the woman's secondariness, ideologically, in any matter which would have a bearing in the world outside. This is effectively demonstrated by the study of Kapur<sup>71</sup> and R.Reiter<sup>72</sup>. The influence of traditional Hindu ideology on the lives of the women and the contradictory interpretations of their positions as goddesses and wives is brought home by Jacobson & Wadley<sup>73</sup>. In the context of analysing the hold of religious ideology in society, Carroll's

70. M.C. Sarkar: Feminism in a traditional society: Women of the Manipur Valley, New Delhi. Shakti Books. 1984.
71. P.Kapur: Changing status of the working women in India, Delhi, Vikas 1974.
72. R. Reiter (ed): Toward an anthropology of women. New York Monthly Review Press 1975.
73. D.Jacobson & S. Wadley: Women in India. Two perspectives. New Delhi, Manohar 1977.

Study<sup>74</sup> of women, religion and development in the third world is significant. Carroll argues for a recognition of the impact of religion on the woman's traditional position. She examines Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam to show that it is the typically ritualistic institutions of various religions which actually prevail in society. These include customs, institutions, priestly interpretation and community biases. The ossification of these, according to her, has had a particularly detrimental effect on women all over the world. The author also believes that considerations of power whether religious or political, economic, or social guided the religious ossification. Mernissi's Study<sup>75</sup> of sexual dynamics in a modern Muslim society - Morocco - reinforces this point. Kumar's work<sup>76</sup> on the Oudh peasants on the other hand also shows how religious texts could be used to mobilize people against imperialism and fight social evils like early marriage and polygamy.

Coomarswamy<sup>77</sup>, on the other hand does not accept the interpretation of women's secondariness. He in fact, sees in the Hindu culture itself, the freedom granted to the woman to realise herself as distinct from merely expressing herself.

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74. T.F. Carroll. op.cit. (refer to foot note number 55 earlier in the Chapter).
75. F. Mernissi : Beyond the veil. Male-Female Dynamics in a modern Muslim society. Schenkman Pub. 1975.
76. K. Kumar: Peasants in revolt. Tenants, Landlords, congress and the raj in Oudh 1886-1922. New Delhi. Manohar 1984.
77. A.K. Coomarswamy: The dance of Shiva, On Indian art and culture Revised 1982, New Delhi. Sagar Publication.

He reiterated, that the essence of femininity lay in wifeness and motherhood. Lannoy<sup>78</sup>, in the same tone argues that the woman's, 'sense of identity with the family, of her role as a wife and mother give her dignity and pride'. This, even prompts Bhattacharya<sup>79</sup> to state that in India, women have been treated as goddesses in the shrine of the family. They have always been loved and honoured.

Nandy's study<sup>80</sup> highlights the influence of the notions of the woman's role on the distinctive style of social intervention. Thus, he interprets male dominance in 19th century Bengal as the need of a new male self definition which defensively sabotaged the traditional symbolic core of maternal authority.

Rosaldo and Lamphere<sup>81</sup> question whether female subordination is natural and whether it is determined by the biological constitution of the human species. It is pointed out that, for humans, biology becomes important largely as it is interpreted by the norms and expectations of human culture and society. Biologists for instance would say that on an average, men are stronger than women; but they cannot tell us why male strength

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78. R.Lannoy: The speaking tree. A Study of Indian Culture & Society. Bombay, Oxford University Press. 1971.
79. P. Bhattacharya : Ideals of Indian Womanhood. Goldquin & Co., 1921.
80. A. Nandy: At the edge of psychology: Essays in politics and culture. Delhi, Oxford University Press 1980.
81. M.Z. Rosaldo & L. Lamphere. Women, culture and society. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1974.

and male activities in general, seem to be valued by people in all cultures. Sayers<sup>82</sup>, demonstrates how biology has been pressed into the service of conservative and anti-feminist positions to give these positions a scientific credibility which is actually spurious.

Why male strength and male activities are highly valued in all cultures remains unanswered. Murphy<sup>83</sup>, makes a significant point in the context of this imbalance. Since, social distance is imperative in ambiguous situations, so is non-knowledge of one another. Culturally sanctioned, the traditional social ideal of sex, enables this distancing. It was this social distancing which was reinforced by the complex of pardā. Makholoufs' case study<sup>84</sup>, of women in Yemen and the study of Arab women by Minces<sup>85</sup>, demonstrate that pardā was not merely a physical veil but a whole ideology to circumscribe women.

The lamentable plight of the women as a consequence of this social circumscribing in India, is captured by Ramabai

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82. J.Sayers : Biological politics. Feminist & anti feminist perspectives. London Tavistock. 1982.
83. Robert Murphy : Social distance of the veil. 1964. American Anthropologist 66(6): 1263-74.
84. C. Makholouf : Women and modernization in North Yemen. London. Croom Helm. 1979.
85. Juliet Minces : The house of obedience : Women in Arab Society. London, Zed Press. 1980.



Saraswati's study<sup>86</sup> of the high caste Hindu women. Ramabai noted the havoc that the tyrannical system of seclusion caused to women. The married woman was considered a property of her husband and his family. A widow's plight was unendurable to the extent that it drove many women to perform sati. Ramabai felt that only education could give the needful strength to women to improve their condition.

Chiplunkar<sup>87</sup> outlined the scientific basis of women's education, Hali<sup>88</sup> and Gandhi<sup>89</sup> advocated education for women though they also felt that the education given to women should be framed on proper lines in accordance with the purpose that nature had set aside for her.

The study :

The problem :

This study intends to break fresh ground by exploring a new area namely the impact of pardā on the education of Hindu

86. Ramabai Saraswati : Op.cit., . . . (Refer to foot note number 15 earlier in the chapter).
87. G.M. Chiplunkar. The scientific basis of women's education Poona. Pub. by Prof. S.B. Hudlikar, Deccan Gymkhana Colony 1930.
88. Hali in Isral and Wagle (ed): Islamic society and culture Essays in Honour of Prof. Aziz Ahmad. Delhi, Manohar 1983. p. 41.
89. M.K. Gandhi, op.cit. (Refer to foot note number 41 earlier in the chapter).

and Muslim women in U.P. The survey of literature reveals, that pardā was and continues to be practised by both communities, although its manifestations varied. This practice per se & its variations, we hypothesize, affect the access of education to girls and women. For instance, whether girls receive education or not, whether they are sent to school or are educated at home in the zenānās are determined to a great extent by the practice of pardā.

Objectives:

The study has a comparative focus. The specific questions are:

1. Whether pardā as practised by Muslims and Hindus was unambiguously, Islamic<sup>90</sup>?
2. Whether Muslim and Hindu<sup>n</sup> women were equally affected by the practice of pardā in the field of education?
3. Amongst the women of the two communities of Hindus and Muslims,
  - (a) Was there any difference in their literacy rates?
  - (b) Was there any difference in the levels of education (primary, middle, secondary) at the school level?

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90. It would be useful to substantiate this point with further field work and primary historical sources.

- (c) Was there any difference in the achievement of higher education ?
- (d) Was the need for facilities of buildings, escorts, scholarships, female teachers of single sex schools for female education, mitigated by the practice of pardā ?

The thesis attempts to analyse whether the differential achievement had anything to do with the practice of pardā. Whether education affected women's pardā ? And in what ways did pardā affect the lives of women who did receive education ? However, it is imperative to mention that no definite data having a direct bearing on this aspect are available.

Source :

Official records, mainly the Director of Public Instruction reports and censuses; sociological and historical literature, related case studies as well as information from the generation of grand parents.

Scheme of chapters :

This study is divided into five chapters. The second (and following) chapter explores one level of social reality. The reference is to the gender differences in U.P. focusing specifically on the women of the two dominant communities of Hindus and Muslims and the socio-cultural factors guiding their

lives. The whole complex of pardā is conspicuous as a symbol of and a tool to reinforce the role expectation from a female in U.P. - Hindus and Muslims, both. The extent of the percolation of pardā is ascertained from an analysis of the property rights of Hindu and Muslim women, the migration trend of women and the occupational distribution of the province.

The third chapter outlines the socio-political profile of U.P. ~~as~~ in the first half of the 20th century. An attempt is made to outline the realities of dominance and dependence at the socio-political level. Reference is made to caste mobility and solidarity, emulation of dominant class, the rising communal consciousness and the efforts at revivalism. Also referred to, are the dominant components of society i.e., the higher caste groups which often and not always formed the higher classes. The political strategies in U.P. are also noted. This includes the importance of local politics, the conservative politics mitigated by the ritual dominance of Brahmanical orthodoxy and the increasing importance of education as a buttress for political ends.

The fourth chapter includes the analyses of the different levels of education, co-education, curricula, professional education, management and finance and grants-in-aid. Finally the intra-regional and communal differences are studied in the education of women in U.P.

The fifth chapter presents the conclusions.

## CHAPTER - II

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF SECLUSION AND VEILING

A dimension of social reality in U.P. of the early half of the twentieth century, is reflected in the constituents of the classes in society i.e., the men and the women and in their social dichotomy, in the position of women vis-a-vis the men, in their relations and interaction. These reflect dominance and dependence. This chapter examines this obvious, but academically neglected dimension of social reality.

#### Segregation and seclusion :

The universality of the phenomenon of sex-segregation needs no elaboration. In different societies however, segregation of the sexes has ranged from an actual to a symbolic separation of males and females in all spheres of life and at all levels.

In North India, sex-segregation is maintained through the practice of female seclusion and veiling. Much ethnographical literature refers to the practice of seclusion<sup>sion</sup> and veiling females, among the Hindu and Muslim communities in north India. In fact, the practice of seclusion and the observance of veiling, form an integral part of the day to day life experiences of Muslim and Hindu women.

Pardā : A semantic reference :

Conventionally, the practice of seclusion and veiling of women in South Asia has been referred to as pardā by scholars and laymen alike. The indigenous pardā literally means a 'curtain'. Though a study of the semantics of the term in actual usage in any Indian language has not been undertaken, it is certain that the word is widely used throughout the sub-continent to refer to modes of secluding a woman from the sight of others, whether by delimiting the boundaries of her world i.e. by confining her within an enclosed space with the help of some physical shield, curtain, wall, or screen or by manipulating her clothing. Reference to a woman being 'in pardā' implies her habitual seclusion or living her veil. Women, who were habitually secluded or customarily veiled are also referred to as pardānashīn or pardevālī.<sup>1</sup>

A large number of localized terms in the various languages in North India have a more or less similar range of meaning. The term ghūngat or ghūnghūt, in U.P. refers specifically to the Hindu women's covering of the face in the presence of males and females of certain categories of relationship. The end of the sārī or the head shawl which is used to cover one's head is referred to as pallā and is used as a ghūnghat. To my knowledge, in U.P., pallā rakhnā implies the covering of the women's head,

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1. H. Papanak & G. Minault (ed): op.cit. p. 58.

whereas ghūnghat is its more stringent form and necessarily refers to the veiling of the face. Apart from the urbanized and apparently modernized categories of women, generally, adult women and girls in U.P. cover their head with their pallā or dupattā. It is the daughters-in-law specifically, who, regardless of their ages, observe ghūnghat or who have to hide their face. In fact, the reference made is normally as either ghūnghat mein i.e., within/in a ghūnghat, ghūnghat-kādhnā or ghūnghat nikālnā i.e., to make a ghūnghat or to take out a ghūnghat. The term ghūnghat is used in Madhya Pradesh<sup>2</sup> and Himachal Pradesh<sup>3</sup> too. In Maharashtra and Gujrat, the word gosha (literally corner) is used to refer to women's seclusion, according to Vatuk.<sup>4</sup> The terms naqāb and burqā also refer to veiling and seclusion of women in U.P. Different from the ghūnghat or pallā, the burqā is a garment specifically stitched for concealing women, and unlike the former the use of burqā is restricted to Muslim women. The old style burqā enabled the most effective concealment of women, since it was a circular piece of material with an intricately, embroidered skull cap right in the centre. The rest of the cloth dropped to touch the ground around the woman, thus giving a ghostly impression to the observer. Occasionally,

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2. D.A. Jacobson, "Hidden faces Hindu & Muslim pardāh in a Central Indian Village" (Unpublished M. Phil thesis, Columbia University, 1970).
  3. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed): op.cit., p. 58.
  4. H. Papanek and G. Minault (ed) : ibid., p. 58.

the area around the eyes had two small holes covered with a gauze like material. The new style burqā is a two piece garment. It consists of a long cost with long sleeves, tailored loosely or occasionally, slightly fitting alongwith a separate waist length cape to be tied over the head with a chiffon veil which folds from over the face. The specific type of burqā worn, signalled class, wealth, sophistication and region of origin<sup>5</sup>. Women also used a chādar to conceal themselves outside their homes.

Whereas a pallā or dupattā could be donned at all times inside or outside the house by females, regardless of age, likewise the ghūnghat by specific categories of women; the use of burqā was restricted to Muslim women outside the home in rural or urban areas.

The symbolism of clothing is perhaps the most striking device to ensure and maintain the social segregation of the sexes, as well as the seclusion of women. The specific use of garments - the shifting and redraping of the pallā or dupattā, the lifting up of the burqā, the concealment of body and face do not necessarily imply any change in the degree of seclusion. The extent of body covered by the woman indicates the degree of respect paid by her to the others. Thus, the heroine of

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5. H. Papanek and G. Minault, ed: ibid., p. 12  
 Cora Vreede-De Stuers Pardā : A study of Muslim women's life in Northern India, 1968, pp. 60, 61, 64.



Rama Mehta's Novel<sup>6</sup>, Geeta, "wanted to pull back the sārī from her face and breathe the fresh, clean air, but she knew she could not in the presence of her cousin-in-law. Instead she leaned against the wall, her sārī fluttering over her face"<sup>7</sup>.

In some social situations, such as a religious ceremony or a death, women cover their heads, while not necessarily in other situations. Here, it is essential to note that even men cover their heads for certain religious ceremonial occasions or on account of a death. However, the difference in the observance of such gestures by the two sexes lies in the fact that the woman conceals her whole self by her clothing, unlike the man. In fact, measures of preventing any possibilities of exposure were stringent on the women. So much so that even though fully draped with an additional chādar, the full sleeved blouse worn by the sārī-clad women had lead pellets sown in at the lower edge of the blouse to guard against any possibilities of exposure of the woman's body<sup>8</sup>. The pardā observed through the manipulation of clothing however, afforded a 'mobile' seclusion. The wearer of the burqā or ghūnghat, for instance, could move from one place to another and hence had the 'advantage' (ironically) of what Papanek refers to as "portable seclusion"<sup>9</sup>.

6. Rama Mehta : Inside the Haveli (New Delhi, Arnold Heineman, 1977)

7. Rama Mehta, Ibid., pp. 93-94.

8. Information from my maternal grandmother, who is henceforth referred to as nani.

9. H. Papanek and G. Minault: p.cit., p. 10.

Apart from the manipulation of clothing which ensured a partial and even a total concealment of the female face and body, the observance of pardā also implies the segregation of living space. Social space was in fact graded according to how public it was, states Sharma<sup>10</sup>. Social space was subject to a moral evaluation in terms of the degree of danger of molestation it held for women. The areas defined as public were acknowledged as male preserves. These included the bazār, the main road, the grain depots and wholesale markets, the public buildings which constituted the offices, schools and library. The bus stand at the junction of the road, also tended to be avoided. By-lanes and back alleys were felt less dangerously public. In this context, Sharma also notes that "one's own land is really an extension of one's own home and women can move about their own fields and estates with confidence that will not be censured.... one had a right of being seen there as one had in one's own courtyard. One was publicly 'visible' in the sense that one was 'visible' to someone peeping through a grille in the wall in the private courtyard"<sup>11</sup>. Another category of social space to be avoided was the jungle or any uncultivated ground in the rural tracks. Chaperonage was essential for women in these tracks.

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10. Alfred de Souza, ed. Women in contemporary India and South Asia. Delhi, Manohar. 1980, p. 220.

11. U. Sharma in A De' Souza, op.cit., pp. 220, 223.

The actual mobility of the woman was restricted and curtailed by a spatial segregation in a number of ways. Sections of the house were set aside, and in some cases it was made possible by architecture, for the exclusive use of women and men respectively. Each section could be a separate self-contained unit. Eglar refers to separate men's houses in one part of the locality or in the family compound of a leading villager in Punjab and Baluchistan<sup>12</sup>. Also in the cases of a rigid pardā observance, men's entry to the women's section of the house, was restricted only to the immediate members of the household and that too not in the day time unless there was an urgent purpose. "The men including her husband seemed to disappear as soon as it was day light. The whole day they were away in their offices or busy in their section of the house. The men came into the interior courtyards only at meal times..."<sup>13</sup> The men's section was out of bounds for the women, to the extent that "a little shiver went through her body as Geeta thought of the day when she had trespassed into the men's apartments. She already knew all the nooks and corners of the zenānā, but she had never been into the other side of havelī"<sup>14</sup>. Spatial segregation could also imply separate entrances to the women's part of the house (i.e. the zenānā). Even the architectural facade of the house visible to the public eye and facing public pathways, was in many instances

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13. Rama Mehta, op.cit., p. 16.

14. Rama Mehta, ibid., p. 16.

characterised by a series of walls with tiny windows set high. Thus, Jeffrey notes that, "the plastered or bare brick walls present a blank facade to the outside, for they are windowless, except for small lights set high into the wall, which are only opened when there is need of cooling through draught"<sup>15</sup>. In the more elaborate and stately construction, carved screens to cover balconies and latticed windows dramatically signalled the seclusion of women<sup>16</sup>.

In the case of male visitors, curtains or screens may be used to shield women from their sight, though conversation was possible. In U.P., male visitors would be guided only to the men's section which was the baithak outside the boundaries of the house, while the female visitor entered the house. An implicit code required that until called for even the small daughters of the household would not venture out to the baithak.

Public spaces could often be enclosed to enable privacy to the women. Thus, vehicles were equipped with curtains or screens to conceal the travelling women. Horse carriages, ēkkās and rickshaws, a popular mode of transport in the townships and cities of U.P. in the early twentieth century, were required to be literally wrapped around with sheets of cotton cloth or even silk by those who could afford it to prevent any mishap of

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15. Patricia Jeffrey: Frogs in a well: Indian women in purdah. New Delhi. Vikas, 1979, p. 9.

16. H. Papanek and G. Minault, ed: op.cit., p. 9.

visibility. Thus, there were also instances of long sheets being held parallel to make a temporary passage from the inner porch to the standing vehicle to enable the chādar wrapped women to scuttle across to the vehicle in total hiding.<sup>17</sup> In the case of women going for car rides, two curtains were drawn across the shut windows.

Consequently, though a woman lived in a place almost the entire of her married life, if left within metres of her house she would be lost. In the case of young unmarried girls, though such stringency may not have been observed, the reasons for leaving the boundaries of the home were virtually nil, in the case of those who could afford to keep their womenfolk at home.

Separate compartments were set aside in trains and buses which were not necessarily visually separated. The stringency of concealing the woman and segregated train-travelling is illustrated by one instance of a mistaken exchange of brides in Eastern U.P. in the late 1920's. Two marriage parties - Hindu and a Muslim returning alongwith the brides had never actually seen the latter. Securely wrapped up and concealed in the chādar with the ghūnghat effectively bringing visibility to a zero, the Hindu bride stepped off the train alongwith her female servant, when asked to disembark. Illiteracy and the rigid pardā prevented the women from checking the name of the

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17. My nānī's experience.

station from the sign board or making inquiries. The women's fears were however confirmed when they realised that the male members of bridegroom's party were pājamā clad and not dhoti clad as the Hindu barātis would be. Of course, the station master was duly informed and the brides were ultimately escorted to their respective in-laws.<sup>18</sup>

Where separate space could not be provided as on public occasions, like fairs, theatres, religious gatherings, film shows and even at schools, at sports stadiums and at swimming pools, different timings for attendance by men and women could be given.

Papanek's field work in Pakistan<sup>19</sup> also serves as evidence of the institutionalization of pardā by the government. Thus, on Pakistan Airlines women passengers may specify that no man is to be seated besides them and banks too have branch offices reserved for the use of women with female employees to encourage female customers in the urban areas. Similarly, at place of work, women employees may specify their unwillingness to share office space with men and are usually assigned to women's suites.

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18. This incident was narrated to me by my to be Mother-in-law. The Hindu bride in question was her distant relative.

19. H. Papanek and G. Minault, op.cit., p. 10.

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Pardā, especially the veil, as noted earlier was more stringent on the daughter-in-law of the household i.e., it was required to be observed from the kinsmen and kinswomen of the husband. Pardā at one level therefore symbolized the woman's role. The essential point here is that pardā does not remain a role symbol only. Pardā as a manipulation of clothing and visual separation buttressed by a spatial allocation to the male and female, forms only one aspect of the concept of pardā.

#### Behaviourial Pardā :

The other aspect of pardā lies in the necessity to conform to a code of conduct and behaviour expected of a female who is required to observe a physical pardā. Thus pardā in this crucial sense encompasses in varying degrees all females, regardless of their roles, in northern India. The behavioural norms serve to ideologically circumscribe the female. The physical manifestations of pardā in terms of visual and spatial separation and the ideological circumscribing in terms of guiding and determining behaviour are so inextricably linked, that, which follows the other is impossible to point out. Nevertheless, the ideological circumvention is crucial enough, in that, it enables the persistence of this ethical ideal of female conduct despite an absence of a physical provision of pardā. Hence, women could be "concealed socially through their deportment and through a reserve in their



relationship with men".<sup>20</sup> Socially, women were required to remain as inconspicuous as was plausible - especially so, the younger women.

The social distancing, whether from male or from females was in effect accomplished by norms of nazar kā pardā i.e., avoidance of direct eye contact, āvāz kā pardā i.e., avoidance of loud conversation and laughter; avoidance of any physical contact and avoidance of sitting at the same level. The women were also to avoid gatherings of men. 'Shyness as a characteristic of the woman's personality is thus implicit. The shyness of a woman was lauded as the appropriate characteristic of an ideal woman. Shyness for sharam, implying modesty and bashfulness has been constantly referred to as the most precious of jewels that adorn a woman. Vatuk notes that, women of U.P., explain and rationalize their observance of pardā, and their refrainment from a free and open behaviour on account of feeling shy and embarrassed<sup>21</sup>. Conversely, a woman who chattered and laughed too loudly would be criticized as be-sharam or shameless.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the phrase be-sharam was even a term of abuse.

20. P. Jeffrey : op.cit., p. 102.

21. S. Vatuk in H. Papanek and G. Minault, ed. op.cit., p. 74.

22. P. Jaffrey : op.cit., p. 99.

Delineating the behavioural norms for the woman, a Hindi book on women's religion and duties written in a question answer form states:

“इतने ज़ोर से न बोलो कि जिसमें तुम्हारे शब्द घर से बाहर तक सुनायी दें, बिना मतलब घरके दरवाज़े पर खड़ी मत रोओ; खिड़कीया भारीखों से बाहर की तरफ मत भाँको।

- व्यर्थ डोकना और बोकना छोड़ दो, बेमतलब दूसरों के घरों पर आना-जाना छोड़ दो, इससे महत्व घटता है, सत्कार में कमी होती है तथा और भी कई दोष पैदा होजाते हैं।

- किसी पुरुषके पास अकेली मत बैठो, जवान पिता भाई और पुत्रके पास भी नहीं। अकेले में बड़े-बड़े तपस्वियोंके मन भी डिग जाते हैं।

- मेले, भाँको, जुकूस, भीड़-भाड़ और नाटक-सिनेमा आदि में कभी मत जाओ।”

23. Stree-Dharm Prashnotri. Gorakhpur, Ghanshyamdas, Jalan, Geeta Press, 1926, p. 43. (author's name not printed on the book).

Translation of Goendka's quotes.

Don't speak so loudly that your words may be heard even outside the house, don't peep outside the window or balcony.

- Leave useless walking - talking, leave visiting homes for it decreases your importance, lessens the hospitality which is meted out and leads to many other problems.

- Do not sit alone near a man. Not even near a young father, brother or son. For when alone the minds of great sages also get unstable.

- Never go to visit a fair, tableau, procession, crowds, theatre and cinema etc.

Further, the women were also enjoined that:

“तीर्थों और मन्दिरों में पति की आज्ञा से पति के साथ जाने में कोई आपत्ति नहीं---- परन्तु आज प्रायः--  
 --- तीर्थों में भी चौर, लम्पट, व्यभिचारी और लालचियों के सिवा ज्ञानी महात्मा बहुत कम देखने में आते हैं,-----  
 -- अधिकांश स्थलों में कई प्रकार की कुत्सित कार्यवाहियाँ सुनी जाती हैं। अतस्त्व स्त्रियों को अकेले कहीं नहीं जाना चाहिए। वास्तव में पति से बढ़कर स्त्री के लिए कोई देवता नहीं और पति का चरणोदक ही उसके लिए परम पावन तीर्थ जल है।”

24. Stree Dharm prashnotri, Gorakhpur, Ghanshyamdas Jalan, Geeta Press, ibid., p. 21.

Translation

There is no harm in going for pilgrimages and to temples with the permission of the husband and along with the husband ... But nowadays often... even in pilgrimages, other than theives, lumpens, characterless and greedy; great and learned people are rarely seen.....at most of the places various types of sinful activities are heard. Therefore, women should not go alone anywhere. In fact there is no deity greater than her own husband for a woman and the husbands feet is the most sublime of pilgrimages for a woman.

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Thus, the woman was not only expected to refrain from talking loudly but was also expected to ensure that she was not spotted standing at the door way or even peeping outside the window. Male company was to be avoided to the extent that the woman were to avoid sitting with a young father, brother or even a son. Fairs, processions even tableau processions and exhibitions, theatre and films were to be avoided. Pilgrimages too were deemed avoidable. As Sharma notes, that though most village women had to go to the bazār from time to time, they were unwilling to be seen hanging around or talking there, since they felt self-consciously aware that they were in male dominated territory.

Thus, even the most dominating, authoritative and senior maid of the havelī was required to be escorted till the place of Arjun, the fortune teller by Khyali the cook.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Maudadi stated, that Islam had not approved that a woman should move out of her home without a genuine need and when she did move out, she should be accompanied by a male relative.<sup>26</sup>

De Stuers referred to this level of pardā as the absent pardā i.e. though the actual veil was absent the pardā nevertheless existed in spirit. De Stuers distinguished between three other categories of pardā - strict pardā i.e. pardā observed in any

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25. R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 85.

26. Maudadi in P. Jeffrey, op.cit., p. 20.

circumstances; partial pardā i.e., the burqā or the veil was used more-or-less regularly and also a small circle of friends was received at home; intermittent pardā, i.e. when the actual veil or burqā was abandoned at certain situations, though mentally it had not been discarded.

Men's responsibility in avoidance :

It is important to note that the responsibility of maintaining the social distance between the sexes lay with women as well as men. Contrary to the notions of the woman's sole responsibility in conforming to and adhering to the norms requiring her to avoid male congregations or male company, the onus of avoidance falls on the men from whom the woman is supposed to seclude herself, according to Vatuk.<sup>27</sup> Maudadi states, that men should not enter other people's homes without permission and even the men of the household should refrain from rushing inside, lest the women are inadequately covered.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the social set up into which Geeta, was married was found oppressive by her husband also. He, "too had found the segregated way of life in the haveli oppressive... Though men could come to the women's apartment when they wished, it was not

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27. S. Vatuk in H. Papanek and G. Minault, ed. ibid., p. 71.

28. P. Jeffrey, ibid., p. 20.

considered dignified to do so during the day, except when women had to be consulted on some family matters. Like everyone else in the haveli, there was a form that men maintained. too"<sup>29</sup>.

Men's arrival in the women's part of the house was either announced by preceding persons or the men themselves coughed or cleared their throats loudly or even dragged their footwear to warn the inmates of their arrival<sup>30</sup>. This was done in order to give those women inside the house, time to settle themselves or hide from the men as certain categories of women were supposed to.

Sharar notes that "if women were secluded in the mahal, men were excluded from it.... A poorer man would have to take a bamboo stool out into the street...The alternative was to go off to a mosque, shop, government office or a brothel, to engage in prayer work, entertainment or the rich art of conversation, according to the decorum of the time and place."<sup>31</sup>

Jeffrey as a field worker noted, that men who received her (Jeffrey) warmly in the privacy of their home or who chatted with her in the shrine just as they did with the other women pilgrims "doggedly" ignored her in the street, "lest their greeting reflected badly on my modesty and their respectability."<sup>32</sup>

29. R. Mehta, ibid., p. 18.

30. I have noted this practice in homes in urban & rural areas of U.P.

31. Sharar in David Lelyveld; Aligarh's first generation, Muslim solidarity in British India (Delhi, Oxford Univ. Press, 1978) p. 37-38.

32. P. Jeffrey: ibid., p. 5.

Thus, Jeffrey was treated and expected to behave as if she was as invisible as a burqa clad lady. Coomarswamy refers to a similar phenomenon when he calls attention to the existence of "other kinds of seclusion than those afforded by palace walls".<sup>33</sup> He cites the example of Lakshman in the epic Ramayan, who had never raised his eyes above the feet of his brother's wife's feet so that he did not even know her appearance, even after having spent years in exile with his brother Rama and brother's wife Sita. Coomarswamy firmly believed that, "these unseen walls are a seclusion equally absolute with any pardā state".<sup>34</sup>

As much as the degree of actual observance of pardā - that is the physical segregation, seclusion and the veiling of the women, the underlying value system, which enforced the social distance between the two sexes determined the pardā society. On account of the variations in degree of observance of pardā and different types of segregation - spatial segregation or that accomplished by clothing and of adherence to a particular code of conduct, it is difficult to find any consistent definition of pardā observance in the literature on women in South Asia. Hence, it is also impossible to make any categorical statements about the extent and distribution of pardā.

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33. A.K. Coomarswamy, op.cit., p. 115.

34. A.K. Coomarswamy, ibid., p. 116.

The crucial point here is, that it is not possible for any society to seclude all women from all men under all circumstances or consistently prevent social interaction between the two sexes. All rules of segregation and seclusion were therefore applied selectively in accordance with the woman's age, her marital status, her position in the life cycle and geneological seniority. Thus Tiny's granny could afford to be gradually lax in observing pardā or wearing her burgā, because many men of her own generation were no longer alive.<sup>35</sup> Considerations of social rank or status were also deemed important to the selective application of the devices of segregation, seclusion and veiling. Thus, the first lady of the havelī, a great grand mother herself, in Rama Mahta's novel, "to the very last... was aware of feminine decorum. As long as she was conscious, she insisted the maids cover her face before the doctor".<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, significantly, Sharma points out to instances of women in a rural tract belonging to Scheduled Castes with a long tradition of female labour and with little prestige to lose by working in other people's fields, also leading a life of 'honourable domesticity' or doing very little agricultural work, though their poverty could hardly afford it. Possibly the lack of cash and economic resources prompted a compensation in having a wife who led a life of domesticity.<sup>37</sup>

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35. C. Vreede De Stuers : op.cit., p. 60.

36. R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 47.

37. U. Sharma, op.cit., pp. 125-126.



The role of the individual was the crucial determinant of the expected differential behaviour of the sexes. The importance of role as a context of seclusion and veiling practices is clarified by the veiling practices of Tuareg men of Africa. Murphy noted, that the quality of the social relationships of the Tuareg men was more instrumental than that of the women and it was the men who observed a rigid and formalized veiling. Kinship relations in the Tuareg society were political relations thus making for a highly ambiguous role of Tuareg men. The Tuareg women on the other hand were not significant political actors in the formal sense. The veil in this situation of role ambiguity of the Tuareg man made "for a diffuseness of ego behavioural stance".<sup>38</sup> A distinct social distance was made possible by concealing the primary communication zone i.e. the mouth region. By this the Tuareg decreased his vulnerability to others by symbolically removing himself from the interaction; he became less labile before the world. It was their quality of remoteness that struck the outside observer. The Tuareg men, it was noted, walked with a long swagger and held their head high with dignity and aloofness. The veils promoted the atmosphere of mystery. The Tuareg "whether in town or in his native desert has often been remarked upon for his penchant for appearing the master of all the surveys"<sup>39</sup>. The veil for the Tuareg men, which showed little of them except hands, feet and the area around their eyes, was worn

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38. Robert Murphy: "Social Distance and the Veil", 1964  
American Anthropologist 66(6) : 1263-74., p. 1265.

39. R. Murphy, ibid., p. 1266.

since it was considered shameful for them to show their mouth among their people. The veil was thus connected with privacy and withdrawal<sup>40</sup>. Yet, the veil for the Tuareg men enhanced whatever was already regarded as their distinct masculine characteristic i.e., their haughty and arrogant demeanor.

In comparison, the veil of the secluded women of north India too served to enhance whatever was seen as feminine. Thus, in the case of the latter it highlighted their special sense of vulnerability and the consequent necessity of protection. In contrast, however, pardā impinged upon the free movement of women in public, to an extent that prompted Nehru to comment, "whenever I think of women in pardā cut off from the world, I invariably think of a prison or a zoo; How can a nation go ahead if half its population is kept away in a kind of prison? Tear the pardā and let each one of us see the light of day".<sup>41</sup>

Pardā - Islamic or not? Hindu and Muslim pardā:

This leads us to the controversy of whether 'pardā' can be labelled an Islamic phenomenon i.e., as a relic of Muslim contact with the Indian society.<sup>42</sup>

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40. R. Murphy, Ibid., p. 1265.

41. Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of world history (Bombay. Asia Publishing House) p. 152.

42. Katherine Mayo : Mother India (New York Harcourt Brace 1927), p. 108; Meer Hassan Ali; Observations of the Musulmans of India, 2 Vols (London; Parbery, Allen, 1832), p. 317.

For an insight into this controversy it would be useful to study the so-called concepts of Hindu and Muslim pardā. Papanek and Jacobson had reasoned that though veiling and seclusion were customs shared by both Hindus and Muslims, these practices were used in each community for different social purposes and in differing contacts. Thus, a Muslim system of pardā and a Hindu system of pardā were delineated. The argument was, that, the Muslims used these practices to safeguard their women from men outside the family and to keep them in their own separate feminine world within the household. The Hindus used the same devices to elicit the woman's subordination to her in-laws and to maintain an asymmetrical relationship between the bride givers and bride takers so as to bring about a certain order in the family and kin-circle.<sup>43</sup>

In a similar vein, Jeffrey points out that pardā of the Hindus was not the same phenomenon as that of the Muslims. Muslim women observed pardā in the sense of complete veiling after puberty in relation to all men, except close kin. For Hindu females on the other hand, pardā was a question of veiling only after marriage and in relation to the relation to the household's older male kin.<sup>44</sup> Thus Mukut Bihari Verma<sup>45</sup> lamented that:

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43. H. Papanek and G. Minault (ed.) : op.cit., p. 18.

44. P. Jeffrey, op.cit., p. 3.

45. Refer to footnote 46.

“ जिन घरवालों की नस-नस का पता होता है----- यह भी कह सकते हैं कि वास्तव में जिनसे खतरे की सबसे कम ही सम्भावना होती है----- उन्हीं से आज परदा किया जाता है। यहाँ तक कि घर और आस-पड़ोस की औरतों तक का घूंघर निकाला और उनके सामने करीने से बैठा-उठा जाता है। इसके विपरीत दूसरी और जिनसे परदा नहीं किया जाता----- वे हैं युवा नौकर-चाकर, नाई, धोबी, मेहतर, कहार, खौञ्जेवाला, फेरीवाला, जोगी, फ़कीर, सयाना, भिगमझा, पास-पड़ोस के जवान-जवान मर्द, बच्चे और घरके अथवा खास परिचितों- रिश्तेदारों को छोड़कर कोई भी जाना-अजाना आदमी----- वहीं बहू-बेटियाँ जो मास-ससुर, जेठ आदि घरवालों के सामने अपना व्यवहार ( लज्जा के दायरे में रखती हैं, बाहर अपना व्यवहार) ऐसा लज्जा-हीन रखती हैं कि मला

आदमी देखकर सिर भी न उठा सकता।”

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46. Mukut Bihari Verma: Stree-Samasys Stree andolan ke Itihās  
Sahit, Ajmer, Sasta Sahitya Mandal, November 1931.

Translation of Mukut Bihari Verma:

- Those relatives who are known intimately ... it can be said that infact those from whom danger is least expected... from them parda is observed today. To the extent that ghunghat is observed even from the women of the neighbourhood and respect is shown on the contrary those from whom parda is not observed: They are young servants, barber, washermen, sweeper, potter, vendors, hawker, vagabond, youth beggar, mendicant young male adolescents of the neighbourhood and leaving aside known\*specifically known relatives and friends from any unknown person.... The behaviour of the same daughters-in-law and daughters of the house which remains respectful in front of their mother-in-law, father-in-law, older brother-in-law etc. is so shameless outside the house that any simple man would not be able to lift his head at their behaviour.

Therefore while the Muslim system of pardā dealt with the relationship of women with outsiders, the Hindu system controlled women inside the family and kindred. The different orientations of these two systems were related in turn to certain differences between Hindu and Muslim social structures, kinship and family organisation, value systems and the like.

An important distinction between Hindus and Muslims was sighted in the permissibility of marriage between cross-cousins and parallel cousins. Cross cousin marriages were not permitted among most North Indian Hindus and parallel cousin marriages were forbidden.<sup>47</sup> Among Muslims on the other hand, marriage with father's brother's daughter was permitted and often claimed as preferable.<sup>48</sup> Vatuk notes that, the ethnographic evidence too supports the notion that Muslims tend to stress the unity of the kindred vis-a-vis the outsiders, whereas the Hindu pardā is related to respect relations among affines.<sup>49</sup> Thus, in contrast to the Hindu girl, the Muslim girl was familiar with the family she married into and this was considered to have had significant repercussions on the parda customs among the Hindus and Muslims. It has also been pointed

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47. K.M. Kapadia, Marriage & Family in India (Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 124-134.

48. K.M. Kapadia, Ibid., p. 135; Vreede De Stuers: op.cit., pp. 28-31.

49. H.Papanek and G. Minault, ed., op.cit., p. 62.

out that, the Quran lists the father-in-law, a prime focus of avoidance amongst Hindus, as only next to the father to whom it was permitted for women to "reveal their adornment".<sup>50</sup> Thus logically, Vatuk argues that, the special avoidance measures or pardā may have been unnecessary within the specified kindred of the Muslim girl.<sup>51</sup>

Such sharp distinctions between Hindus and Muslims could however be misleading. Jeffrey's work amongst the Pirzade Muslims of Delhi points to a 'Hindu type of pardā amongst Muslims whereby the pre-occupation with controlling the women within the family and kindred was evident. A woman in her fifties noted that : "I was in pardā in my own home until my marriage. I was not even allowed to meet my older sister's husband and my mother's sister's husband.... I did not show my husband my face at all for well over a month after marriage. I covered my head completely with a thick shawl and just to make sure, I put on a dubbātā underneath as well".<sup>52</sup> Similarly, commenting on the psychological consequences of an arranged marriage between cousins, where the contact with boys was limited outside the kin-group, Papanek states that young educated girls

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50. H.Papanek and G.Minault, ed., ibid., p. 64.

51. H.Papanek and G. Minault, ed., ibid., p. 62.

52. Patricia Jeffrey, op.cit., p. 126.

became shy of the cousin once they learnt of the parental decision to marry them.<sup>53</sup>

Vatuk points to the Muslim type of parda amongst the Hindus in some areas of north India. While the unmarried Hindu girls did not wear a veil or cover their faces in front of strangers, the confining of post-pubertal girls was highly valued. The married woman covered her face in her natal home, too, if her husband or elder members of his kin group were present. She was, however, not expected to veil from the younger members of her husband's kin.

Veiling from female affines :

Another striking and significant characteristic of pardā observance is the veiling observed by younger women from older female affines in their conjugal home. Geeta noticed that all the women of the haveli who gathered to greet and welcome her as a newly-wedded bride were veiled. Similarly on the occasion of her first child's birth the gathered women had veiled so much so that it was difficult to identify her acquaintances in that gathering of women.

In U.P., a daughter-in-law married into the family for 15-16 years would have to stay veiled in her conjugal home

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53. H.Papanek and G. Minault, ed., op.cit., p. 20.



from the older female affines of the extended household of her husband, as well as their aged and senior female friends. In case her face was to be shown to them the veil was lifted and she was required to shut her eyes or lower her gaze to avoid direct eye contact.<sup>54</sup>

Jeffrey noted that, young Muslim girls avoided the company of elderly women who had come visiting or who conversed. Thus, even in the company of women, the youngest and the unmarried did not take a major part in conversation. One woman noted that: ".....there used to be complete pardā between young girls and women from other houses....."<sup>55</sup>

Necessity to focus on cultural orientation :

It seems therefore, that a focus only on the behavioural forms represented by seclusion and veiling amongst the Hindu and Muslim women proves to be an inadequate explanation of these observances, and handicaps assessment of socio-cultural factors affecting the Hindu and Muslim women in U.P. The notion that the selected sets of behaviour patterns of veiling and seclusion "as systems" which may be "employed" or "utilised" in different ways according to the cultural orientation of a social group, be it of Hindus or Muslims, as Vatuk points out,

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54. My mother's experience.

55. P. Jeffrey, op.cit., p. 102.

seems to be a rather narrow conceptualization. Whether pardā is used as an umbrella term for an arbitrarily defined sociological concept, or whether it is limited to an examination of behaviours which the people of the culture label as pardā, it would be more useful to turn this conceptual formulation of the behavioural forms around, to focus on the meanings and cultural orientation of these forms. To gauge the full meaning of the pervasive practice of pardā, it is necessary to probe into the orientations which generate it. A focus on only one of the many forms of behaviour could possibly leave the basic orientation itself partially detected, since the "functions" that veiling and seclusion serve, are served additionally by other behavioural patterns. A study of a single or a particular behavioural form would fall short of enabling a thorough understanding of the pre-occupation to deal with a cultural concern. On the other hand, a peep into cultural orientations would clarify whether the contrasts between the South Asian Hindu and Muslim attitudes regarding the role of females are as sharp and fundamental as made out to be. It will also clarify the implicit ambiguities in the practice of veiling from female and male affines; in 'protecting' the Hindu and Muslim women by enforcing the observance of veiling from men within the family and not so much the outsiders. It would further explain the contradiction evident in the laxity in veiling or even discarding the veil in the absence of those whose approval or disapproval was negligible, even if they were males.

De Stuers aptly points out that "flexibility and variety of the pardā system give rise to contradictions when the focus is merely on external signs; . . . when the basic principle of pardā is not taken into account; namely, the segregation of sexes and the subordinate position of women"<sup>56</sup>. In essence, therefore, a more rational approach would study not only what seclusion and veiling practices entailed, but also what it meant to be a female in U.P. in the early half of the twentieth century, whether Hindu or Muslim.

Central concerns of Hindus and Muslims :

Vatuk suggests that Hindus and Muslims share two very central concerns, which are characteristic of societies all over the world, i.e. protection of women (particularly in the realm of sexual matters) and the maintenance of harmony within the family and kindred through respect relationships. Veiling and seclusion practices are only two among the myriad structural and symbolic ways of dealing with the problems originating from and demands of these concerns.

Researches in India<sup>57</sup> have shown that, as in other South Asian societies, two major cultural concerns exist with

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56. C. Vreede De Stuers, op.cit., p. 62.

57. Researches of C. Vreede De Stuers : op.cit.; D.A. Jacobson : op.cit.; H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed) op.cit.

regard to the woman in society. One is the concern with the woman's sexual vulnerability and the consequent need to protect her from sexually motivated assault or from the possibilities of such a violation. Secondly, a related set of notions exist regarding the nature of female sexuality. This implies a necessity of external constraints on the woman because of a belief in the woman's inability to control her own sexual impulses. This protection for the woman was considered necessary for her sake and also as crucial for the sake of maintaining the social honour of her kindred. In fact, the izzat of the family rested on the female preserving her sense of 'Sharam'. Outlining the duties of women Goendka writes<sup>58</sup>:

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58. J. Goendka, Streeyon ke live Kartavya-Shiksha Gorakhpur. Geeta Press. 1952., p. 43.

Goendka, p. 22.

Women should pay special attention to safeguarding the social status of their in-laws and of their parents. Women should pay special attention to maintaining their sense of shame, because the sense of shame is the ornament of women.

“स्त्रियों को --- लोकमर्यादा की रक्षा पर भी विशेष ध्यान रखना चाहिए। --- ससुराल और नैहर दोनों कुलों को कान रक्नी चाहिए --- स्त्रियों को लज्जा पर विशेष ध्यान देना चाहिए; क्योंकि स्त्रियों के लिए लज्जा ही भूषण है।”

He affirmed that: “कुलीन स्त्रियाँ लज्जा का त्याग करने से नष्ट हो जाती हैं अर्थात् उनका पतन हो जाता है।”

He affirmed that:

On the other end of the scale was the prostitute implying that lack of sense of 'sharam' in a female put her in the category of 'the lowest' category of women.

“वेश्या लज्जा करने से नष्ट हो जाती है अर्थात् वेश्यापन नहीं चक सकता --- ”

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59. J.Goendka, ibid., p. 44.

Women of noble families/high families who discard the sense of shame get destroyed i.e. it leads to their downfall.

Prostitute who observes a sense of shame gets destroyed i.e. prostitution cannot continue.....

Jeffrey notes that amongst the Pirzade Muslims, izzat is maintained and best kept by distancing and various forms of modesty behaviour.<sup>60</sup> Bodily concealment was the major idiom through which izzat was preserved and sharam demonstrated. Thus, a sharam-wali woman showed no more than her hands, feet and head.

The concern with the maintenance of harmony in the family and kindred through respect relationships was intricately linked not only with the assumptions about the nature of woman's sexuality, but also the role that was expected of a woman. Women were considered to have been born for a certain role. As noted earlier, veiling reinforced what the role delineated - that of a married woman thus as a wife and mother. This assumption and expectation was crucial for it cut across class, caste and community. The significance attached to the particular role of a woman is effectively demonstrated in the purposeful selection of the ideal Hindu woman. Mukerjee shows that, the Hindu elites over the centuries focused mainly on the glory, fidelity and chastity of a married woman. The ideal held up before the woman was to be submissive, dutiful and a loyal wife, totally dependent on her husband. An ideal form of womanhood was described at great length. Amongst the women, important

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60. P. Jeffrey : op.cit., p. 100.

enough to be mentioned in the Hindu scriptures, those who expressed sentiments or practised customs deviating from the expected role were not encouraged as a model of the ideal. Thus Ahalya's moral slip, Draupadi's polyandrous marriage, Tara's secondary marriage with her brother-in-law, Kunti's pre-marital folly and subsequently obtaining a son from one other than her husband, Damayanti's plan for a secondary marriage, Shakuntala's parentage and secret marriage, tarnished their images. In contrast those who enjoyed the highest reputation in this respect were Sita, Savitri and Parvati. Their lives were considered remarkable for the absence of any interest outside their domestic affairs. Their careers demonstrate the all important, all embracing factor of their lives as the husband and service to him.<sup>61</sup> Goendka, drives home the point<sup>62</sup> that:

“सुहागिन स्त्रियों के लिए पति सेवा ही सबकुछ है ----- ।

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61. Prabhati Mukherjee, Hindu women : Normative Models. (New Delhi, Orient Languar Ltd., 1978), pp. 41-43.

62. J. Goendka, op.cit., p. 63.

सौभाग्यवती स्त्री के लिए सर्वस्य है, उसके लिए पति-सेवा की तुलना में यज्ञ, दान, तप, तीर्थ, व्रत, उपवास, देव पूजन, सेवा आदि सब मिलाकर भी कुछ नहीं है।----- पति के बिना स्वच्छन्दतापूर्वक यज्ञ, दान, तप, व्रत, तीर्थ आदि करने का स्त्री के लिए निषेध है, क्योंकि उसको केवल पतिसेवा से ही सब प्रकार पूर्ण सफलता मिल जाती है। ”

Thus, the ideal role of a woman, was that of a loyal and chaste wife with an abiding interest in her household affairs, to the exclusion of all other outside interests. Jeffrey notes that, dependence on husband was considered the only proper fate for a respectable woman. The married woman's ornaments were considered a sign of happiness and the removal of jewellery when she was widowed was a dramatic display of her grief at losing her role as a dependent wife. In fact, the old practice of Sati amongst the Hindus, epitomised this ideal of an

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63. Goendka p. 24.

Translation

For married women the service of their husbands is everything. For a married woman religious sacrifice, penance, donation, pilgrimages, fastes, daily worship and service etc. are nothing compared with the service to husband. Without her husband or in the absence of her husband a woman is forbidden to independently donate do religious sacrifices and penance, fast, go for pilgrimages etc. because for her, the service of her husband will give her all rewards.



uncompromising fidelity of the wife, wherein the married women was denied the very right of existence without a husband. Equally significant is the fact that, many widows were even willing to perform sati, since the life delineated for a widow was so blatantly harsh and humiliating.<sup>64</sup>

Rituals :

The centrality of the domestic unit and primacy of role was sought to be reinforced and its cruciality stamped through, which formed, at least theoretically, an integral part of women's daily lives. Numerous vratas were observed for the well being of the family as a whole or for the husband. Vratas, as Beach, points out,<sup>65</sup> were a special class of religious rituals which included pooja (non-vedic worship) and were performed mainly by women. The vrata was literally a vow. It was a calendrical ritual performed by an individual as an act of worship often to gain some specified benefit. Popular vratas included those undertaken for the husband<sup>66</sup>, for sons or for brothers, or even for securing an ideal match by the unmarried girls.

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64. Pandita Ramabai Saraswati : op.cit., p. 90.

65. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed), op.cit., p. 120.

66. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed), ibid., p. 120.

These rituals,<sup>67</sup> as a part of festivals also, served to reaffirm the woman's identity in terms of her role. She performed and observed these rituals as a mother, a wife and as a sister. They also underlined the value accorded to the male sex.

Another point of significance was that the woman herself figured only indirectly at the munificence and of vrata observance. The vrata kathās often drew attention to the necessity of adjustments and to the demands of specific inter-relationships. On the other hand, there is an instance of a vrata<sup>68</sup> to be observed by the Hindu women of U.P. to absolve them of sins committed as a consequence of performing their normal duties while in a state of pollution. These rituals served to (a) reaffirm the woman's separateness i.e. her distinct identity in terms of her role, for she performed and observed these rituals as a wife, a mother, a sister or even a prospective wife; and (b) underlined the value accorded to the male sex.

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67. The rituals observed for particular vratas did vary but broadly included the preparation of the mind and body through fasting and bathing, occasionally the construction of an image, tableau or an alpanā (i.e., the design on the floor with rice flour paste or geru), or a design on the wall, the reading of the Kathā i.e. the story explaining the significance of the ritual, worship to the appropriate deity and the sharing of the deity's prasād i.e., the leavings at the completion of the ritual.

68. Information given by my nāni.

Almost a similar and was accomplished by the superstitious beliefs among the communities of Hindus and Muslims. Jeffrey refers to the belief in the 'evil eye' or nazar which is widespread throughout the Muslim middle East as well as in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>69</sup> The evil eye could affect anybody - men, women and children as well as animals and crops. On the whole, women and children, it was believed, were more vulnerable than men. One important facet of the evil eye which Jeffrey refers to was, that the evil eye could attach itself to women in certain conditions if they frequently left their homes. Virgins, new brides and pregnant women - i.e. a sizeable proportion of all young women - were particularly likely to be attacked. Significantly, those women who did venture out were themselves considered responsible for the attacks of the evil eye. Thus, the belief in the evil eye effectively regulated movement of the female population outside the home, as well as curtailed their social interaction. Jeffrey states that several writers associate such beliefs particularly with complex differentiated societies in which envy may be an important element.

In conditions of such a constricting environment, there were provisions of a safety valve, which by itself throw light on the degree of social constrictions. The observance of the festival of Holi is especially significant in this context.

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69. P. Jeffrey : op.cit., p. 148.

Holi implied a disruption of the established social order and its concomitant social code of conduct. The world turned topsy-turvy on Holi. There were instances of men assuming women's roles, of men being beaten up by women (Holi at Mathura being famous for this), of affines on a formal avoidance relationship, coming in close contact, such as a new bride and her older male affines, of hierarchies within the families being overlooked, of jokes and taunts, verbal and even physical neck fights not only among members of the same sex but also between the members of the opposite sex, marking the celebration of Holi. Holi provided an outlet for frenzied behaviour, as well as an opportunity to individuals to negate conformity. Its implications for the two sexes were significant. Holi served as a safety valve against the pent up resentment consequent to the imposition of sex segregation and female seclusion. Implicitly, the social system recognised its oppressive nature. The lifting of normal taboos and restraints obviously served to emphasize them and to reaffirm the hierarchical principle. By taking on the role of the other's each actor probably learnt to play his own routine roles.

### Socialization :

Girls from their infancy were socialized into their inevitable roles as wives and mothers, the centrality of the domestic realm and its accompanying responsibilities. The games

played by little girls were important in this respect. Dolls' marriages, for example, complete with all preparations for ceremonies and decorations as well as the house leaving by the bride. Playing house etched the significance attached to the domestic realm, and the social distinctions attached to the two sexes. Thus, future role and responsibilities within a household were internalized.

The treatment meted out to the girls and boys reinforced the distinctions. There are instances of partiality in matters of diet especially. Thus, while boys got milk, the girls did not necessarily get it even in the upper class households where there was no dearth of anything. Male infants were suckled longer than female infants. Ghee (purified butter) was an essential part of the diet of the male. There were instances of a careless attitude even in whether girls slept straight on the floor, or whether they slept on jute mats in households which could afford better arrangements. Little girls were expected to shoulder responsibilities of the siblings too.<sup>70</sup>

Conformity to the established norms was essential and instilled. Girls may not have donned a burqa or a ghunghat there may not have been rigid restrictions on their movements or interaction, but at the same time the fear of a marred reputation which jeopardized their marriage alliances, endorsed an effective check on the activities of the girls.

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70. Evident in many homes. e.g. in my mother's paternal home.

Socialization can be attributed to the guiding authority of the women themselves - especially the older generation. Jeffrey refers to instances of Pirzade woman who, while complaining about the discomfort and conspicuousness of a burqa turned rigidly in favour of donning of burqa by their daughters. One girl commented that, once when she was going out without a burqa her mother called her back for she was annoyed that her daughter dared to go out 'naked' like that. In another instance, a girl had not moved out of the house since two years because she had been adamant about not wearing the burqa. Ultimately she capitulated not because she changed her opinion but because she would at least be permitted to accompany family members outside the house. In yet another case, a teenaged girl had stopped going to school, because she did not want to wear a burqa and her grand-mother insisted that she wear it.<sup>71</sup>

In this context it is interesting to note that it was the woman who became the oppressors of their own sex. Rama Mehta's novel, graphically describes how Geeta's mother-in-law, directed her, "Binniji", she said gently but firmly, "keep your face covered, by now you should be able to move around, without uncovering your face".<sup>72</sup> Similarly Pari the old maid of the haveli instructed her, "don't ever forget that your face must

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71. P. Jeffrey, op.cit., p. 156.

72. R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 76.

always remain covered".<sup>73</sup> The comments on Geeta were also indicative of the women's attitudes".... Let us see how she adjusts. After all, she is educated and on top of that she is not from Udaipur. What a risk to get an outsider, especially when there is only one son".<sup>74</sup> The women thus received the outsider with a penchant to identify her lapses in the established norms.

#### Pedigree Preoccupation :

Though not absent in the lower classes, the women vs women authoritarianism or pressure for conformity, referred to above was especially marked in the higher classes where the whole complex of pedigree assumed crucial dimensions.<sup>75</sup> The women of the higher castes and classes were believed to be an exclusive group. The name and social standing of their families rested also on the unblemished reputation of the female members. Secluded as they were, the women of these families derived a sense of personal worth and self-respect from their membership of an exclusive group. Hence, they also stood to lose in case of deviations from the expected behaviour or

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73. R. Mehta, ibid., p. 15.

74. R. Mehta, ibid., p. 15.

75. Researches of R. Mehta, op.cit.; F. Mernissi op.cit., P. Jeffrey, op.cit.; C. Makhlof op.cit.; H. Papanek and G. Minault, op.cit.

standards of conduct. Apart from this general consideration of class, there is also another point of significance. A cyclical pattern is also discernible. Women gained in authority and power within their household also with age and geneological seniority. The most valuable and weakest in authority of any kind was the newly wedded bride. She conformed, served and was guided by an austere, demanding hand of the older generation. With time she reached that position of authority herself and reaped the advantages of power within the household, as an affine of the young bride's husband. She had waited long for that position and was obviously not willing to forgo it. This cyclically oppressive system was repeated generation after generation.

It is imperative to note that women of geneological seniority and age derived their authority and power as mothers of sons and not as mothers of a daughter. For, this meant that their family would be in a position of bride takers and not bride givers. That, a son in the family meant that a bahū would join the household in the future 'to serve' the son's family, especially his mother and relieve her of the household drudgery was an extremely popular notion in U.P. The importance of male issues hence, never suffered. Women's hegemony extended over other women. It did not come into conflict with that of men of equal geneological seniority and age.



A fact that clearly emerges from the above discussion is that these set paradigms of social interaction between the sexes handled ambiguities of interaction especially in the smaller unit of society - the extended family. That, it was the woman who was a surer target of 'control' and adjustment compared to the male is a crucial point. The labels of a Hindu or a Muslim did not result in any significant difference for the woman in terms of the value accorded to her sex, vis-a-vis the male. Hindu women belonging to different classes enjoyed no particular advantage over their Muslim sisters belonging to the same classes. The ideological ideals of Hindus and Muslims did not differ to the extent of different consequences for the women of the two communities. It is more logical to believe that,

"pardā.... pressed least hard on the very poor and on the rich. For the rich there would be alleviations, air and light were not denied them, in the physical or in the cultured sense... For the poor the demands of hard necessity often raised the veil. It is upon women of the middle classes that the institution bears harder", - those who for the sake of conventional respectability adopt it in its most rigid form without having the means to render the seclusion healthy or even tolerable".<sup>76</sup>

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76. A.R. Caton (ed) The key of progress : A survey of the status and conditions of women in India. (London, Humphrey and Milford. Oxford Univ. Press. 1930), p. 116.

Separate Worlds :

The pardā system as it operated in U.P., can be better understood in terms of what Papanek refers to as the "two interacting and closely related principles of separate worlds and the provision of symbolic shelter".<sup>77</sup> Separate worlds were related closely to the division of labour. But here, the division of labour was based on the distinction in sex. This division formed the counterpart of spatial allocation between the males and females. Thus, while men worked outside the home, the women worked inside the home. There are varying descriptions of the separate world of women, behind the pardā. The world of the upper class women had its share of comfort, luxury, relaxation, friendships, enjoyment and amusement and ceremonies as well as a band of servants. There were cooks, water carriers, personal attendants, barbers, washermen and sweepers to do the housework. The women of the lower class households - the poorer state led lives akin to frogs down a deep well. Vreede De Steurs also describes the vast differences between the world of high-class women and the lower class women, who observed pardā. For some, it meant a lifetime of confinement in one room. The census for 1911 for U.P. too noted that ".....plague attacks women more than men and it does so because women are confined to their house more than men. The pardā system, however, among

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77. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed) : op.cit., pp. 27 and 34.

the well-to-do classes is not necessarily an ally of plague : for it does prevent women from travelling with proper precautions and the well-to-do can remove their womankind out of the harm's way to an uninfected house when necessary. It becomes dangerous only when such removal is impossible. In other words, it is present among the poorer classes who despite their poverty observe pardā. The Muhammadan community contains a very large proportion of poor gentle folk who are as proud as they are poor, who would die rather than let their women appear unveiled..."<sup>78</sup>

In U.P. and in fact North India, where the pardā system was a rigid phenomenon, the specific division of labour, especially reinforced by principles of caste, affected Hindus as well as Muslims. It prevented men from doing tasks defined as women's work and they were therefore dependent on women e.g. a physically exhausting work like grinding wheat etc. into flour. Women were similarly dependent on men for an access to goods and services outside the home. In this case, tasks associated with housework were also undertaken by men. Thus, the responsibility of buying daily food supplies fell to the man's share of work. Alternatively even children could be sent on such errands. Chaperoning was an essential duty of men in case women had to run outside errands.

Traversing of the public spaces without a chaperone for the woman was at her own risk. According to Sharma, "so long as a woman

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78. Census of India, 1911, Vol. XV. United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Pt.I, Report., p. 110.

stays in her own home or her own field she can claim that any violation of her honour has taken place inspite of the protection of her men-folk and her own due care". Otherwise, "she herself is responsible to her family for any loss of reputation which they may suffer as a result of her behaviour (or the behaviour of others to her) in public spaces".<sup>79</sup> While this specificity resulted from and in turn resulted in a premium on marriage, it led to a high degree of mutual dependence. It also conferred a certain dominance to the two sexes in their respective spheres. Yet, the fact that women, almost as a rule were financially dependent on men cannot be overlooked.

Primacy of the man's world - the outside :

It can also be argued that since the pardā system allocated separate worlds to men and women focusing on the division of labour and since it was primarily 'outside' the home world of men which sustained the world of women economically and socially, the outside sphere overrode the 'inside sphere' of the household in importance. The outside sphere conferred a sort of authority, prestige and cultural value which was the prerogative of men.<sup>80</sup> This does not, however, imply that if the women stepped into the

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79. Alfred De' Souza (ed) : op.cit., p. 224.

80. M.Z. Rozaldo and L. Lamphere (ed) : op.cit., p. 8.

outside sphere it gave them the membership of an important sphere. Rather, the central concerns with protecting the female and a maintenance of harmony in the kingroup already defined their identities in terms of their roles. The avenues by which women gained prestige and a sense of value were shapped, often limited, by their associations with the domestic world<sup>81</sup>.

Female participation in the outside sphere was either out of sheer necessity as in the case of the lower-classes (and this is important) or the participation was translated in terms of what would suit their role. Thus, the occupational structure of U.P. in the early half of the twentieth century reveals that women were concentrated either in the tasks and occupations connected with 'women's work' like flour grinding, midwifery, or in trades like grain parching, oil pressing, weaving and spinning of wool and cotton and basket making which were home based; or in ritually low-ranked occupations of scavenging, trade in betel and in grass, collection and sale of firewood and collecting of wood.<sup>82</sup> There are instances of flourishing zamindaris in the early years of the twentieth century in U.P., which disintegrated because the male head of the household expired and there were no sons old enough to take over the reigns of responsibility. The older women of the household

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81. M.Z. Rosaldo & L. Lamphere (ed), ibid., p. 8.

82. Census of India. United provinces of Agra and Oudh Part I Report for the years 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931.

who were even aware of the finer nuances of administering the estate and could have done as well as any other male could not do so in reality because a woman was not meant to do it.<sup>83</sup>

Symbolic shelter :

Integrally linked to the notion of a separate world of men and women is the principle of symbolic shelter for the women. This principle is in line with the notion of women's place within the home; of their dominance in their respective sphere as well as their interdependence, and of the authority, prestige and cultural value to the outside sphere which economically sustained the world 'inside'. Thus, it was the occupants of the 'inside' world. - i.e., the women, who required to be sheltered. According to Papanek<sup>84</sup>, the complex of symbolic shelter is supported by the strongly felt tension between the kin unit and the outside world. This has deep implications for women on account of underlying assumptions about human interaction and about the nature of men and women.

Concept of women :

The Hindu and Muslim ideology regarding the woman also conclusively supported the notions of segregating the women and

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83. The case of my paternal grand-mother's paternal household.

84. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed), op.cit., p. 35.

secluding them, though there is no coherent body of detailed empirical data on which generalizations could be made.<sup>85</sup> The concept of women varied from regarding them as victims to temptresses. There could be clear differences in the concept of women in the two communities of Hindus and Muslims. According to Papanek, in the Pakistani society, the general impression that prevailed, was, that women were victims rather than temptresses, but that both men and women did have strong sexual desires which were individually difficult to control.<sup>86</sup> Carstairs noted the prevailing impressions of Hindus - Rajputs, Brahmins and Banias in a Rajasthani village - regarding women. The newly wedded wife and the husband were strangers. She stood as "an emissary of the race of women and as such for carnal temptation, for seduction from the ideal values" represented by the father and gurū of the man.<sup>87</sup>

Allen noted that historically, an explicit theory of an ideology of purity determined the hierarchical evolution of the Hindu society. Allen agrees with Yalman that purity remains the principle idiom of status differentiation, and hence a major preoccupation with the maintenance of female chastity. A direct function of the purity of the women folk thus, was the purity

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85. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed): ibid., p. 36.

86. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed): ibid., pp. 193, 196, 213.

87. H.Papanek and G. Minault (ed): ibid., p. 36.

of caste. A wayward girl could ruin the status aspirations of her male kinsmen.<sup>88</sup> The premium on purity amongst the Hindus and Muslims in U.P., is evident in the menstrual taboos on the women folk. The value accorded to the sexes is evident in the seclusion practices after child birth. The personal seclusion which indicated a state of impurity was more in case it was a female child than if the child was a boy. The pre-menarche female ritually was accorded a high value vis-a-vis the older females. In fact, there were even ritual observances, wherein the pre-menarche girl was even worshipped, since she was considered goddess incarnate, whereas the menstruating girl was not allowed to enter the place of worship or the kitchen.

An instance of notions similar to those pointed out by Carstairs i.e. the notion of women as not the victims is also noted in the Muslim society of Morocco by Mernissi. Mernissi cites Imam al Ghazali's classical work *The Revivification of Religious Sciences Vol. II*, which sees in women a destructive all absorbing power. According to Mernissi, what Islam attacked and debased was not sexuality, but the 'woman who was considered the embodiment of destruction and a symbol of disorder.' Ghazali's conception of the individual considered the women a threat to humanity on account of her quaid power i.e., the power to deceive and defeat men by cunning and intrigue and not force.

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88. M. Allen and S.N. Mukherjee (ed.): op.cit., p.6



The anti heterosexual involvement was embodied in sex segregation and its corollaries: arranged marriages, the important role of mothers in the son's life and the fragility of the marital bond.

Whether held as victims or temptresses, pure or impure, the conclusive point indicated the necessity of a rigorous control of the female which was achieved by the whole complex of pardā, for it was the female who formed the focal point of vulnerability. A rigorous observance of control which would imply confining the women within their separate world ensured a protection of the aspect of vulnerability. Since the issue of protection of the female would reflect on the protectors, the female became an indicator of the status of her protectors as well.

The notions of protection of women formed an important dimension for conventionally arranged and early marriages. Early and arranged marriages were characteristic practices in U.P. The marriage of first cousins was a popular practice among the Muslims. Amongst the Hindus, however, it was a taboo, and hypergamy was often followed, thus making the issue of reputation particularly sensitive. Marriage within the family as amongst the Muslims did not allow for any scope of waywardness on the part of the girl. It was noted that some castes even observed the custom of "petmanganiyā" by which children yet unborn were promised in marriage. Significantly, the census noted that amongst the majority of castes, the custom of child marriages

had probably arisen through an initiation of the highest castes.<sup>89</sup>

The operation of the notion of symbolic shelter in U.P. is evident in the migration patterns chartered by the census. The migration patterns of the two sexes, reveal a distinct difference in terms of their causality. Reasons of employment led to male migration. Female migrants in this context were very low. Female migration was primarily due to marriage and the consequent change of residence, especially for the Hindu females and was of a permanent nature.<sup>90</sup> The 1911 census also noted, that in the case of temporary and periodic migration which was undertaken for employment or due to a change of seasons, men were in excess, except in the case of pilgrimages. Pilgrims, it was noted, were more usually women than men for, in accordance with the 'Principle of division of labour' "the woman's part" was "to pray" and man's "to work".<sup>91</sup>

In fact, the 1901 census had pointed out that "there has been a tendency among males to migrate more and amongst females to migrate less during that decade because the decrease in the number of marriages, which it is known occurred, has very

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89. Census of India. 1901 Vol. XVI. North Western Provinces and Oudh., pp. 116 and 117.

90. Census of India. North Western Provinces & Oudh 1901 Vol. XVI Part I, Report. P. 42, Census of India. United Provinces of Agra and Oudh 1911, Vol. XV, Part I Report. p. 86; 1921, Vol. XVI Part I. Report., p. 42..

91. Census of India. United provinces of Agra and Oudh 1911 Vol. XV, Part I, Report. p. 86.

appreciably diminished migration among females. The diminution is in fact so marked, that it more than balances the increase that has taken place in migration amongst males".<sup>92</sup>

Significantly, the census of 1921 noted that "domestic unpleasantness" was a possible reason for emigration "in spite of the greatly increased demand for labour" in the province. Majority of these emigrants were males. "This fact bears out what must be the impression of anyone who has acted as an emigration officer..... that emigrants generally leave their homes not to better their prospects but to escape domestic unpleasantness".<sup>93</sup> This, apart from other factors of poverty and better prospects elsewhere, the intra-family paradigms of dominance and dependence were manifest social realities. Also, while it goes to show that domestic unpleasantness could be a cause for emigration, it also points to the fact that this possible opportunity of escape hardly seemed to have existed for women.

#### Economic rights :

The interaction of the principle of separate worlds and symbolic shelter is evident in the occupational structure of women in U.P. in the early half of the twentieth century as well as their economic rights.

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92. Census of India. North-Western Provinces and Oudh 1901 Vol. XVI, Part I, Report, p. 42.

93. Census of India North-Western Provinces & Oudh 1901, Vol. XVI, Part I Report, p. 4

The occupational structure of U.P. in the early half of the twentieth century<sup>94</sup> shows that the proportion of female earners was high in those professions which were carried on by the ritually low ranked castes like those of scavenging, trade in betel or in grass collection and sale of firewood, selling of milk and field labour. In 1901, it was noted that females outnumbered males in the case of field labourers. Professions which did not require physical strength more than what the woman was capable of but which did require a technical knowledge remained predominantly the preserve of menfolk e.g. in industries connected with luxury like that of goldsmiths.

Professions like law, public administration, trade in textiles, proprietorship, land ownership and in industries connected with luxury, were the preserve of high caste families. It was considered unseemingly for the women of these families to engage in any occupation. These occupations in fact had the highest number of dependents since reasons of 'social status' prevented their women to work and their children attended school.

Female workers or female earners dominated those professions which were traditionally considered to be essentially the woman's

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94. Census of India. North-Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh 1901. Vol. XVI, Part I, Report, pp. 259-266. Census of India. United provinces of Agra and Oudh 1911, Vol. XV, Part-I, Report, pp. 401-403, Census of India. United provinces of Agra and Oudh 1921. Vol. XVI, Part I, Report, p. 169.

job, as noted earlier. These professions included flour grinding, rice pounding, "production of raw materials or trade in food stuffs".<sup>95</sup> Women earners dominated occupations which would enable them to keep within the limits of the private space vis-a-vis the public space - i.e. in home based industries like yarn - spinning and basket making and ivory carving. Similarly, professions like midwifery and masseuring which catered to a female clientele were dominated by women.

Women's work in those occupations which otherwise would require a helper or an extra hand like that of the potter and the weaver was regarded differently from that of the man's for purposes of wage enumeration. It was seen primarily as supplementary labour rather than competitive labour i.e. at complementary parts of the industry. The woman's work implicitly deserved no wages - it was enough that she had saved the wages which may have had to be given to a hired assistant.

In the context of the almost institutionalized sex - segregation in the economic arrangements in India during the early half of the twentieth century, it is interesting to note that in the sphere of agriculture and trade, the policies of the colonial rulers ran counter to the interests of the women and implicitly recognised only the male as the earning head of the

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95. Census of India 1921, United provinces of Agra and Oudh Vol. XVI, Part I, Report. p. 177.

household. The inflow of financial resources to pay for the rule of the British depended on the development of land revenue systems, detailed settlements and assessment. It also necessitated important decisions on tenure and proprietary rights. The effective ownership of most land was vested in cultivators. In the various forms of land settlements, - a hybrid of Mahalwari settlement or the permanent settlement in U.P., the land and revenue policy was concluded invariably with the head of the household, who was also invariably the male even in cases where physically he was absent.

Similarly, in the agricultural sector, the cash crop revolution led to an extension of commercial crop acreage. Colonial laws and policies diverted land, labour and marketing outlets to cash crops, enabling cities and towns like Cawnpore, Jhansi, Meerut, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjahnpur to grow in stature. The cash crop revolution also directed the flow of cash to and from each household through its head. Thus, payments went mainly to the men. The contention here is not that in the pre-cash crop revolution stage of agriculture in U.P., women had a distinctly better deal than men in matters of finances, but that the developments of a cash crop economy gave a legal sanction to the strait-jacketed lives of women.

Further, the degree to which women were expected to confine themselves to the domestic sphere only and the degree to which the principle of 'providing for her' existed, is evident in the property rights that operated for women.

According to the Mitākshara law, and the Banaras and Mithila sub-schools of Mitākshara law of inheritance operative for Hindu women in U.P., only specified female relations could succeed as heirs to the males. However, whenever a female heir succeeded (unlike a male heir) she took a limited estate only, in the nature of life-estate. She did not have a right to sell off the property.

The Hindu woman's right to inheritance was intimately connected with the Mitākshara law of joint family, according to which coparcenary properties i.e. those allowing for joint ownership, were extremely important. Significantly, only males could be co-parceners. Prior to 1937 in U.P. joint-family properties revolved on male coparceners only, according to the principle of survivorship. Female heirs were entitled to inherit but only in the absence of male heirs who were natural or could have been adopted.<sup>96</sup> The Muslim law in its attitudes to women's rights of inheritance revealed a relatively redeeming feature since it significantly checked the problems of disinheritance of women. The concept of inequality remained inherent in the law of succession whereby a female heir could take only one half of what a male heir of the same degree would take.<sup>97</sup>

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96. B. Sivaramayya : Women's rights of inheritance in India. A Comparative study of equality and protection. Madras Law Journal Office. 1973, pp. 3-5.

97. B. Sivaramayya. Ibid., p. 9.

The issue of property rights for women, Hindu or Muslim shows the attempts to establish a definite pattern of life for women. Lack of financial resources ensured, and an almost nil economic right ensured, a weak if not non-existent access to the sphere outside the domestic realm and reinforced literally as well as ideologically the notions of 'being provided for' for the female.

Therefore, the complex ideology of pardā, effectively excluded women from the public sphere, the political and economic processes and interactions of which were publicly acknowledged, and encased them in a symbolic shelter whether literal or ideological.

#### Negotiated privilege :

The symbolic shelter was however, even considered as a 'negotiated privilege' and this formed a significant dimension of the interpretations of pardā. Pardā saved them from the harsh realities of fending for a living or for basic necessities. It instead enabled the women, the luxury of relaxing at home instead of interacting with strange men in the public sphere. Thus "we are as much mistresses of our homes as we could have been if parda was never introduced. Our control over the menfolk, the children and the servants is as complete as those of the women of any other country. The fact that we observe parda



makes our men more considerate towards us".<sup>98</sup> Rogers,<sup>99</sup> draws attention to some of the informal political processes which occur "off stage" i.e. in the domestic sphere from which women are not excluded, especially, if the domestic sphere is 'where the action is' and the male members of the household exert a very weak public power as in the case of agricultural labourers and the other ritually and socially low ranked professions, where the situation of women is not a disability.

However, this is only a single facet of the varied dimensions of the life of a woman in a sex - segregated society with rigidly sanctioned female seclusion. To argue that the issues of male dominance and female dependence either in literal terms of social, political and economic power or in psychological terms of internalization of the behavioural norms are illusionary, would be lop-sided. Vijay Laxmi Pandit thus pointed out that,

" a myth has persisted that, inspite of pardā, and other social handicaps, the Indian women was the real power inside the home. All sorts of instances have been quoted to prove this theory and various historical records have been brought to light to show that all real power lay in the hands of the elder woman of the family. This is in my opinion an entirely wrong representation of the case and the argument is used by those men who though outwardly educated, have not been able to uproot from their minds the inherited superstition and tradition of ages.. .. This mother or wife ... .. was a

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98. A.R. Caton (ed): op.cit., p. 117.

99. B. Rogers. op.cit., pp. 54, 161, 163.

useful person to have in the background and the myth of her power helped many a meek man out of uncomfortable corners... the constant repetition of it had to a great extent, affected the minds of the women themselves, who, while living practically as slaves in their own homes, really imagined that they had as much power as they wanted".<sup>100</sup>

Thus Mastelli notes that "to the majority... there must remain, the dull monotony, the restrictions and the lack of occupation", which absence of contact with the world involves.<sup>101</sup>

The successive censuses of U.P. in the early twentieth century empirically reiterate as noted above, in the migration patterns, occupational distribution, the negative orientation of parda for women, thus dispelling any theoretically argued doubts regarding its circumscribing effect for the Hindu and Muslim women. Successive census reports noted this especially in the area of the education of women in U.P. which shall be discussed in the fourth chapter.

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100. Pandit Vijay Lakshmi : So I became a minister (Allahabad & London, Kitabistan, 1939) p. 66.

101. In A.R. Caton (ed) : op.cit., p. 118.

## CHAPTER - III

### SOCIO-POLITICAL PROFILE OF U.P. (1927-47)

A brief historical survey of the socio-political condition of U.P. in the early 20th century provides a relevant backdrop to an investigation of women's education in the state. The social paradigms and economic arrangements current in the state reflected the realities of dominance and dependence. The political processes in this milieu modified and re-inforced the social and economic status-quo.

#### Juxtaposition of Hindus and Muslims in U.P. :

Hindus and Muslims constituted the two major communities of U.P.. The assumption and argument that compared to Hindus, Muslims were backward, did not apply to U.P.<sup>1</sup> (a-d). The Muslims of U.P. were not backward as they were in Bengal. Urban Muslim concentrations in U.P. towns mainly consisted of artisans, shopkeepers and petty traders. On the other hand, in large parts of Avadh and the Aligarh - Bulandshahr region, Hindu peasants faced Muslim taluqdars and landlords<sup>2</sup>.

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1. (a) Anil Seal, Emergence of Indian nationalism, Competition and collaboration in the later 19th Cent. (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1968).
  - (b) Aparna Basu, Growth of education and political development in India (1888-1920) (Delhi, Oxford Univ. Press, 1974).
  - (c) Paul Brass, Language, religion and politics in North India. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1979).
  - (d) Sumit Sarkar, Modern India. 1885-1947 (Delhi, Macmillan 1983).
2. S. Sarkar, ibid. . 60.

U.P. formed the base from where the ideology of this dominant Muslim elite spread throughout Eastern and Western India. The traditional elite felt increasingly threatened by the Hindu trader, money lender and professional groups buying land, capturing municipalities and obtaining jobs at its expense<sup>3</sup>. Thus political demands were made by the Muslims of U.P. because of the desire of the Muslim elite to remain in the dominant position vis-a-vis the Hindu population.

That, the Muslims in the early 20th century were not backward in U.P., were not conspicuously lagging behind the Hindus, and that in some respects they were even placed advantageously in comparison with the Hindus, is demonstrated by the patterns of urbanization, literacy, and English education, employment and communication<sup>4</sup>.

Census reports demonstrate that the Muslim population of U.P. was relatively more urbanised than the Hindu population in the late 19th century and the early half of the 20th century<sup>5</sup>. As late as 1931 while 29.0% of the Muslims were living in towns, only 7.7% of the Hindus were town dwellers. Also, the urban Muslim population showed a steady increase from 33.9% in 1891 to 38.1% in 1941, but the urban Hindu population recorded a decline from 64.3% to 59.5%, in the same years. Though in the crucial

3. S.Sarkar, ibid., p. 77.

4. P.Brass (1975) op.cit., p. 141.

5. Census of India. 1931, Vol. XVIII Pt.1., pp. 54,526; 1941, Vol. VI. pp. 56, 81.

years of Hindu-Muslim conflict, the urban Hindu-Muslim population ratio was beginning to shift in favour of Hindus it is doubtful if the shift was pronounced enough to influence Muslim political attitudes. Thus, the Muslim urban population was much larger vis-a-vis the urban Hindu population and also the Hindu rural population was larger than that of the Muslims.

By the time W.W. Hunters' "The Indian Musalman" was published in 1871, Muslims in the North Western Provinces and Oudh showed a distinct advantage over the Hindus in the new system of education<sup>6</sup>. Muslims surpassed the Hindus since the literacy was 5.9% among Muslims vis-a-vis 5.8% among Hindus in 1911. In 1921 there were 7.4% Muslim literate males aged 5 years and above compared to 7.0% Hindus of the same age group. By 1931, the Muslims showed a distinct advantage over the Hindus - 9.7% literate Muslims as compared with 8.9% Hindus<sup>7</sup>.

English education had a crucial political dimension, and here too the Muslims had an edge over the Hindus<sup>8</sup>. Although Muslims were a minority, they belonged to a more literate strata of society<sup>9</sup>:

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6. P. Brass, op.cit., p. 146.

7. Census of India, op.cit., P. Brass, ibid., p. 147.

8. P.Brass, ibid., p. 147. The statistics are not consistently available.

9. A. Seal, op.cit., p.60.

The proportion of the Muslim male literates as well as literate in English to the proportion of the total Muslim population of the state, was higher than the corresponding proportion of Hindu literates as well as Hindu literates in English to the total Hindu population of U.P. From 1901 onwards, till 1931, the Muslims closed in the gap and made more rapid advances than the Hindus. In the total literate population, the Muslims improved from over 12% in 1901 to over 15% in 1931, whereas the proportion of literate Hindus declined from over 82% in 1901 to over 79% in 1931. Muslim literates in English were over 14% in 1901 and by 1931 their proportion to over 19%. The Hindus comprised over 54% of the English literate population in 1901 and improved to over 63% by 1931. Amongst the urban literates Muslims comprised over 20% of the population in 1901 and increased to over 28% in 1931, while for the same years, the urban literate Hindus comprised over 73% and declined to a little over 63%. The Muslim urban literate in English in 1901, comprised of over 17% of the total English literate population in U.P. and rose to 22% in 1931, while the Hindu urban English literate population in 1901 stood at 66% and declined to over 58% in 1931<sup>10</sup>. Thus, Muslims improved more rapidly than the Hindus in education a characteristic which they demonstrated in the urbanisation pattern as well. However, the Hindus continued to

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10. Census of India : 1931 Vol. XVIII Pt. I. pp. 453, 457, 465-7, 475-9, 481-2; 1921 Vol. XVI Pt. 1. pp. 115, 118, 23, 127; 1911 Vol. XV Pt. I; pp. 252, 264-9.

comprise the majority of the total population and the English literate population. The numerical preponderance of the Hindus put the Muslims into a minority even though for the period between 1901 to 1931, Muslims in the urban English educated classes, multiplied themselves more than four times, whereas the Hindus multiplied themselves by slightly less than three times. Though in terms of percentages and proportions the Muslims were not backward compared to the Hindus, it was a fact of immense socio-political significance that by 1931, there were 1,631,640 Hindu literates as compared to 311,569 Muslims, that there were 230,542 urban Hindus literate vis-a-vis 103,589 Muslims and 68,838 urban Hindus literate in English - i.e., the class which provided the politicians, lawyers and Government servants, whilst the Muslims numbered 26,375<sup>11</sup>. Thus, in literal numerical terms, Muslims remained a minority, and this consciousness formed the theme of their political harpings in the early half of the 20th century.

The ruin of Muslims, their eclipse from prestigious government service and their economic deprivations was the theme of Hunter's description of the Muslims in Bengal. The memorial of the national Muhammadan Association generalised this for the whole of India. However, they were aware that in the

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11. P. Brass. op.cit., p. 150.

North Western Provinces, the disproportion between the two races was probably not so great<sup>12</sup>. Their complaint was against the sheer out-numbering of the Muslims by the Hindus in the Government offices.

Muslims, as an official reported, were represented well enough in government offices, in fact - out of all proportion to the population figures<sup>13</sup>. Out of the 54,130 native officials holding appointments under this Government, 35,302 were Hindus and 18,828 Muhammadans, being 65.22% Hindu and 34.78% as against 86.75% and 13.25% in the general population<sup>14</sup>.

Hindus were sometimes outnumbered in the late 19th century. in prestigious positions of deputy collectors and tehsildars. The Secretary to the Government of India noted that, "the figures submitted indicate that in respect of offices in the subordinate Executive and Judicial services including all the higher and better paid appointments, the Mohammadans had secured not only a fair proportion, but almost an unduly liberal share of patronage"<sup>15</sup>, by the end of the nineteenth century.

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12. P.Brass. ibid., p. 150. Correspondence on the subject of the education of the Muhammadan Community in British India and their Employment in the Public Service Generally. Calcutta. Superintendent of Government Printing, India 1886. p. 240.
13. P. Brass. op.cit., p. 150.
14. P.Brass. ibid., p. 150. Correspondence on the subject of the Education of the Muhammadan Community in British India and their Employment in the Public Service Generally. p. 286.
15. P.Brass. ibid., p. 151.



The 1911 and 1921 census figures, which are the latest available comprehensive figures on employment by religion in U.P. demonstrate, that in modern urban sectors or the elite sectors of traditional rural economy, the Muslims were either over represented or proportionately well represented in every major category of employment including Government employment.

A striking fact is, however, that as late as 1911 and 1921, Muslims held 41.94% and 47.67% of Government positions whilst the Hindus held 53.02% and 47.37% respectively<sup>16</sup>.

Though, the comparison of occupation by religion in U.P. must be cautious on account of the difference in the basis of enumeration, the figures do reveal certain consistent and persistent features. In both census years, compared to Hindus there were proportionately less Muslim cultivators in U.P., but there were more rent receiving and rent collecting Muslims than Hindus. In 1911, the urban Muslim rentier class was larger in absolute terms than Hindu urban rent receivers and collectors. Though there are sharp differences in the 1911 and 1921 tables, probably because of changes in enumeration standards, the Muslims in proportion to their own population, were very well represented in the industrial life of the province as well as the transport and trade of the province. In these categories they were only slightly under represented in the cities<sup>17</sup>.

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16. Census of India, 1911, Vol. XV. Pt.II., pp. 550-63, 588-9, 614-15, 640-1, 666-7; Vol. XVI. Pt.II. pp. 396-407.

17. Census of India, 1911, Vol. XV. Pt.II., pp. 550-63, 588-9, 614-15, 640-1, 666-7; Census of India, 1921, Vol. XVI. Pt.II pp. 396-407.

Government service and liberal professions were politically crucial occupations and Muslim representation in these was very high in 1911 and 1912. In proportion to their total population, the Muslims outnumbered the Hindus in the urban and rural sectors - the army, the police departments, credit dealing, trade and commerce and even the categories of the village watchman.

At the higher levels of Government employment, a caste-wise break up of the gazetted officers in 1921 reveals that, Brahmins provided the largest contingent of 1,019 officers, but that Shaikhs (707) and Saiyids (265) come next, followed by the Hindu Jats (259) and Kayasthas (198)<sup>18</sup>. In the politically viable profession and liberal arts, the Muslims were well represented or even heavily over represented as lawyers in the province, as doctors and in the teaching profession.

In proportion to the total Muslim population, the Muslims were well represented in the non-agricultural sectors of the economy and in contrast, they were proportionately low in the agricultural sectors. Figures for U.P. show that Muslims constituted an almost dominant administrative elite compared to the Hindus. In employment therefore, as in urbanisation and education, the Muslims showed a considerably advantageous position and a positive progress pattern over the Hindus.

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18. Census of India. 1921. Vol. XVI. Pt.II., p. 413.

The dominance of the Muslim elite in the administrative and cultural life of the province was symbolically denoted by Urdu. In the late 19th Century, Urdu was the sole official vernacular language and the vehicle to a Government job and position, therefore, necessitating an Urdu-medium education. In 1900, during the Lieutenant-Governorship of Sir A.P. MacDonnel, Hindi was given an equal status with Urdu. The assimilation of Urdu by the Hindus as well on account of its official importance, received a setback by the Government Order of 1900<sup>19</sup>. Though figures are not available, according to Brass, the process was almost reversed. In any case it was not until 1920 that the number of Urdu papers were exceeded by the number of Hindi papers. In 1900 there were 69 Urdu papers and 34 Hindi papers. By 1920, the figure rose to 151 Urdu newspapers and 125 Hindi newspapers. The rate of increase of Hindi papers was greater<sup>20</sup>.

Hindi and Urdu newspapers and periodicals in U.P. 1900-1940:

	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900
Hindi	367	253	175	86	34
Urdu	268	225	151	116	69

Source : Census of India<sup>21</sup>

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19. The Government Order of 1900 admitted Hindi in Devnagari script to an equal position with Urdu in Persian script as an official language of the provinces. P.Brass op.cit. p. 132.
20. P.Brass. ibid., p. 159.
21. Census of India. 1931 Vol. XVIII. Pt.I., p. 474; and 1951. Vol. II. Pt.I-A., p. 409.; Press in India 1971. Pt.I., p. 327

Of significance in early 20th century U.P. is the fact that proportionately, no matter how backward the Hindus were vis-a-vis the Muslims in U.P. or how securely the Muslims had consolidated their position, invariably, the Hindus outnumbered them.

Regional variations in the U.P. economy :

The economic development of the years after 1928 created certain common economic problems. The Indian economy was so much a part of world capitalism, that an event like the Depression affected even the poor and middle peasants deep in the countryside. The foremost change on account of the Depression was the catastrophic fall in the price of food grains after more than a decade of high prices, during which rents and cesses had been increased and the upper rural classes, had grown accustomed to substantial profits from the produce of the land. Men with fixed incomes and urban dwellers in general benefitted from the new situation, though factory workers suffered from retrenchment. Though agricultural labourers suffered less loss than their employers, rural custom was no bar to the upper classes imposing new burdens upon the lower or taking away their rights. The worst sufferers were the mass of depressed peasants who scraped a living from the soil in the eastern-most division

of U.P.<sup>22</sup> Monetization was extended in the economy of the region not on account of a surplus, but because the peasant was often forced to sell even his food and stock in order to pay instalments of rent and revenue. In other parts of U.P., where the density of population was not so great, as in Kumaon and Bundelkhand, or where some alternative avenues of employment existed as in Western U.P., abject poverty was not encountered on this scale<sup>23</sup>. Avadh was the area worst off in terms of the exploitation of the subordinate classes by the superior ones<sup>24</sup>.

The divisions of Western U.P. and the Doab had a relatively low agricultural work force and a relatively high share of manufacturing over 9%. By contrast, the divisions of Eastern U.P. and Avadh generally had a higher proportion in agriculture and only 4-6% in the manufacturing. The Western divisions of the province, particularly Meerut and Agra, had been advanced in terms of urbanization and industrialization, since Mughal times. These two places were especially affected by the general increase in commercial activity. Kanpur, which lay on the important route between Delhi and Calcutta too, became the industrial and commercial centre<sup>25</sup>. For all the development, U.P. remained an overwhelmingly agricultural province.

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22. Gyanendra Pandey, The ascendancy of the Congress in U.P. 1926-34. A study in imperfect mobilization. (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 162-63.

23. G. Pandey. ibid., pp. 118, 119.

24. G. Pandey. ibid., p. 20.

25. G. Pandey. ibid., p. 12.

Significance of caste and class in U.P.:  
Realities of Dominance and Dependence

Caste was an important principle of structural and cultural differentiation in early 20th century. U.P. Non-Brahmin high castes dominated in Northern India - the dominant Hindu caste groups in U.P. being the Kayasthas and Rajputs. The social standing and solidarity of the Kayasthas was evident at the dawn of the 20th century. By 1900, the all India association of the Kayasthas - Kayastha conference and Kayastha pāthshālās had been started. The characteristic sectarian difference among the Muslims was between Shias and Sunnis. But, there were also other sectarian differences which were akin to the Hindu caste. Muslims too had the same criteria of birth, endogamy, rigid hierarchy and social discrimination. The major distinction in Muslim society was between the Ashrafs and Non-Ashrafs. Thus, differences existed between the high caste or honourable Saiyyad Shaikh, Mughals, Pathan and Rajput Muslims and the low caste or commoners like the Julaha, Teli and others<sup>26</sup>.

In the agrarian society, agricultural labourers were a socially degraded class not only due to their profession which kept them at the lowest economic stratum, but also due to the caste-structure of society. The bulk of the rural proletariat

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26. P.Brass. op.cit., p. 125 Cora Vreed DeStuers. op.cit., p. 3.

was drawn from "low castes". Almost every member of the rural society in Oudh, barring the taluqdārs, their karindās and the Mahājans, was oppressed and exploited in the prevailing social system. In the Pratapgarh district for example, the "high caste" tenants paid 25% to 50% less as rent in comparison to the "low caste" tenantry which consisted of Ahir, Kurmi, Pasi and Chamar Tenants. Numerically, the lower castes dominated<sup>27</sup>.

Similarly, the case study of the relatively urbanized and industrialized city of Kanpur shows that new relations of the migrant workers were built around kin and regional connections, though some loosening of familial lives was sustained through the mode of workers' recruitment. Segregation along community and caste lines continued to be maintained in the places of residence<sup>28</sup>.

However, differentiations along economic lines divided members of the same caste and kin. Economic motives superceded all other motives, for example, in almost every taluqadari estate of Oudh, darbārs or courts were held by taluqdārs on the occasions of Dushera and Holi and the tenant had to pay nazar. The Muslim taluqdārs collected nazar not only at Īd but also at Dushera. The "landed magnates tended to be landowners first and Muslims second"<sup>29</sup>. The peasant movement in Duh proved

27. Kapil Kumar : op.cit., pp. 66,74,76.

28. Chitra Joshi, Bonds of Community, ties of religion. Occasional papers on history and society. No. XVI; (New Delhi, NMME, 1984), p. 24.

29. Francis Robinson; Separatism among Indian Muslims. The Politics of the U.P. Muslims, 1860-1923 (New Delhi-1975), p. 192.

that class solidarity was possible despite religious and caste affiliations. Both Hindu and Muslim peasants actively participated in the struggles against oppression. The use of religious symbols did not lead to any communal misunderstanding. The peasants were conscious of their interests as "peasants"<sup>30</sup>.

In this context, the leadership of the two communities was significant. The leadership referred to, is that of the Indian National Congress and Muslim League. It was the upper strata of Hindus and Muslims which assumed leadership of the Indian National Congress i.e., the urban English educated professional classes in towns, and petty Zamindars and bigger peasants in the countryside with the financial backing of textile and sugar mill owners and big cloth traders, whilst the leadership in the Muslim League was distributed between the Muslim aristocracy and the upper middle-class professionals. Middle-class, English educated Hindus and Muslims were able to co-operate effectively until the struggle for political power intensified, and brought about the end of this co-operation<sup>31</sup>.

The initiation of communal activity was in fact limited to political leaders and elites. It had a direct and powerful influence on the masses of Hindus and Muslims specially in the

30. Kapil Kumar. op.cit., pp. 223-224.

31. K.B. Sayeed, The political system of Pakistan. Boston. Houghton Mifflin, 1967. pp. 22, 31.



towns heightening the feeling of separate identities and interests<sup>32</sup>.

The 'normative' themes which the leaders of the nationalist movement could use was largely determined by the sources of financial support as well as the social background of its leadership and cadres<sup>33</sup>. The commercial classes played an active part in the early Congress and its related organisation, and produced individuals of local or provincial importance in the new politics. They did not however break away from the social preconceptions of their class. The support of commercial elite was significant in that, it helped to confirm the socially conservative character of the Congress and also aided in strengthening the rising trend of Hindu revivalism<sup>34</sup>.

The social influence of the commercial elite was determined not only by the economic resources but also the nature of clientele. Old commercial families who catered to the court aristocracy enjoyed a higher social prestige than those who specialized in short term loans to artisans and poorer sections. The former thus had high stakes in the maintenance of the status-quo socially and politically<sup>35</sup>. A means adopted for the purpose was

32. G.Pandey. op.cit., p. 129, P.Brass. op.cit., p. 162.

33. G. Pandey. op.cit., p. 153.

34. J. Gallagher, G.Johnson & A.Seal(ed) : Locality, Province and Nation. Essays on Indian Politics 1870-1940 (Cambridge University Press 1973), p. 31.

35. J.Gallagher, G.Johnson and A. Seal (ed), ibid., p. 33; ibid., p. 43.

their over and indulgent religious patronage<sup>36</sup>. In fact, the concern with religion and status remained omnipresent in the local politics of U.P.

In dominant elements in the Muslim League were largely aristocrats and Government Servants - specifically the upper middle-class professionals. The dominant elements in the Muslim League Council in 1942 were the landlords followed by lawyers.<sup>37</sup> The leadership of the Muslim League in U.P. was in the hands of a class, most modern, most secular and most oriented to political power, among the Muslim leadership being the beneficiary of separate electorates and weightage in representation and government service which was demanded on behalf of Muslims<sup>38</sup>.

Sayyid Ahmad, probably, the most prominent Muslim of North India, visualized the Muslim community as an autonomous entity in the political map of India. Muslims were seen as an 'ethnic community'. It was, however the Ali brothers who forged Islam with Muslim politics. In fact, apart from political constituencies, Muhammad Ali favoured the organisation of the systems of education along religious lines.

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36. K.B. Sayeed, op.cit., p. 55.

37. P. Brass. op.cit., p. 162.

38. David Lelyveld, Aligarh's first generation. Muslim Solidarity in British India (New Jersey, Princeton University press. 1978), pp 241-342.

For Muhammad Ali and Muhammad Iqbal, religion and social order were ideologically compatible. And, in their political battles, the Ali brothers discovered the potency of religious appeal for mass mobilization. The Muslim religious elite i.e., the Ulema too tended towards traditionalism and revivalism. They were mainly concerned with the protection of Islam. Apart from the scions of Ulema families, they tended to belong to a petty bourgeois background. The field of their 'recruitment and operation was significant', in the villages and small towns, in the Muslim elementary schools teaching through the vernacular and among the lower middle-class of a pre-industrial society, printers, lithographers, booksellers, teachers, retail shopkeepers, skilled craftsmen and petty zamindars<sup>39</sup>, i.e. they belonged to and moved in a wide strata of society. Consequently, their ideas percolated to a broad range of the Muslim population.

North India was, in fact, marked by 'conservative politics' as distinct from the radical politics which was characteristic of coastal cities<sup>40</sup>. Rural based leaders of dominant Jats, Rajputs and Brahmins were drawn in the political alliance of service people and merchants of district towns. The background of Muslim service gentry, too was set in the Muslim quarters of

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39. P.Hardy, The Muslims of British India (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 169.

40. C.A. Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 450.

district towns<sup>41</sup>. Significantly, the traditions of these small rural places encouraged an evolvement of a strong sense of communal identity. Unity and solidarity around religious and cultural issues existed in "an unobstrucive , nebulous and sub-conscious form"<sup>42</sup> and coloured common mental attitudes as well as the perception of social reality.

Language, which had united elite segments of society, whether Muslims or Hindus was also used as a means of competitive mobilization. In U.P., Hindu leaders like Malviya, offered Hindi as the alternative standard language instead of Urdu, a proposal which was anonymously rebutted. The development of regional and communal sentiments along linguistic lines was a characteristic feature of the early decades of the 20th century<sup>43</sup>.

#### Revivalism :

Internal religious differentiation characterised both communities, but it was at the elite level that religious differences were emphasized. Common worship and religious communication did exist at the mass level between the Hindus and the Muslim believers<sup>44</sup>.

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41. C.A. Bayly. op.cit., p. 450.

42. C. Joshi. op.cit., p. 24.

43. S. Sarkar (1983), op.cit., pp. 59, 79.

44. P. Brass. op.cit., p. 179; S. Sarkar. op.cit., p. 76.

Though there was sufficient basis for emphasizing either differences between the Hindus and Muslims or their composite culture, the religious revivalism of both communities staunchly emphasized the differences. They turned to "ancient and exclusive symbols" of each community and from religious interaction to an increasing religious opposition through competitive proselytisation. Muslims sought to revive the ancient pure Islam and Hindus encouraged a Brahminical kind of commitment to orthodoxy. The Brahmins were not the socially dominant castes in U.P., but their ritual role overarched the caste segmented society<sup>45</sup>.

The dominant revivalist movement for the Hindus was the Arya Samaj which swept North India. The Arya Samaj emphasized the glorious ancient Hindu heritage, thus making grounds for a pan-Hindu framework. The Arya Samaj struck deep roots amongst the trading castes. With its initiation of the process of 'shuddi' or 'mass purification as well as the conversion of the lower castes, the Arya Samaj in fact turned into a 'sanskritizing' channel. Its membership rose from 92,000 in 1901 to half million by 1921<sup>46</sup>.

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45. A. Seal. op.cit., p. 29.

46. S. Sarkar. op.cit., p. 74.

In the late 19th century, the Arya Samaj split into two factions. The Gurūkul faction was the more openly revivalist and militant and favoured proselytization through paid preachers and shuddi. This faction also opened a Gurūkul in 1901 at Haridwār, which was based on traditional principles of brahmachārya and vedic training, unaffiliated to the official educational system. There was a gradual shift from Arya Dharma to a Hindu consciousness<sup>47</sup>. The Hinduism of the Samaj was moving towards a position of orthodoxy and was attempting to "organise itself by the late 19th century through Hari Sabhās and Sanātan Dharam Sabhās, conferences at Kumbh Melās" as well as a big conference Bhārat Dharma Mahā Mandal, started in 1900 at Delhi<sup>48</sup>. The concept of a medieval dark age provided the background for this Hindu revivalism.

A similar kind of movement developed within Indian Islam as well. The cause for the decline of Muslim power was located in the decline of Islam and the call was given to retrieve the the pristine purity and rigour of its formative years. The two poles of Islamic revivalism in India in the late 19th and early 20th century were represented by the Aligarh movement of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and the Deoband Dar-ul-Ulma founded by Muhammad Qasim Narawtani and Rashid Ahmed Gangoli<sup>49</sup>.

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47. K.Jones. Communalism in the Punjab : The Arya Samaj contribution. Journal of Asian Studies, XXXVIII No. 1 (Nov. 1968). Michigan. pp. 39-54.

48. S.Sarkar. op.cit., 1983. p. 75.

49. P. Brass. op.cit., pp. 10, 163.

The social basis of Sayyid Ahmed's movement was provided by the U.P. Muslim landlords and the upper class Muslims of Western U.P. Deoband, on the other hand, attracted relatively poor students for whom western education was out of reach.

The Hindu and Muslim revival movements found a ready response in the same strata of society i.e., "pre-industrial lower middle-class of petty land holders, country-town mullaha, teachers, booksellers, small shopkeepers, minor officials and skilled artisans.... men literate in the vernaculars.... quick to seized by religious passion"<sup>50</sup>.

Revivalism in its formative years can be seen in terms of a solace and inspiration seeking exercise by the leaders of the two communities in the face of colonialism and introduction of Western ideas. A competitive aggressive confrontation between the two communities however developed towards the close of the 19th century, and communalism also acquired a mass dimension. On the other hand, the imperial policy, spelt out first in a secret note by Sir Auckland Colvin in 1889, and elaborated by the Morley Minto reforms of 1909 was that of resistance, conservatism, active incitement of divisive and "conservative forces of Indian society", through an alliance with the latter, viz., the landed interest, the princes and the orthodox leadership of the Hindu and Muslim communities, including the caste hierarchies.

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50. P. Hardy. op.cit., p. 58.

51. V. Mazumdar, Education and Social change. Three studies on 19th century India. (Simla, 11AS 1972), p. 22.

The Government's efforts to foster communalism was aided by the introduction of Dyarchy - provincial autonomy in 1919. Education, health, agriculture and local bodies were transferred to provincial governments and the respective Ministers were responsible to legislative assemblies of the provinces. The Government of India Act of 1919, however had transferred only those departments which carried less political weight. The provincial Governors in any case were armed with veto powers<sup>52</sup>. Butler had noted in 1911- "I'm sure that the only way to capture India now and bring it into the empire is through education"<sup>53</sup>. Education became a political issue of great importance for it became the focus of the 'politico-literary' elites. A specific policy on education was outlined. By 1921, the Government was set to take the initiative in several aspects regarding education. Apart from other things, the Government outlined that all restrictions under the educational rules which tended to hamper the spread of women's education were to be withdrawn. Definite steps were to be taken to popularise education among girls<sup>54</sup>. However, several social impediments to women's education, were

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52. S. Sarkar. op.cit., 1983.,p. 167.

53. D. Awasthi, Administrative history of Modern India (Delhi National Pub. House, 1973), p. 92.

54. The 'New India' Madras, June 7. 1921., p. 7.



widely acknowledged<sup>55</sup> specifically the practice of pardā which has been discussed in the previous chapter.

It is possible to conclude that in U.P., in the early half of the 20th Century, contrary to general notions Muslims were not in a disadvantaged position. Class distinctions and variations in the regional economy of U.P., rather than communal divisions, serve to clarify the hazy picture of social, economic and political reality and further provide the paradigms of dominance and dependence. The social-political milieu of the early half of the 20th century, U.P. however, aided the germination and growth of communalism. The pristine form of the respective religion - Hinduism and Islam - and culture was continually harped though basically for reasons of political power. Religion formed the ideological stamp which the mass of the population accepted. This possibly effected social attitudes and perceptions. Aspirations to a social status formed an inextricable part of this complex. This intricate web strengthened the social dichotomy between males and females. It is possible to speculate that the relative position of males and females in the field of education was bound to be affected keeping in view not only the all encompassing nature of pardā but also the socio, political, economic environment of U.P. The specific relationship between pardā and women's education in U.P. shall be examined in the next chapter.

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55. Evident from the report on women's education in the Progress of Education in India (1897-1902 to 1942-1947); records, & Director of Public Instruction Reports. United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Annual and Quinquennial reports (1900-1947). Government of India.

## CHAPTER - IV

### THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN U.P. 1927-47

The introduction of education for women, the provision of educational facilities for them as well as the efforts made to promote and expand the system of education for women in U.P. in the second quarter of the 20th century forms the focus of this chapter.

At the outset, it is imperative to note that education in U.P. did not spread uniformly. An examination of female education in accordance with the natural divisions of U.P.<sup>1</sup>, shows that there was an intra-regional disparity in the spread of female education as well as a difference in the levels of education achieved by males and females. The scanty data available shows that the Western Himalayan region maintained a high rate of literacy for both the sexes, while the Eastern Sub-Himalayan region was characterized by low literacy rates for females as well as males. However, in the remaining natural divisions the male and female literacy rates show no definite correlation. For instance, while Western plains achieved a higher female literacy rate according to the 1911 census, this

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1. The census gives information on female education in accordance with the natural divisions of U.P. The data-information available is unfortunately of a very general nature. Statistical data does not always substantiate the trends. Nevertheless it is significant that the observation has been made consistently in the census.

region was at the lower end in the male literacy achievement; while the West Indo-Gangetic plain and Sub-Himalayan Western region achieved a high rate of female literacy, in 1921, male literacy dipped in these regions. Female literacy was the lowest in the East Satpuras according to the 1931 census. Possibly the presence of Banaras improved the female literacy returns for the Eastern Indo-Gangetic plain. The achievement of male literacy was highest in the Indo-Gangetic plain East as well as the East Satpuras.

The study of female education in U.P. shows that the Indo-Gangetic Western plain and Western Himalayas showed a relatively higher number of female literates vis-a-vis the Indo-Gangetic Eastern plain and the East Satpuras region. Districts in the Western Sub-Himalayan regions did relatively better than the Eastern sub-Himalayan region. Female literacy was hence noticeably higher in the Western regions than in the Eastern regions.

The establishment of schools for females also seems to have followed a similar pattern. Apparently, institutions were more rapidly established in the Western regions of U.P. vis-a-vis the Eastern regions. Efforts towards educating girls and women met with success in Allahabad, Banaras and Meerut Divisions.<sup>2</sup> By 1904 there was a notable progress in

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2. General Report on Public Instruction in the United Provinces of Agra & Oudh 1902. Henceforth referred to as GRPI, p. 27.

female education in Jalau<sub>n</sub> and Saharanpur. In Mirzapur, four out of six girls' schools had to be closed down for want of funds.<sup>3</sup> Unnao and Ballia stood at the bottom of the list of female education.<sup>4</sup> Noting the striking difference in the diffusion of education among girls in the east and west of the province, the general report on public instruction in U.P. for 1906, stated that, "in the five Eastern divisions Allahabad, Lucknow, Banaras, Fyzabad and Gorakhpur, the percentage of girls at schools to those of an age to attend school averaged around 0.6% only. In the four Western divisions of Rohilkhand, Agra, Meerut and Kumaon, on the other hand, the percentage of girls at schools was 1.5%".<sup>5</sup> Model schools were established in Agra and Lucknow districts and municipal board schools in Allahabad, Shahjahanpur, Cawnpore, Bijnor, Pithoragarh, and Lucknow. In fact High schools were set up in Lucknow and Allahabad had made a good progress by 1917.<sup>6</sup> Dehradun was also added to the list of centres which met with success in female education.<sup>7</sup>

The quinquennium 1932-37 also witnessed the establishment of girls' High school at Balrampur and Badaun and the starting

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3. Ibid., 1904, p. 39.

4. Ibid., 1905, p. 33.

5. Ibid., 1906, p. 31.

6. Ibid., 1917, p. 79.

7. Ibid., 1927, p. 86.

of primary teachers' training classes in Sultanpur, Fatehpur, Banaras, Shahjahanpur, Etawah and Unnao. Co-education was more popular in the Eastern districts of Ballia, Basti and Gorakhpur where it was doubly welcome due to the "problem of insufficient staff and accommodation in girls' schools in general", and also because education was made possible "for a large number of girls in areas where there are no schools for girls at all."<sup>8</sup>

This pattern could be accounted for, in the apparent differences between the Western and Eastern regions of U.P. The 1911 census noted that the Western plains possessed more large sites and less small ones.<sup>9</sup> The Western plains also had the largest urban population. The Eastern sub-Himalayan region was relatively new country. In the older country of the plains, urbanization increased regularly from East to West. Urban centres offered a relatively favourable ground for literacy vis-a-vis the rural tracts. It was noted that "in a few large towns and in one or two other exceptional centres" "that the initially prohibitive notions regarding women's education seemed to be yielding to that modern spirit which would emancipate women from a position of household slavery, and give them a share in the

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8. Ibid., 1932-37, pp. 84-85.

9. Census of India: United provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1911, p. 25.

intellectual privileges of the race."<sup>10</sup> Urban centres also tended to attract immigrants who went there for economic purposes. According to the 1921 census, such immigrants tend to be of an enterprising and progressive type.<sup>11</sup> Industries in fact occupied more people in the Western plains and Western sub-Himalayan region than elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> while agriculture predominated increasingly towards the East. The contention is that, urban and industrial development also favoured a growth of literacy, apart from exclusively socio-cultural considerations. Thus, the number of male and female literates per mile in the Indo-Gangetic plain West, which, apart from others, consisted of urban centres like Agra and Meerut, was higher than the Sub-Himalayan Eastern regions.<sup>13</sup>

TABLE - 1

	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>		
	<u>1931</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1911</u>
Indo-Gangetic Plain West	83	65	58	13	8	6
Sub-Himalayan East	54	44	54	4	2	2

Sources: Census of India, United Provinces of Agra & Oudh, 1931.

10. Progress of Education in India. Calcutta, Govt. Press 1897-1902: Vol. I, p. 310.
11. Census of India. United Provinces of Agra & Oudh, 1921, p. 117.
12. Ibid., p. 169.
13. Census of India. United Provinces of Agra & Oudh, 1931, p. 481.

All districts in each natural division did not follow an identical progressive or retrogressive pattern. The districts which were commercially or industrially important or were the seats of Government headquarters, differed in their achievement of female literacy from those districts which were not centres of similar importance. Thus, the 1931 census for U.P. showed that Lucknow, Allahabad, Agra, Cawnpore and Banaras which were centres of importance had a higher number of literates than Gorakhpur, Gonda, Fyzabad, Ghazipur and Jaunpur.<sup>14</sup> (See Table 2 on the subsequent page).

Female literacy remained uniformly low in eastern U.P. The relatively higher rate of advance in male literacy in the western region vis-a-vis the eastern region, was however, not a consistent phenomenon in U.P. Also, a relatively higher rate of advance in the number of female literates was not always evident in the number of female literates was not always evident in areas where the literacy rate for men was high. Thus, female literacy does not seem to have been as a rule, dependent on or guided by the rate of male literacy in some regions of U.P. For instance, while the Western Himalayan regions had the highest literacy rates for both sexes, the regions of U.P. which followed in female literacy were, in 1911 the Western plains, in 1921 Indo-Gangetic plain West and in 1931 Indo-Gangetic plain East and West. The advance in male literacy, on the other hand, was

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14. Census of India: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh 1931,  
p. 481.

TABLE - 2

Number Literates per Mile

	Districts	Female			Male		
		1931	1921	1911	1931	1921	1911
Seat of Government Headquarters	Lucknow	23	11	15	108	101	95
	Allahabad	17	12	7	102	72	70
(Commercial Importance)	Agra	22	14	11	122	102	94
(Industrial Importance)	Cawnpore	18	12	8	121	93	84
(Religious Importance)	Banaras	22	21	16	164	133	120
	Gorakhpur	4	3	3	55	44	56
	Gonda	3	4	2	49	42	53
	Fyzabad	6	3	3	72	51	53
	Ghazipur	10	5	3	109	84	57
	Jaunpur	6	3	3	96	76	64

Source: Census of India United Provinces of Agra and Oudh,  
1931, p. 481.



higher in Central Indian Plateau and Indo-Gangetic plain East than the other regions for the Census years 1911<sup>15</sup> and 1921<sup>16</sup> and in the East Satpuras in 1931<sup>17</sup>. Female literacy remained lowest in the East Satpuras and Eastern Sub-Himalayas, in 1911, 1921 and 1931, whereas male literacy, in the same years remained lowest in the Eastern and Western Sub-Himalayas.

A study of the education of the two sexes, specifically the education of women could not, therefore, remain limited to tangible factors of urbanization and industrialisation. The census records for 1911<sup>18</sup>, 1921<sup>19</sup>, and 1951<sup>20</sup> refer to 'social reasons' for the relatively high female literacy in the Himalayan regions. It was noted that, the relative absence of pardā facilitated female education and a relative rigid adherence to pardā hampered any progress in the education of women.

An intriguing fact of female education in U.P. is that, though female enrolment at different stages of education was increasing<sup>21</sup> because it enhanced marriage prospects, the female population in eastern U.P. continued to remain relatively illiterate and married at lower ages as compared to their

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15. Census of India. United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1911, p. 247.

16. Ibid., 1921, p. 116.

17. Ibid., 1931, p. 457.

18. Ibid., 1911, p. 261.

19. Ibid., 1921, p. 116.

20. Census of India. Vol. II. Uttar Pradesh Part- I, A Report 1951, p. 388.

21. See Table No. 4 given later in the Chapter.

sisters in western U.P. It is thus possible to speculate that educated wives were not in demand in Eastern U.P. It is also possible to argue that female education suffered from the relative rigidity of pardā in the eastern regions in terms of a literal access to education. The popularity of co-education in the eastern districts due to insufficiency of staff and resources points to pardā at different levels. Firstly, since co-education was limited to primary levels, it is evident that the demand for female education existed, though in a nebulous form and only for a very young age group. Secondly, it is apparent that prejudices to female education were dominant enough to inhibit any substantial organisation of resources for female education though a nascent demand for it may have existed.

It is possible to hypothesize that a bustling and 'prosperous'<sup>22</sup> economy of Western U.P. also experienced the permeation of diverse social ideologies which prompted social reform though not through an organised social reform movement. Here it can be argued that regional culture guided or set the frame of reference for cultural interaction.<sup>23</sup> Hence, though prejudices to women's education did not die down or role expectation of females suffer a reversal in western U.P., the

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22. Census op.cit., (1901) p. 117.

23. Jones K: Op. cit. p. xiii.

developments in the neighbouring province of Punjab may have had a bearing on western U.P. The reference here is primarily to the activity of the Arya Samaj Munshi Ram's faction of the Arya Samajists who had begun to concentrate on the quest for a new woman in Punjab and female education was advocated in a big way by the end of the 19th century. Gradually, their efforts made the educated young girl a reality clearly visible throughout the province of Punjab. Their attempts to promote widow remarriage as well as to prevent early marriages had even found allies among the educated Hindus of varying ideological backgrounds.<sup>24</sup> Though Arya Samaj represented a chauvanistic section of the Hindus, the fact remains that there were stirrings of consciousness for female education in the neighbouring regions of Western U.P.

#### Stages of Education

The successive reports of the directors of public instruction as well as reports on the progress of education in India, noted a growing response to the education of women. A concurrent restrictive impact of pardā was, however, also evident, at different levels of education and more so at the higher levels.

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24. Jones, K.; ibid., pp. 215, 218-219.

Regarding primary education, it was noted at the turn of the century that a demand for primary education for girls was "well nigh altogether wanting" and that the difficulties to be contended with were "almost insurmountable".<sup>25</sup>

Primary schools for girls which included model schools, district and municipal schools, aided and unaided schools registered an increase. A considerable eagerness on the part of parents to send girls to school was noticed in 1904, "in order that a little instruction may be had before early marriage puts a stop to it." However, the preparatory classes or infant standard was the maximum limit of education for a majority of girls. There were instances, however of "three generations of scholars" attending an institution within its brief span of existence of two years, like the Lahori Tola Girls School in Banaras.<sup>26</sup>

The importance of inducements to girls to remain at school was recognised. Since very few passed the lower primary, it was proposed to give scholarships of one rupee per month for those who had gone through this stage. It was felt in 1906 that this measure held a promise of an under diffusion of female education.<sup>27</sup> One of the causes of slow progress in the lower

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25. GRPI, 1901-1902, p. 27.

26. Ibid., 1903-1904, p. 38.

27. Ibid., 1905-1906, p. 35.

primary stage was the difficulty in managing the crowd of beginners. But a greater difficulty pointed out was that "few parents took the education of girls seriously and so attendance was irregular."<sup>28</sup>

Female education did not progress beyond this stage. "Only an insignificant proportion of those in the primary schools reached higher than the lower primary stage."<sup>29</sup> Although the inspectresses referred to the need for a closure of some of the primary institutions, it was noted that it was preferable that the idea of girls' education should take concrete form in the school of a deplorable type than to close down schools.<sup>30</sup>

By 1932, compulsory primary education had been introduced in rural areas. The policy adopted with regard to primary education for girls in the quinquennium 1932-1937 was to develop existing primary schools in rural areas, where girls education was almost entirely primary, instead of opening any new primary schools.<sup>31</sup> The necessity for more schools was diminished as a consequence of the spread of co-education

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28. Ibid., 1915, p. 21.  
29. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 80.  
30. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 80.  
31. Ibid., 1932-37, p. 91.

in the villages. In urban areas, more primary schools had been opened since co-education made itself evident only at the university stage.<sup>32</sup>

It was pointed out that the wastage at the level of lower classes was high. Only one in every 8 girls reached the middle stage and those who did were usually situated in big towns, where all the facilities were available. Thus there were constraints on female education even in areas where facilities were not lacking. And here it is possible to point out specifically to the social constraints of adherence to pardā.

By 1947, the scheme of compulsory primary education remained in operation in two district boards and three municipal boards. Compulsory primary education for girls recorded as 84.4% attendance. However, it did not make a sustained headway, since it encountered difficulties of attendance and lack of efficient teachers who through personal influence with the mothers could persuade them to send their girls to school.<sup>33</sup>

#### Secondary Education:

The secondary education for females in U.P. was divided into two stages - the middle school stage and the High school stage. The middle stage of education was a complete course. The High school stage was also the preliminary stage for entering the higher education of colleges and universities.

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32. Ibid., 1932-37, p. 91.

33. Ibid., 1942-47, p. 36.

The middle schools comprised of anglo-vernacular middle schools, English middle schools and vernacular middle schools. The resolution of the education department noted that secondary education was inevitably confined to the children of a small section of the upper class.<sup>34</sup>

The demand for anglo-vernacular education could be gauged by the fees paid to secure it. There were instances when objections were raised to a hike in fees, by the boards rather than the parents of a girl.<sup>35</sup> Thus, at the Central Hindu College School, Banaras, conveyance fees were charged and the parents of the better class welcomed them as they felt that this would eliminate the less refined type of pupil.

Secondary education was recognised as the pivot of the whole educational system. However, since U.P. was relatively one of the most backward provinces, experiments which were attempted in the more advanced states could not be emulated.<sup>36</sup>

The superiority of the school leaving certificate examination to the matriculation examination was acknowledged by 1917.<sup>37</sup> The Jwala Prasad School at Shahjahanpur and the Church Mission

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34. Ibid., 1914, Resolution of Education Department, p. 3.

35. Ibid., 1915-1916, p. 22.

36. Ibid., 1915-16, Resolution of Education Department, p. 2.

37. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 2.

Society's Pardā school at Lucknow sent pupils for the anglo-vernacular middle examination.<sup>38</sup> Improved administration and organisation even enabled the Kashmiri Mohalla School at Lucknow to secure female students interested in education, thereby replacing students whose only inducement was the monthly stipend.<sup>39</sup> By 1924, the importance of letting girls study further than the primary stage, the report noted, was recognised by parents. There were even reports of newly married girls having been sent back to school to complete the middle course.<sup>40</sup>

None of the vernacular middle schools, nevertheless, had classes of the upper middle section and in most classes, V and VI were very small classes of the upper middle section opened only in the practising school attached to two Government Normal Schools, with the hope that other Government vernacular schools would follow them. The difficulty in maintaining a vernacular middle school in a rural area was due to the scarcity of competent teachers and not on account of inadequate pupils.<sup>41</sup> Variations in enrolment emphasized that a steady tendency had not been established. Variations continued to depend on the individual

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38. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 80.

39. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 80.

40. Ibid., 1923-24, p. 29.

41. Ibid., 1926-27, p. 87.



circumstances of pupils and schools. There were instances of enrolment only on paper thereby only 3 or 4 little girls were actually present from the 25 to 35 enrolled scholars.<sup>42</sup>

While girls continued to study in boys schools in U.P., there existed a demand for separate middle schools for girls which was expected to continue.<sup>43</sup>

High schools numbered four by 1912. The Chief Inspectoress remarked that the "demand for High school education has been increasing, even among non-christians, and every where and there one finds, among the latter, girls who are anxious to study further or whose fathers are ambitious for them. It was however, noted, that the number of girls belonging to this class had been so few and far between hitherto, that practically the problem had not existed. There was the instance of Crosthwaite School, Allahabad, which had no pupil above the middle standard and was a High school only in name."<sup>44</sup>

As a measure of improvement, the school leaving certificate examination was substituted for the Matriculation examination at Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow. Of the total enrolment of the college which was the only college for Indian women in 1917, the highest was in the High school.<sup>45</sup>

42. Ibid., 1930-31, p. 33.

43. Ibid., 1939-40, p. 36.

44. Ibid., 1907-1912, p. 79.

45. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 79.

The proportion of students completing the High School course was comparatively small. It is interesting to note that the Isabella Thoburn College had applied for permission to transfer classes IX and X back to the school, since a larger enrolment was expected in those classes, if they were attached to school and not the college.<sup>46</sup>

By 1927, the Chief Inspectoress observed that there was a strong tendency to open classes of the High school stage for one or two pupils, who for various reasons would not leave a school near their homes. Many candidates appeared for High School examination as private candidates.<sup>47</sup>

The tuitional condition of some backward High Schools improved considerably partly in an effort to meet the requirements of the Board of High School and Intermediate examination. However, since some parents were unwilling to send their older girls away from home as boarders, some schools which could ill afford them, attempted to maintain classes IX and X. These classes were poorly equipped and the rest of the school suffered.<sup>48</sup>

By 1930, the chief Inspectoress noted that, "there is undoubtedly a growing conviction that girls should make the High School examination their goal, even if the numbers who put this conviction into effect are still very few."<sup>49</sup>

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46. Ibid., 1935-36, p. 37.

47. Ibid., 1926-27, p. 86.

48. Ibid., 1927-1932, p. 74.

49. Ibid., 1929-30, p. 57.

Though the number of High Schools increased by 18, during the quinquennium 1942-47, the number of girls receiving High School education was less than one third of those at the middle stage.<sup>50</sup> It was also pointed out that

"Most of the High Schools were situated in towns and cater for middle class families which are paying more attention, now to the higher education of girls. Though this interest according to some is inspired mainly by the idea that the High School certificate improves chances of marrying well-the growing number of girls receiving higher education and professional training is enough indication of the fact that marriage no longer remains the only career for our girls."<sup>51</sup>

Collegiate and University education:

The High School education was followed by collegiate and university education. The only institution of its kind for women in India<sup>52</sup>, was the Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow, which drew students from all over India. By 1917, the Theosophical Girl's School at Banaras had also started college classes as a private institution.<sup>53</sup> The Woodstock College, Missouri

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50. Ibid., 1942-47, p. 37.

51. Ibid., 1942-47, p. 37.

52. Ibid., 1902-1903, p. 35.

53. Ibid., 1912-17, p. 84.

the Allahabad European Girls High School and the All Saints Diocesan College, Nainital were meant exclusively for Europeans.<sup>54</sup>

The desire for higher education for non-Christian girls was evident. However, the size of the classes was small and rapid increase in them was not likely. Consequently, the expenditure on their maintenance was anticipated to be heavy, compared with that on boys' institutions. "In spite of this it is better", the Chief Inspector notes, "that there should be separate institutions for girls; to combine them with the institutions for boys would retard progress in the long-run".<sup>55</sup>

By 1925, the Crosthwaite College, Allahabad was included as one of the two Univery Colleges. However, despite the increase in institutions, it was believed that the numbers expected to join the intermediate classes scarcely justified the large expenditure needed for them.<sup>56</sup>

By 1947, the women's department of the universities at Banaras and Aligarh had come into existence and the total of intermediate colleges had gone up to 11, higher education left practically untouched the larger population of girls in the villages. The chances of a village girl to receive higher

54. PEI, Vol. I, 1912-1917, p. 173.

55. GRPI op.cit, 1924-25, p. 31.

56. Ibid., 1928-29, p. 49.

education were still very limited.<sup>57</sup> Percentage of female enrolment at all levels of education from the total males - females enrolled:

TABLE - 3

Percentage of female enrolment at all levels vis-a-vis total enrolment of girls and boys.

	1927	1932	1937	1942	1947
College	0.0098	0.12	0.025	0.05	0.071
High School.	0.16	0.29	0.46	0.85	1.15
English Middle School.	0.36	0.47	0.62	0.66	0.83
Vernacular Middle School.	1.31	1.85	2.53	3.27	3.36
Primary School.	4.95	4.53	5.12	4.84	4.44
Total Female enrolment	6.19	7.14	8.75	9.66	9.75
Total Girls & boys.	1249727	1420231	1540033	1718012	2044151

Source: GRPI

57. Ibid., 1942-47, p. 37.

Of the total population enrolled for education at various levels in 1927, only 6.19% were females, the rest being males. This percentage of women increased negligibly in the next 20 years. In 1947, the total women enrolled were only 9.7% of the total population enrolled.

Thus, an overview of female education at various levels i.e. Primary school, Middle school, High school level and collegiate level reveals that over a period of 20 years (1927-47) maximum percentage of females were enrolled at the Primary school level. The percentage of females vis-a-vis males at other levels steadily increased with time although the increase was nominal. The percentage of females enrolled at the High school and college level was less than even one percent throughout this period.

Percentage of female enrolment at all levels of education to total numbers of female enrolled :

Of the total number of females enrolled for the period 1927-47 (the data prior to 1927 was either not consistent or not available) the percentage of females enrolled for primary education was the highest vis-a-vis that at other levels. Thus, whereas in 1927 the percentage of females enrolled at the primary level was as high as 69%, in 1947 the number decreased to 45%. This was understandably so because the percentage enrolled at the Middle school level increased sharply while the percentage increase in female enrolment at the High school level was sizeable. Thus, female enrolment in English Middle schools

increased from 5.9% in 1927 to 11.7% in 1947, in Vernacular Middle schools from 21% in 1927 to 33% in 1947 and, in High schools from 2.6% in 1927 to 11.7% in 1947. It is interesting to note that in 1947 whereas 45% females were enrolled in Primary schools, almost the same percentage (44.7% ) were enrolled at the Middle school level. Female enrolment, however, remained limited to the Primary and Middle school levels. Females enrolled at the college level remained negligible even in 1947.

Educational facilities were extended for women in U.P. The impact of pardā is nevertheless evident in the often discriminatory provision of major inputs for female education.

#### Buildings and Finance :

A significant input for popularizing female education was the school building for girls' schools. The Chief Inspectoress had noted in 1912, that

"the question of buildings was especially important in the girls' schools, since they had to be enclosed<sup>58</sup>, there was a risk of insanitary conditions. The teachers too were forced to live in them. Though buildings of every description existed and in some schools buildings were exceedingly good, there were instances, especially in the small aided schools of classes being held in verandahs among charpoys and other household goods while hens and goats also had their habitation there."<sup>59</sup>

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58. Emphasis mine.

59. Ibid., 1912, p. 85.

More than a decade later it was noted that, apart from the obvious but much neglected duty of ensuring that the girls work in hygienic conditions, there is also the consideration that when buildings are good, more girls are attracted to school and more rapid progress is made. It was noted that a lack of proper space in government schools was a great obstacle to expansion. There were instances of "kutchra" badly built, ill ventilated little houses where, according to the Inspectoress, it was impossible to stop for more than an hour or so, on account of the "smell from open drains".<sup>60</sup>

The condition of building, particularly of the non-mission, non-English schools remained a constant complaint. By 1927, it was noted that very little had been done to provide better accommodation for girls' schools in villages.<sup>61</sup> The village school for girls was even described as a little better than a cowshed.

By 1932, it was noted that "it is an old tale, the repetition of which is wearisome, that the majority of the Vernacular schools for girls are badly housed. The cry is repeated however, lest the boards should think that arrangements which have lasted (for) so long may be permitted to continue indefinitely".<sup>62</sup> However, the report noted that unlike the

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60. Ibid., 1929, p. 59.

61. Ibid., 1927, p. 88.

62. Ibid., 1927-32, p. 72.



Vernacular schools, most anglo-vernacular schools, had adequate accommodation and none of the anglo-verancular were so badly housed that teachers and pupils worked under discomfort.<sup>63</sup> It was suggested by 1942, that a more expedient measure would be to consider buildings before opening fresh institutions.<sup>64</sup>

Finance :

The financial resources for female education were provided by the municipal funds, the district board grants, the provisional revenues, fees and other sources. The complaint of the inadequacy of financial aid provided by these agencies for female education runs through the reports on public instruction in the U.P. for the early half of the twentieth century. The insufficiency of public funds for the general improvement of female education was described as the "rock on which the solution to the problem splits".<sup>65</sup>

The smallness of the permanent annual grant (Rs.5 lakh) for education, to the United Provinces was deplored in 1903. The general report on public instruction stated that "the opportunity was not taken to bring the most backward province, more nearly abreast of the more forward parts of the country, in which a greater liberality towards education has been customary".<sup>66</sup>

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63. Ibid., 1927-32, p. 72.

64. Ibid., 1937-42, p. 46.

65. Ibid., 1936, p. 44.

66. Ibid., 1903, pp, 2-3.

U.P. had received less funds in proportion to its population than any other province. It was thus, according to the report, their misfortune rather than the fault of the province that it was amongst the last in the educational progress.

The outlay from district and Municipal funds was mainly on Primary schools. The contribution from fees occurred chiefly in aided English schools and more particularly in aided-mission schools. Year by year, most district boards reduced their contribution towards expenditure for female education and depended more and more on provincial grants, which were intended to supplement their own contribution.<sup>67</sup>

A section of the administration felt that income from fees could be increased without injury to girls' education, others felt that in view of the fact that the importance of girls' education was not fully realised, the legitimate amount of bus fees, or tuition fees could not be charged. In Vernacular schools nevertheless, no tuition fees and a very small conveyance fee was charged.<sup>68</sup> By 1930, income from fees was greater than previous years,<sup>69</sup> which was an evidence of progress in the desire for educating girls and women. Income from other sources, however, registered a decrease.<sup>d</sup>

67. Ibid., 1926, p. 38.

68. Ibid., 1929, p. 47.

69. Ibid., 1930, p. 56.

Schools, aided by the boards were on a different footing from those aided by provincial revenue. Usually, the grant formed the sole source of income and was regarded by the mistress concerned as her salary. Since the amount was small, she spared finances with difficulty, even for equipment and other necessities. Consequently, the condition of these schools, the majority of which were in villages, was often deplorable.<sup>70</sup>

On the justification, that the strain of conveyance charges on the public budget had become acute, the policy of self-supporting conveyance was formulated for girls' schools in 1936. Thus, parents were also expected to pay more conveyance fees.<sup>71</sup> By 1937, it was noted that the increase in fees was welcome as the future security of girls' schools would depend more and more on the willingness of parents to co-operate as readily and as fully as they had done in the education of their boys.<sup>72</sup>

A number of girls' schools had to depend on the monthly subscriptions of benevolent subscribers to make up the difference between expenditure and income from Government grant. Since, voluntary subscriptions were always a variable factor, the payment of staff and other demands became uncertain.<sup>73</sup>

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70. Ibid., 1930, p. 60.

71. Ibid., 1936, p. 42.

72. Ibid., 1932-37, p. 87.

73. Ibid., 1932-37, p. 87.

Management and administration :

Regarding the management of girls' schools, it was noted that schools managed by Boards or by Committees of citizens were subject to fluctuations, which were accountable to mismanagement or diminishing interest. It was reported, that incompetent teachers were appointed in schools managed by district or municipal boards, and for private reasons were retained in service against the advice of the Inspectoress. Private considerations and politics were permitted to over-rule the interests of education.<sup>74</sup> Missionary bodies as a rule managed their schools successfully. It is essential to note that the primary aim of missionaries was proselytisation for which women formed an ideal target.

The history of the non-Christian, non-mission schools was considered mainly a record of "Inconstant purpose". Noting the reasons for an inadequate progress, the 1914 report stated that

"in the case of female education, private effort flags and enthusiasm is fitful; so that schools which seem to have entered upon a career of prosperity are liable, unaccountably to sudden decline. The ardour of promoters is apt, to be dampened by wavering support and the consequent difficulty of maintaining financial equilibrium. Apathy and unconcern succeed in quick succession to outbursts, of zeal for the cause. An instance of unusual success is that of Arya Kanya Pathshala, Allahabad; a contrary instance is that of the

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74. Ibid., 1927-32, p. 76.

Kanya Pathshala, Meerut of which so much was hoped at one time that the Government Model School was closed to give it freer scope".<sup>75</sup>

Bulk of the Primary schools were managed by district boards. In larger towns, municipal boards usually made itself responsible. It was noted that the Government maintained a higher percentage of Middle schools, especially vernacular middle schools. Its advantage was the better material conditions which were made possible by provincial resources.<sup>76</sup>

A further advantage which sprung from the existent pardā ideology was that the Government maintained schools, which were known as the model schools had the "advantage of undivided control in the hands of women, since they were managed by the mistresses",<sup>77</sup> and "the better class of women teachers preferred not to deal directly with men".<sup>78</sup>

The administration and inspection was also adjusted to the stipulated cultural necessity of segregating women, thereby reinforcing the 'separate' identity of a girls' school. The administration and inspection of girls' schools was put under the charge of women. The number of inspectresses was raised from 4 to 7. Their official relations with the Inspectors were severed.<sup>79</sup>

75. Ibid., 1913-1914, p. 19.

76. Ibid., 1925, p. 33.

77. Ibid., 1925, p. 33.

78. Ibid., 1925, p. 33.

79. PEI., 1907-12, Vol. I, p. 2 .

The circles that an inspect-ress was supposed to visit were reduced in size and the influence and stimulus of more frequent visits by her was expected to have its effect.<sup>80</sup>

The Chief Inspectress admitted that "the difficulty of proper management existed even in the boys' schools, but in the girls' schools, it was aggravated by strange reports of strict pardā observing schools."<sup>81</sup>

### Curriculae :

The curriculum for females and the provision and availability of teachers for educating girls too revealed the working of a pardā ideology.

The curriculum imparted to female students was an important issue of female education in the early half of the twentieth century. The necessity of a specially designed curricula for women/females was often emphasized. Differing opinions also existed. The report on public instruction in the U.P. for 1912-1917 noted two different views on the curriculum for girls education - (i) they should be taught nothing save domestic science (ii) a smattering of the three Rs. as well, would help in their household duties, that too much arithmetic was taught and that readers were unsuitable. In fact, one of the reasons for the

80. GRPI., 1915, p.21.

81. Ibid., 1914-1915, p. 20.

failure of female education was cited as the unsuitability of curriculum.<sup>82</sup>

Over the years, the curriculum for girls' education was sought to be revised to suit the needs or demands of their familial roles well within the domestic sphere. Consequently, subjects which were seen as devoid of any direct bearing on a training for an effective handling of the household affairs were either dropped or revised. Consequently, the committee constituted to revise the vernacular curriculum in 1915, introduced domestic science as a compulsory subject and directed a revision of the arithmetic course. The middle course for girls was shortened by one year, as compared with that of the boys. Also an alternative curriculum exclusively for girls was to be prepared, to lead up to a special girls' certificate examination for girls whose schooling was to fit them for ordinary domestic life.<sup>83</sup>

Sewing and knitting formed an important part of the curricula for girls' education, sewing was included in the training class courses, in order to secure competent teachers. Drawing and painting were attempted at some places and were considered "particularly useful in giving purdānashin girls some occupation with which to fill their leisure".<sup>84</sup>

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82. Ibid., 1912-17, p. 82.

83. Ibid., 1912-17, p. 82.

84. Ibid., 1917, p. 84.

Principal changes were brought about in the courses of Isabella Thoburn College also. Philosophy was to be taught for B.A. instead of mathematics. Biology was to be taught upto the intermediate standard. Weekly lectures were introduced on literary, scientific and historical subjects and once a month extension lecture in Urdu with slides were provided for the zenānā ladies of Lucknow.<sup>85</sup> It was declared that "female education in order to be made attractive must be adopted more closely to the needs of the sex".<sup>86</sup>

By 1926, desire was specifically noted for needlework and cookery. The distinction between candidates who followed the same curriculum as boys and those who took the girls' alternative, disappeared in 1930 through a remodelled anglo-vernacular curriculum for middle schools. In the arithmetic paper, a separate provision was made for girls who had neither the ability nor the opportunity for going far in Arithmetic.<sup>87</sup>

By 1930, systematic physical training was given but only in a small minority of schools. It was added that "few years ago the introduction of games and drill would have met with criticism from a certain number of parents, but this attitude is now a thing of the past".<sup>88</sup>

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85. Ibid., 1912, p. 79.

86. Ibid., 1912, p. 79.

87. Ibid., 1930, pp. 66-61.

88. Ibid., 1930, p. 61.



Participation in extra-curricular activities like girl guiding, first-aid, home-nursing and outdoor sports remained low on account of a dearth of competent teachers and space. Also the 1926 report noted that it was not easy to gather girls together, once the school dispersed, especially, when girls live at a distance and have to be fetched in bullock carts.<sup>89</sup> The growing interest in games was commended for it was "helping to remove pardā restrictions".<sup>90</sup> It was also pointed out that unfortunately the interest in physical culture is limited to large towns".<sup>91</sup>

#### Teachers :

The crucial role of efficient and trained female teachers was recognised early in the twentieth century. They were considered essential for popularising female education.

The Sogra Female Normal School, Banaras, the Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow and the Government Female Normal School at Lucknow and Allahabad were the major training institutions for female teachers employed in Indian Schools. Voluntary enterprise or 'private' institutions also existed<sup>92</sup> indicating a consciousness for training female teachers.

89. Ibid., 1933, p. 35.

90. Ibid., 1937-42, p. 46.

91. Ibid., 1939, p. 39.

92. Ibid., 1912, p. 7.

The census for 1911 pointed out the lack of female teachers as the greatest of all difficulties in the way of female education. It was noted that even though the Government had offered valuable scholarships to the wives of male teachers, who would pass certain examinations, on the principles that their husbands would teach them and the two schools could be combined under one one roof, the measures had not succeeded.<sup>93</sup>

However, according to the report on public instruction for 1912, the employment of superannuated male teachers was also welcomed. Due to the dearth of female teachers, female education, at least, in villages may not have been touched for years.<sup>94</sup>

A decrease in enrolment at the teachers training institutions was noticed by 1913. It was put down partly to the great demand for teachers which induced girls to begin teaching directly after passing the entrance and partly to the college courses proving more attractive.<sup>95</sup>

Even though the necessity of a female teacher in popularising female education was recognised, the dearth of trained mistresses the existence of incompetent mistresses, and of employment of superannuated males in girls schools dominates the discussion of obstacles to the education of girls. It was recognised that there were deterring consideration for the woman, "the educated woman

93. Census of India United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1911, p. 261.

94. GRPI., 1912, p. 83.

95. Ibid., 1913, p. 11.

is in any case lonely, and if she is in pardā away from her family, the loneliness must be beyond description; yet if she is out of pardā she often loses the respect that is necessary to win scholars.<sup>96</sup>

The director of public instruction for U.P. pointed out that it would be a mistake to suppose that the scarcity of female teachers is merely the result of low pay, or that it could be remedied if higher salaries were offered. "It is not merely a question of getting good teachers, but of getting any teachers at all. Unless this problem is solved, female education can make no real progress, and as long as early marriage is universal and the position of unmarried women considered dishonourable the prospect is not hopeful".<sup>97</sup>

#### Co-education :

Co-education was an important means of improving the diffusion of education for girls in U.P. An investigation of the development of co-education in U.P., further highlights the importance of pardā for women's education.

The local Government of U.P. passed an order in 1896, permitting district boards to throw open primary village schools to both sexes, where separate schools for girls could not be

96. PEI., Vol. I. Pt.I, 1917-1922, pp. 133-134.

97. PEI., 1902-1907, pp. 263-264.

provided. However, inhibitions regarding female education surfaced when the district boards were consulted. They professed themselves terribly shocked at the grave impropriety of allowing girls, even between the ages of 6 and 8, to go to the same schools as their brothers. It was also pronounced to be "subversive of morality notwithstanding the practice in other parts of India."<sup>98</sup> Describing the introduction of the new system, the Director for public instruction noted that "the proposal was not made on behalf of those who are unwilling to avail themselves of it, and there seemed to be no valid objections to allowing others, who did not feel the same objection, to send their girls to the ordinary village schools". He also noted that, "the custom was not wholly unknown in the provincē. Instances (of co-education) are in fact occasionally met with all over the provinces without any harm resulting".<sup>99</sup>

The custom of teaching boys and girls together, was commended on account of "its economy in a province where educational progress was seriously arrested by the want of funds."<sup>100</sup> By 1906, the number of girls reading in Boys' school doubled, thus indicating a positive trend for co-education. More than ten percent of the whole number of school girls were reading in public schools for boys and private boys school.<sup>101</sup>

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98. PEI., Vol. I. Pt.I, 1897-1902, p. 320.

99. Ibid., Vol. I. Pt.I, 1897-1902, p. 320.

100. GRPI., 1903-1904, p. 39,  
ibid., 1905-1906, p. 33.

101. Ibid., 1905-1906, p. 3.

Allowances were given to encourage co-education in U.P. The rates had varied from 4 annas per child and 8 annas for five children. Opinions regarding the success of the practice varied. There was the possibility of violence being done to social feeling. There was also a professional distrust about the value of co-education. In schools, receiving the special capitation there was a suspicion of fictitious entries, nominal attendance, spurious education and undue pressure on parents. Fluctuations in numbers were obvious and these fluctuations had followed the rise and fall of the rate of grant, and the presence or the transfer of an officer who regarded the scheme with favour. Apart from commenting that probably all this proves that in some areas the desire of parents to see their daughters educated is well diluted with a feeling of human kindness towards the ill-paid teachers who will earn a little more if the small sisters accompany their brothers to school for a certain number of attendance. The report noted that the real disadvantage of the system of girls studying in boys schools was that girls were forced to leave such schools at an early age, before any permanent impression was made.<sup>102</sup> The report for 1912 noted that, "Madras is not the United Provinces, and in Madras, girls are not removed from boys schools at the age of eight. Here, it is the almost invariable rule. It requires a rather sanguine

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102. Ibid., 1907-1912, p. 84.

temperament to expect that at that age girls can carry away from school, impression, "that will never fade into nothingness . Zeal may outrun discretion and the blowing of bubbles does no permanent good to the cause of education".<sup>103</sup> It was hence reiterated that co-education should never be regarded as an excuse for NOT maintaining and establishing girls' schools wherever this was necessary or possible.<sup>104</sup>

The 1911 Resolution dated 14th January claimed, that the idea of educating both sexes together had never appealed to the Indian mind. For, as soon as the stimulus was removed the attendance diminished. The plant had struck no vigorous root and was too dependent on artificial aid. Encouragement through the practice of capitation grants or other means was to be stopped.<sup>105</sup> An Inspector of schools in Banaras division who was a champion of the system of girls studying in boys' schools advocated payment by results for he believed that mixed education was an excellent means of diffusing widely, a little of the light of knowledge throughout the all prevailing mental darkness. Diametrically opposed views also existed. It was felt that though the attendance of girls in boys schools would do good, any form of official pressure was to be depreciated.<sup>106</sup> It was noted that the system of mixed education did not find favour with Muhammadans

103. Ibid., 1907-1912, p. 84.

104. PEI., 1907-1912, p. 220.

105. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 7.

106. GRPI., 1907-1912, p. 8.

or flourish in cities and that it would never diffuse education above the lowest stages.<sup>107</sup>

Despite disapproval of mixed education from many quarters, it was admitted that "it would be a pity if these girls were deprived of this opportunity of getting some education, however slight."<sup>108</sup>

By 1933, a large influx of new girls into boys' schools was reported. Also noted, was an unexpected migration of girls from existing girls' schools to boys' schools, where the latter presented better opportunities for further study.<sup>109</sup> This, however, was reported only in village schools. The Chief Inspectoress hoped "that the day is not far off when their own sisters will have the courage to emerge out of pardā and shrouded bullock-carts into the open of better conditions... Girls who could easily walk do not, because of pardā objections".<sup>110</sup>

The large increase in the number of girls reading in boys' schools, though largely at the primary stage, was attributed to, apart from other reasons, the awakening of parents to the advantage of education for their girls.<sup>111</sup> The encouraging response to co-education at the primary stage, in many cases, prompted the employment of women teachers in boys' schools. Whenever possible, girls' schools were closed by being amalgamated with the boys'

107. Ibid., 1907-1912, p. 85.

108. Ibid., 1917, p. 81.

109. Ibid., 1932-33, p. 31.

110. Ibid., 1932-33, p. 31.

111. Ibid., 1932-37, p. 84.

schools.<sup>112</sup>

Despite, encouraging trends in favour of co-education,<sup>113</sup> the report for 1944 noted that, there existed, opposition in some districts to co-education. It was, thus, felt that it would be a better way of amalgamating boys' and girls' schools if boys' lower primary schools were closed and boys were sent to girls' schools, even though this had never been tried anywhere earlier.<sup>114</sup>

#### Hindu and Muslim Female Education in U.P. :

In the context of the impact of pardā on the education of Hindu and Muslim women in U.P., an analysis of data reveals a significant point regarding the hypothesis that contrary to the notion of pardā as an Islamic practice, pardā was practised by both Hindus and Muslims and consequently affected both communities.

From 1927 to 1947, the difference between the percentage of Hindu and Muslim females vis-a-vis the total population of Hindus and Muslims enrolled at all levels of education - primary level, Middle school level, High school level as well as Intermediate and Collegiate level was negligible (Table - 4 on the subsequent page).

112. Ibid., 1937-1942, p. 40.

113. Ibid., 1942-43, p. 30.

114. Ibid., 1943-44, p. 27.



TABLE - 4

Percentage of Muslim females enrolled vis-a-vis the total enrolled from - males and females of Hindus and total males and females enrolled amongst Muslims respectively.

	1927		1932		1937		1942		1947	
	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M
Primary School	5.68	6.0	10.72	9.23	13.26	11.60	13.89	12.87	12.68	12.50
Middle School	0.11	0.07	0.26	0.18	0.57	0.38	0.92	0.72	1.073	0.98
High School	0.007	0.0005	0.017	0.012	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.097	0.12	0.18
T & U.	0.0015		0.013	0.005	0.03	0.025	0.07	0.084	0.10	0.16
Total										

Source : GRPI.

It can therefore be stated that female education did not vary significantly in accordance with communities and religious groups. Female education amongst the Hindus and Muslims was subject to impediments which were common rather than exclusive, to both the communities.

It was noted that the problem of the education of Muslim girls was made "more difficult owing to the rigidity of their pardā system". At Meerut 2 hand carts and 5 dolis were provided by the board for the use of the Muhammadan girls' school.<sup>115</sup> Similarly the conditions that operated against the admission of Hindu girls was the lack of provision of conveyance or of hostel arrangements.<sup>116</sup> Though sections of both communities availed of hostel facilities for girls,<sup>117</sup> it was noted that boarding institutions were not popular with non-Christians. Provision of more facilities was acknowledged as essential for facilitating admission of non-Christian girls.<sup>118</sup>

The biases against the women's entry into professional and vocational education i.e., at Medical Schools, Technical and Industrial Schools and Teacher Training Institutions, do not seem to have been operative in the case of only one community.<sup>119</sup>

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115. Ibid., 1913, p. 17.

116. Ibid., 1932-1937, p. 90.

117. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 83.

118. Ibid., 1932-1937, p. 90.

119. Ibid., 1905, pp. 6A, 7A & 8A,  
ibid., 1932-37, p. 25A.

Hindu and Muslim women's entry into the teaching profession was apparently not without difficulties. A "strong aversion towards the adoption by their girls of the teaching profession" was noted.<sup>120</sup> It was noted that the number of day scholars fluctuated on account of difficulties of supplying conveyances and of caste prejudices".<sup>121</sup> The profession of medicine and teaching for girls seems to have been only gradually accepted by the Hindus as well as the Muslims.<sup>122</sup> In the case of schools for adults because of the higher proportion of Hindu rural population as well as the very nature of schools, a 'communal' comparison is difficult.

The 1901 census noted that "taking considerable, areas such as natural divisions and not single districts, female education amongst Musalmans is more in vogue in the east of the province than in the western plains where it was seen that the greatest proportion of literate Hindu females is to be found".<sup>123</sup> However, the later censuses do not indicate this trend. While the literacy test adopted in 1911 may account for this difference, it can be hypothesized that the higher percentage of literate Hindu females in the West was due to the relative lack of rigid pardā in the region, as noted in the early part of this chapter. On the other hand the relatively urbanized population of Muslims

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120. Ibid., Resolution, 1915, p. 5.

121. Ibid., 1907-12, p. 70.

122. Ibid., 1927, p. 23A.

123. Census of India: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1901, p. 154.

vis-a-vis the Hindus in U.P., ensured a higher percentage of literate Muslim population in the eastern parts of the province. As the census of 1901 as well as 1931 noted, the presence of large towns in a district tended to raise the proportion of literate persons, especially among the females and this was more marked in the case of Muslims than Hindus because Muslims were more largely town dwellers.

It is imperative to note that amongst both Hindus and Muslims, it was the higher classes which showed an interest in and the response to female literacy. It is also significant that either norms of pardā or notions of religious orthodoxy were specially emphasized in connection with the female education of this strata of society. For instance, there is evidence of successful pardānashin school at Pilibhit. But, "Pupils were drawn mostly from the higher classes of Muhammadans".<sup>124</sup> Similarly, it was noticed that the Hindu girls' school at Lucknow was doing valuable educational work as it attracted the daughters of many of the well-to-do professional classes and while adhering to the orthodox Hindu point of view"<sup>125</sup>, aimed with some success at widening the girls' interest. The largest increases were noted amongst high caste Hindu girls, whereas the progress amongst "the depressed classes" was disappointing.<sup>126</sup>

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124. GRPI., 1906, p. 32.

125. Ibid., 1912-1917, p. 79.

126. Ibid., 1937-38, p. 36.

Even amongst the section of population which did receive education, the proportion of literate females was relatively highest among the Kayasthas whose occupation required literacy.<sup>127</sup>

Convenience seems to have been a criteria of establishing sectarian schools. It was admitted that though separate schools involved a policy which was doubted, it was more practical and more conducive to harmony to have separate schools. Hindu girls invariably wished to learn the Nagri and Muhammadan girls the Persian character. This necessitated a separate classification and double staff. Few mistresses were capable of running joint classes. The difficulty over language was given as a reason to establish sectarian schools,<sup>128</sup> though it was not always intended. Thus, when aided institutions came into existence by the effort of private bodies, funds tended to limit them since parallel classes in Hindi and Urdu could not be provided.

The convenience in establishing sectarian schools can be understood in the context of the political developments in India in the first half of the 20th Century. In India, the Khilafat issue was particularly, prominent in the years 1911-1913. The issues that preoccupied the Muslim leaders was protection of the Turkish empire and of the holy places, since the British policy

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127. Census of India: United Provinces of Agra & Oudh, 1921, p. 460, ibid., 1931, p. 118.

128. GRPI., 1906, p. 31; ibid., 1932-37, p. 90; ibid., 1930, p. 40.

was not sympathetic to Turkey. Pan Islamism relegated to a secondary position, even the whole issue of political independence.<sup>129</sup> The social energy of the Muslim community was directed to communal ends. Official policy too reinforced communal divisions of society, in U.P. In this atmosphere possibly, the sanctions of respective religion and culture crystallized amongst Hindus and Muslims. Thus the consciousness that Urdu was the language of Muslims and Hindi was the language of Hindus could not have waned.

Thus, it can be concluded that evidence on the educational pattern of women of the two communities of Hindus and Muslims reveal that the differential achievements in the education of women, cannot be attributed solely to socio-cultural factors which were solely the characteristic of either of the two communities and which could be considered exclusive to U.P.

It is possible to interpret the disparities in the education of Hindu and Muslim women in terms of political and economic factors which in turn possibly reinforced norms of parda. These factors may have stemmed from pragmatic reasons as in the case of shutting down primary schools either on account of their uselessness or their promotion as secondary schools. In the case of the establishment of sectarian schools, the difficulty lay in provision of curricula and finance. Sectarian schools tended to

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129. Chandra Bipan, Modern India (1981 reprint, New Delhi, NCERT, 1971), pp. 255-256.

institutionalize communal differences and possibly the Government too relied on such calculations. One can speculatively go so far as to state that sectarian schools, in all instances were a consequence of socio-cultural factors in so far as Hindus did not open schools for Muslims or Muslims for Hindu girls.

Disparities in the female education amongst the Muslims and Hindus may also have surfaced on account of residential patterns or from political preoccupations whereby women's education may not have been a matter of priority.

To the extent that socio-cultural factors and especially the practice of pardā impinged on the education of women, it is not possible to point out to one single community as being more affected by it or relatively not affected by socio-cultural considerations, regarding women's education. Since certain sections within both the Hindu and Muslim communities showed enterprise in educating their women and evinced a consciousness in this direction, it is possible to conclude that in order to account for the nuances in the education of women a study of the whole socio-political and economic factors is imperative. It can be further stated that a communal comparison is not very logical in the area of women's education. The point which is reinforced is that provision for education, access to education and the level of education was a matter of male - female as well as class distinction, rather than reasons of religion and custom alone.

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## CHAPTER -V

### CONCLUSION

Socio-cultural factors - primarily pardā, which was dominant in the social milieu of U.P. highlights the reasons behind the motivations, manifestations and goals of women's education in U.P. The socio-political and economic situation of U.P. further provided a clue to some of the guiding factors behind the social reality of the early half of the twentieth century.

At the initial phase of this study, the concept of pardā included the physical veil as well as other modes of visual separation of males and females. This implied restriction on mobility and communication. Consequently, only the quantity and not the quality and content of education for women was seen as important. Another hypothetical notion was that as the status of women became higher, the incidence of pardā declined and the level of women's education rose. A notion that followed from the above was that in instances where adherence to pardā was low and the level of education relatively high, there even existed avenues for economic independence. Also the impact of pardā on women's education seemed to be apparent in terms of the quantity of education that women received. Thus, it seemed a simple correlation that a relatively rigid adherence to pardā meant less of education.



The contextual study of U.P. in the first half of the twentieth century revealed the inadequacies of the initial notions noted above and clarified that the dialectics of pardā and the education of Hindu and Muslim women were not so simplistic.

The study revealed that the reference to pardā as only a physical veil and a visual separation was inadequate to describe the various facets of Hindu and Muslim women's lives in U.P.

Apart from segregating men and women by either manipulating the women's clothing or by screens, by spatial segregation or even by differential timings for the two sexes, pardā was also affected by a behavioural code which implied a restriction not only on verbal communication but also on the communication of any opinion and emotion by the woman, to those older to her, especially men. Restriction was extended to any behaviour which would attract attention or was likely to attract attention. Thus, the aim was to prevent the woman's exposure to the world and prevent the world's access to her. Thus an important dimension of pardā was that which was bereft of all visual forms i.e., it existed in spirit.

It is difficult to find any single consistent definition of pardā on account of the regionally varied observances as

between the pardā observed by Muslims in Pakistan and in U.P., as well as the regional differences in what was considered pardā, as overt behavioural constraints between U.P. and Central India. There was no exclusive Hindu or Muslim observance of pardā. The goals and aspirations of both Hindus and Muslims, the two major communities in U.P. were not different. Members of both communities aspired to social prominence and political power. Revivalists and political leaders in U.P. in the first half of the twentieth century stressed the respective exclusiveness of Hindus and Muslims. However, regional culture rather than the great tradition of Indo-Muslim civilization set the frame of their interaction, since both Hindus and Muslims upheld conservative values. This is evident in the nature of inter-political alliances and intra socio-political interaction i.e., in the nature of the leadership that gained acceptance, in their style of politics and their revivalism which underlined the importance of religion in their lives. The harping on religion and the constant harping back at the ideal forms of their respective religions, outlined the blue-print of a society which upheld social conservatism.

As far as subtle variations regarding the observance of pardā are concerned, differences existed within the community itself regionally, and in the crucial terms of class. Regionally this difference in the concept of pardā is evident in the

expectations from Hindu women of the upper strata in the western Himalayan region of U.P. and the eastern U.P. while pardā existed throughout U.P., in the Western Himalayan regions woman's work outside the home was acceptable, whereas in eastern U.P. the woman was destined for a relatively secluded life. Similarly, within the same community whether Hindus or Muslims, the life-style of the woman belonging to the higher strata and that of the lower strata presented a wide gap. The strict and rigid adherence to pardā characterized the routine of the woman belonging to the upper strata in both the communities unlike that of the woman of the lower rungs in both communities. A communal distinction of pardā is hence not relevant. The ethical code of the higher classes whether Hindu or Muslim demanded women to adhere to the norms of pardā. In fact this adherence was a constituent of the stamp of social status. Economic necessities, on the other hand forced the Hindu and Muslim women of the lower classes out of the literal pardā.

Instead of concentrating on the communal similarities and dissimilarities of pardā in U.P., it is essential to inquire what it was to be a woman in the first half of the 20th century, U.P.

Two major concerns of society determined the Hindu and Muslims woman's life in U.P. (1) the notions of female sexuality and the need to protect her and (2) maintenance of harmony within

kingroup. Again as to why the woman exclusively was the focus of this concern, protection and control may have had biological undertones. Why the male centered activities were culturally valued, remains unanswered and controversial.

A woman's activities were envisaged primarily in terms of her role as a wife and a mother - a mother of sons specifically got importance. Consequently, marriage was the ultimate destiny of a woman. Reasons of progeny, and extension of kin lines were deemed important. The importance of the husband is evident not only in the social stigma attached to an unmarried girl, as well as her parents, but also in the ostracization that a widow suffered.

Early marriage and even child marriages were in keeping with the requirements of the pardā ideology. Since the woman went to live with her husband's family, as a newcomer she was to be controlled. This was further compounded by the notions of a woman's nature and her disruptive potential. Early marriages were seen as the most effective solution to deal with possible sources of disruption. Consequently even the age differences between the wife and her husband were known to be very wide.

The life style of the upper classes of both Hindus and Muslims reiterated the fact that the woman was socialized to accept domesticity as her sole destiny. The ideological circumscribing of the woman which ensued from her infancy, moulded her to accept the home and the hearth as what nature had intended for her.

The social system was such that ascriptive status i.e. genealogical pedigree acquired more importance than any other criteria of social distinction. Thus, those born with it were preoccupied in conserving it and those who were not, aspired to the life-style of the pedigreed.

However, all women were not to be kept in pardā at all times. Pardā requirements were applied selectively. Pardā was more stringent depending on age, geneological seniority and marital status. The norms were such that the older women enjoyed a relative relaxation in adherence to pardā as well as some authority over the younger members of the family/household. The younger womenfolk waited for their turn to reach that position. A cyclically oppressive system extending over generations was established. Significantly the responsibility of ensuring a conformity to the pardā ideology also lay with men. Their responsibility lay in avoiding female company. They were in fact required to treat women as if in pardā even if the latter did not have a veil.

It was within the domestic unit that the women in U.P. were believed to enjoy power and authority. Thus, many women and men were in favour of the pardā system. It provided leisure to the women and afforded them an authority over the household. They did not have to fend for themselves and enjoyed the social status. Women of the lower strata could not have been able to afford the leisure, yet their identity

seen exclusively in terms of their role was realised only within the precincts of the household. It is imperative to point out however, that this authority extended only over those younger to them. Even within the household, their authority did not extend over the males of their own generation. Pardā, as it was adhered to, can thus be seen in terms of two closely interacting principles of separate worlds and symbolic shelter. A dichotomy between the world of men and women was visualized. The woman's world was associated with the domestic unit, the hearth and the home. The man's world was outside the domestic realm. His was the public sphere. The principle of symbolic shelter implied the protection extended to woman.

Pardā was thus the single comprehensive socio-cultural factor which pervaded every aspect of female life. It could literally be identified with the female sex. In fact a reference to the pardā is taken to imply that the subject of discussion is "woman".

Pardā, in all its visual variety and ideology was inextricably linked with the whole issue of women's education. The various restrictions of pardā affected the very age group which should have been receiving education, thereby limiting a large female population's access to education. Thus though in their childhood girls and boys played together and may have attended the same primary school, it was the former who paid the price of being born as girls through an enforced illiteracy.

The primary level of education which recorded the highest female enrolment vis-a-vis other levels, recorded a high wastage and stagnation also for it was difficult to secure attendance of female students after the age of eight. Since pardā became more stringent on the pubertal and post - pubertal girls, many were not enrolled for education after the primary level.

Female enrolment at the higher levels of education continued to depend on individual circumstances of pupils and schools. There were instances of higher enrolment on paper than the actual numbers receiving education.

There were also instances of no pupils, and High schools only in name as the Crosthwaite School of Allahabad. At the higher levels, women did gain an educational qualification as private candidates. It is essential to point out that most High-schools were situated in towns and catered for middle - class families, which had begun to pay more attention to the higher education of girls. It was also noted that this interest was inspired mainly by the idea that the High school certificate improved chances of marrying well. On the other hand, it was also noted that the growing number of girls receiving higher education and professional training was enough of an indication that marriage was not the only career for girls. Many were receiving education in order to adopt a profession.

The trends in the adoption of vocational and professional education also reflect considerations of pardā. The initial reluctance of Hindus and Muslims, to any vocational education for women gave way to allow medical instruction. It is likely that there existed a demand for female doctors. A medical profession also ensured that contact with strange men would be avoided. The teaching profession also brought women in contact with girls only, or very small boys. However, the aversion to it by Hindus and Muslims indicates a prejudice to education itself. It may be interpreted as a fear of the potential of education to widen the mental horizons. Significantly, engineering and surveying schools did not exist for girls at all. Though female participation in agriculture is evident from the occupational distribution in U.P., no facilities were extended for women to impart a technical knowledge in the same field.

More important than the quantity of education for females, it was imperative to inquire into the quality and content of education imparted to women. Even among those girls and women, who did receive education despite the literal constraints of space and distance, the ideological circumscribing to mould the minds to carry out the responsibility of their role continued. Regarding the quality of women's education, pardā's effects were direct as well as indirect. A belief in the undesirability of stepping outside the home precincts or travelling distances, prevented girls from venturing far to attend school. On the



other hand this also led to instances of schools opening special classes for these girls despite their inadequacies regarding the necessary equipment. The consequence was a poor standard of education.

The content of education imparted to women was role oriented - i.e., oriented to their potential wifely responsibilities and responsibilities as a mother. Thus, it was important to design a curriculum suited to their special needs as different from boys. Domestic science was considered important for women. Similarly, it was believed that a smattering of three R's would enable them to carry out their household responsibilities more efficiently. Physiology and hygiene of home life were also taught specially to girls just as sewing and knitting were. Drawing and painting were introduced to fill the leisure hours of pardānāshīns. The woman's vocation was visualized as geared primarily to the domestic unit. The girl was taught that her place was within the home and the primary responsibility lay within the family. The parda ideology did not encourage delineating a subject or vocation which was not directly connected with the domestic unit and the role of the female. Education, therefore, was not envisaged for broadening mental horizons. It was visualised as an aid to pardā, to reinforce established norms and attitudes and provide them with a legal sanctity. Education and pardā identified and reinforced the other - there was to be no encouragement of the critical faculty of the mind. They were not to think for themselves but to learn up what had been thought out for them.

It is essential to note that in cases of rigid confinement and of pardā, even this protective stepping out of the home to receive a carefully planned curricula or congregating for the same purpose within the home was significant in that it enabled erstwhile pardānāshins to come in contact with and communicate with other women. To this limited extent then, education helped the women to defy the bindings of pardā. A relative rigid adherence to pardā hence did not necessarily imply no education for women. It was possible that as long as education was streamlined to meet the demands of a woman's role, the women in pardā had the opportunity to receive education privately. An enquiry into the private education imparted to women within the confines of home would be a useful subject of research.

The recurrent complaint was a lack of competent, efficient and trained female teachers. This was a consequence of the biases against women's education. Though, the incessant campaign for female education bore positive results, evident in the increase in demand for it, the ideology of pardā had prevented Hindu and Muslim women from taking it up. Ironically, there were instances of girl's schools suffering not because of lack of students but due to the lack of teachers. Social norms in the U.P. permitted only old males to take up this task. The younger male teachers were not always considered competent not because they lacked the requisite qualifications but because

their gender was different. It was even noted that the employment of superannuated male teachers at least meant that a desirability for female education could be created in areas where the movement for women's education would never have otherwise percolated. However, the quality of teaching was far below expectation and hence proved to be occasionally a disincentive for female education.

The inputs for girls' education in terms of literally providing an accommodation for teaching classes betrayed the even more rigid adherence to biases against female education despite the relative increase in popularity. Thus, while efforts were made to provide enclosed rooms for classes, girls' schools often suffered from gross insanitary conditions. Thus kachā, ill-ventilated houses, some being little better than cowsheds were seen fit enough to house girls' schools. There were instances of classes for girls being housed in the same rooms as that of hens and goats. At one level it can be concluded as an evidence of the desire for female education at another level, it is difficult to appreciate widespread inadequacy of accommodation meant for girls schools in the province of U.P., a condition evident over a period of time.

Missionaries, almost as a rule are believed to have managed their schools for girls in a better fashion. Otherwise management, too, seems to have suffered from private considerations.

Government managed schools were however preferred by female teachers. Here, is an evidence also of the fact that communal considerations were relatively not so important. For, apart from better material conditions these schools also ensured to prevent any direct dealing with men, because women inspectoresses had an undivided control in the Government model schools.

Financial paucity was yet another impediment to female education. Income from private sources was disappointing. It is possible to speculate that the reasons for even the official bypassing of financial support to women's education stemmed from the biases of the imperial bosses. The secondariness of the female was a pan-cultural phenomenon and the imperialists were no different in their attitudes to the female gender. The gradual increase of income from fees shows the increasing desire for educating girls and women. The increase occurred chiefly in aided English schools and more particularly in aided mission schools. This crucial fact points out the class distinctions of the strata receiving education or not receiving it. Those, who were interested in English education for their daughters belonged undoubtedly to the upper strata of society. More specifically, the girls belonged to a strata of the population conscious of the importance of English education. An interesting instance of the willingness to pay the fees for educating the

girls also lay in the fact that it was also understood to imply a high status. Education once again came to the aid of norms which contributed to the development of the pardā ideology. Ability to educate indicated status which in the long run would forge the requisite marriage alliances and the socio-political status.

The intra - regional differential achievement of female education was a characteristic feature of education in U.P. Female education was noticeably higher in the western than the eastern regions. The establishment of schools showed a similar pattern. Pardā requirements were more stringent in the eastern regions than the western regions and this was proved by the popularity of co-education in the eastern regions of Ballia, Basti and Gorakhpur. Co-education implied a scheme of girls studying in boys schools. Though this was far more economical than single-sex schools for girls it was limited to primary levels only. Co-education also implied therefore that they had to leave schooling at an early age. A tangible factor of urbanization seems to have encouraged a higher rate of female education. Agra and Kanpur performed better in female education than Basti and Azamgarh. Keeping in view that Muslims were relatively more urbanized, proportionately more literate and well represented in non-agricultural sectors of the economy, the education of their women does not seem to have been in an

equally advantageous position vis-a-vis Hindu women. The urbanized, literate and professional Muslims do not seem to have shown a proportionately higher initiative for educating their women. Traditionally sanctioned, socio-cultural attitudes continued to colour their perceptions of women and their position in society. It is known from the analysis of the socio-political and economic milieu of U.P. in the early half of the 20th century that the traditional socio-cultural attitudes formed an important ingredient of the concept of status. This factor itself belies the notions of one community being more backward or forward in the area of female education for reasons of socio-cultural factors exclusive to one community.

The increasing trend of caste solidarity and communalism in the socio-political milieu of early 20th century U.P. manifested in the sectarian nature of educational institutions especially at the High school level. This was initiated by private enterprise for girls. The practical difficulty of linguistic differences which was cited as a justification in itself reflected the communal stress - Urdu was the language of Muslims and Hindi was the language of Hindus. The fact that educational enterprise/entrepreneurship regarding women's education concentrated on the higher levels of education is significant. Women's educational institutions were probably also envisaged as an ideal avenue for consolidating and gaining political control.

On the other hand, a communal orientation would naturally prompt a stress on what were considered the ideals of a community. It is an improbable supposition that the pardā ideology would not get a strong impetus in such an educational programme amongst both the communities of Hindus and Muslims.

It is, however, imperative to point out that while education was considered a novelty for males and the majority could not hope for it, its necessity for girls was not visualized. However, as education gained in importance in the colonial set-up and contributed a major dimension to the complex of status an educated wife was more likely to keep pace socially with the educated bread-winner, though this consciousness again cannot be generalised to all classes. While issues of a possible employment for women outside the home were also mentioned, the demands on a woman's role did not change. Rather they were modified to enable an educated compliance with the role that the woman was socio-culturally destined for. In passing it could be added that biologically the woman was destined for motherhood and wifehood, the man too was destined for fatherhood or being a husband but these dimensions of the male were never emphasized. Also, nature never laid terms of the essentiality of realising these roles. Thus pardā was a socio-cultural device to enable an educated mind to willingly and consciously comply with the demands of her familial role and see it as of primary importance.

The dialectics of women's education and pardā in the early half of the 20th century in U.P. did not in quantitative terms, leave the province hobbling educationally on one leg. However, qualitatively in terms of the motivations, manifestations and goals, the stamp of the socio-cultural factors, specifically pardā, on the education of Hindu and Muslim women explicitly manifested itself in terms of inadequate education as well as a carefully streamlined education, and implicitly guided it, in terms of the attitude of society to woman's education.

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(D) In November 1983, I also paid a brief visit to the National Archives, Delhi, State Archives U.P., Lucknow to ascertain sources for data on women's education in U.P. Data were collected from Nehru Memorial Museum Library, Central Secretariat Library, Rattan-Tata Library, Central Library, Delhi University, Association of Indian Universities Library, Ncert Library, NIEPA Library, American Library, British Council Library, ICSSR Library, IIPA Library and J.N.U. Library.

