

PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY OF KOREA: A CASE STUDY ON KOREAN COMFORT WOMEN

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

MAHALAT SAOM FUDONG



**KOREAN STUDIES DIVISION
CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI**

2014

जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI- 110 067 (INDIA)

Phone : 91-11-2670 4346
FAX : 91-11-2670 4346

25 July, 2014

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Patriarchal Society of Korea: A Case Study on Korean Comfort Women**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

Mahalat. S. Fudong
Mahalat Saom Fudong

CERTIFICATE

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

Vara Prasad Sekhar
28/7/14
Dr. Vara Prasad Sekhar

Chairperson, CEAS



Chairperson
Centre for East Asian Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Jitendra Uttam
Prof. Jitendra Uttam

Supervisor



Supervisor
Centre For East Asian Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

***FOR
PAPA AND AMA***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jitendra Uttam, for giving me the opportunity to work on this theme for my dissertation, and for having faith in me throughout the two years that were needed to complete the work.

I thank the University Grants Commission for financial assistance under their Rajiv Gandhi fellowship program that went a long way in the undertaking, and completion of this dissertation. Library work is integral to any kind of academic research and I was very lucky to have had access to some of the best of them. I express my sincerest gratefulness to the staff at the Central Library.

The challenge of doing research has its share of highs and lows and the cheerful presence of friends is uplifting and motivating. Vizzy didi, my sister and friend I thank you for your constant support and moving words of encouragement, without which this dissertation would not have seen the light of day. I think of all the times you told me not to give up and it helps calm my nerves under challenging situations, not only relating to my work, but in life, generally. I could not have done without the presence of Intakhab Alam, thank you for always having a solution ready for anything and everything! A special 'thank you' is also extended to Smyrna though you were far away, i really appreciate your support and for always being around and Naro, for her jovial appearances every now and then, when the chips tended to be on the downside. Despite the pressures and challenges of her own work, Jina was a true pillar of support and I can never thank her enough for that. My roommate Shreeranjana at various stages in these two years, were instrumental in helping me keep my focus on the work at hand and I am truly grateful for

everything you have done for me. I was also helped along by the wise and friendly advice from Pradyumna (paddy) when many things not only at my work but also when challenges in my life were testing my patience. The invaluable support and show of solidarity from him was heartwarming.

I also extend my earnest appreciation to Priya and Edna for being the kind of friends they have been. 'Thank you' is but a phrase for everything that my friends have helped add to my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

Maps

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION	07-13
1.1 Background	07-09
1.2 Definition, Rationality and Scope of the Study	09-10
1.3 Research Questions	10
1.4 Literature Review	11-12
1.4.1 Gaps in Literature	12
1.5 Research methodology	12
1.6 Hypothesis	12
1.6.1 Chapters	13

Chapter II

PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY OF KOREA	15- 27
2.1 Introduction	15-16
2.2 Korean Confucianism	16-17
2.3 Women Status during Choson Period	17-18

2.4 Women Status in Japanese Labor Market	18-19
2.5 Kinship Custom	19-20
2.6 Women and Poverty in Korea	20-21
2.7 Comfort Women during Japanese Period	21-22
2.8 Kiseang Business	22-23
2.9 Comfort women in U.S Occupation period	23-24
2.10 Confucianism and Women in Korea	24-26
2.11 Conclusion	27

Chapter III

THE ROLE OF THE ELITES (YANG BANS)	29-38
3.1 Introduction	29
3.2 Yi Dynasty of Korea	30
3.3 Civil Service Examination	31
3.4 Yi Dynasty and Confucianism	32-34
3.5 The Social Status of Women in Yi Korea	34-36
3.6 Yang Bans and the Comfort Women	36-37
3.7 Conclusion	38

Chapter IV

KOREAN WOMEN STATUS IN JAPANESE MILITARY ARMY

	40-
54	

4.1 Introduction	40-
41	
4.2 Korean Women During the Late Colonial Period	41-42
4.3 Chongsindae, The Voluntary Labor Service Corps	42-43
4.4 The Nature of Comfort Stations	43-47
4.5 Japanese and Korean Comfort Women	47-49
4.6 Social Reparation and Redress Movement	49-51
4.7 Asian Women's Fund	51-
53	
4.8 Sexual Slave Practice in Korea	53
4.9 Conclusion	53-
54	
Chapter V	
CONCLUSION	56-
59	

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND:

Women status have been focused from various theories in International Relation and in the case of Korean Comfort Women, it is one of the prominent issue which is highlighted by the Feminist scholars. The term 'sexuality' was a topic which was never discussed in Korea until 1938 with the rise of Korean feminist movement things started to change and attitude towards it changed in 1980. This lack of interest among the Korean scholars can be attributed to the philosophical and unique cultural system of Korea brought by their belief in Confucianism. Since the ideology of Confucianism is characterized by extreme sexual segregation and double standard of sexuality morality. Looking into the female sexuality from the feminist perspective it has described sexuality as the socio historical construction. The introduction of Neo Confucianism during the *Chosen* period the culture of Korea was deeply influenced. Since the ideology of Neo Confucianism was an ideology of change. This ideology of Neo Confucianism affected the Korean women society a lot and it also clearly stated the hierarchal order of the sexes which brought a strong distinction between the status of men and women. Women were accorded to the lowest section of the society. The sexual related problems in Korea was taken seriously only in the late 1980s when several rape cases along with the rise of the Feminist movement brought some changes into an epoch making transition. Though a lot of such movements did exist before like the family law revision movement (1960s to 1980s), the Nationalist Liberation movement (1920s) but they were not as genuine as other organizations as the Women's Hot Line (1982), Korean Women link (1983) etc. who came together and jointly made efforts to help the victims. The organizations were not systematic to deal with the numerous cases of sexual violence hence they formed a coalition and in 1992 to put forward a special act on sexual violence. However regarding the relation between the feminist movement and the Confucian discourse the former always criticized the latter but regarding some conception like the chastity ideology, the double standard of sexuality the former always used to promote changes in the law and helped the victims of sexual violence. Despite the differences between feminism and Confucianism yet there exist alliances that could make serious effect in the feminist movement

The term '*Comfort Women*' is the translation of Japanese word '*ianfu*' pronounced as '*Wainbu*' in Korean. They are usually referred to young girls and women approximately 200,000 who were taken as sex slaves to military brothels by the Japanese Government during the 2nd World War. Recollected from some information it is known that these Comfort Women were often treated as military equipments and were shipped from various Asian countries to the battlefield. There are numerous reasons that explain the establishment of these military brothels, as per the historians and the archival research details it has been pointed out that the Comfort Stations were established in order to prevent the occurrence of disorganized rape, particularly after the mass rapes in Chinese city of Nanjing during the six week Japanese invasion. The Japanese encountered sexually transmitted disease problems and for the secure future the comfort stations were established throughout the Japanese occupied areas in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover it is also believed that in order to provide comfort to the Japanese soldiers and to control discontent among soldiers such stations were institutionalized.

For decades Japan stood successful to prove that its military never enslaved foreign women in brothels until some survivors along with some Korean women leaders brought this issue to the attention of U.N in 1992. Japan denied the truth of kidnapping foreign women and forcing them to serve in the military brothels until one of the Japanese historian Yoshiaki Yoshimi discovered at the archives of the Self Defense Army Library an uncovered official document that contained information of the Japanese military government's involvement in the establishment and processing of these military brothels along. The document showed that it was a highly developed system that was carefully operated since 1938 and employed women from Philippines, Indonesia, China but the majority of these women were unmarried young women from Korea, Japan's colony at that time. The Japanese women were also employed in these military brothels but compared to the others these Japanese comfort women had better facilities and were not ill-treated as the others.

The main motive behind the annexation of Korea by the Japanese government was to use the former as the invaluable source of mineral resources, cheap labor and hydroelectricity during its military expansion in Manchuria. Korea was referred to as the 'base of war supplies' by the Japanese imperialist. However Imperial Japan tried to erase entirely everything from Korea and imposed a stern rule that everything

should be Japanese. Hence Korea was left with nothing, even the lands were taken away and poverty all over the country started increasing rapidly. Women were lured by high officials promising them jobs whereas some of them were sold and mobilized to these military brothels. The Japanese officials instead of sympathizing with the women denied that military had organized or administered such kind of brothels. Moreover they considered that the 1951 San Francisco Treaty of peace had already considered the issue of reparation.

The more Japan tried to deny the more women came out to speak about their experience. The truth about forcing the women into the brothels were proved true when a Japanese living in the Tokyo suburbs of Abiko, Seiji Yoshida appeared numeral times on the Television in the summer of 1992 to prove what he had written in a book in 1983, long before this issue became the major political issue. He confessed that he was hired in Yamaguchi to lead the Korean police to raid the villages and select the women. However the Japanese officials denied that there is no document to prove his testimonial and that these young women voluntarily joined in, while some of them were sold by their family members and the Korean brokers.

Though the Japanese government denies its legal responsibility, the government in 1995 on the 50th anniversary of the end of Asia Pacific War established the Asian Women's Fund to fulfill its responsibility for the wartime '*Comfort Women*'. However the Japanese Government has been criticized that it has not genuinely apologized and has not compensated the victims adequately. Though the "Statement by President Tomiichi Murayama' of Asian Women's Fund, on Aug 4th1993, the Chief Cabinet Secretary expressed the Japanese government's sincere feelings of apology and remorse". An apology that came from the highest levels of the Japanese Government was all that the Comfort women wanted and not from the Lower-level Officials. They talk about the apology made by the Prime Minister Murayama in 1995 where he expressed his 'feelings of deep remorse' and his 'heartfelt apology' for every damage the Japanese brought during the Second World War but it was not a specifically directed to the Comfort women.

Moreover the fund provided by the Japanese government was the money financed by the Japanese people donation and it was also contributed by the medical and welfare support projects financed by the disbursements from the Japanese government .Hence

the funds compensated by the Japanese Government through this fund raiser was rejected by some of the Comfort Women, who were only keen in accepting the sincere apology from the Government high officials and not the money.

The issue of this past memory stirred up in 2007, when Japanese Prime Minister Abe denied that the Comfort Women were not coerced by the Japanese military. He was supported by more than few politicians, though research since 1999 has been trying to prove that the establishment of these military brothels was fully and systematically operated by the Japanese government. However the Ultra rightist groups have been trying to erase these researches but the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility felt that erasing such researches and Japanese government ignoring such issue would discredit the Japanese people in the eyes of the international community.

This lead to the public appeal on the issue of the Japan's Military Comfort Women by the JWRC on February 23, 2007. The Japanese media ignored such efforts of researches and groups like JWRC, for which the group had to call for a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan in April 19, 2007. However the Japanese media paid little attention but could not completely ignore it.

Today both the Governments are trying to put aside their historical issues and make efforts to improve their economic relation. Both plan to try working out and come into terms with history and stay focused on sharing a vision for the future .Although the economic reconciliation only offer a slight possibility for the two hostile countries. The '*Comfort Women*' issue has become one of the essential and interesting project in the international scenario as it provides the information of valuable insight into the themes of historical past injustice and in addition helps to understand in a better way the reconciliation as a mutual, interactive concept within the northeast region.

1.2 DEFINATION, RATIONALITY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

1. Generally *Gender* denotes the biological sex of individual, however according to the Feminist theory *Gender* is defined as a set of socially and culturally constructed characteristics such as power, autonomy, rationality and public. So looking through

this perspective, Korea was a weak state which was socially constructed. The research aims to study the colonization of Korea from gender perspective.

2. The research aims to study the vital role of the patriarchal system in Korea and the hands of the elite class(Yangban) in this Comfort women Tragedy.

3. It also aims to focus on the policies the Korean government is undertaking to support this issue (comfort Women).

1.3 Research Questions:

1. How can a feminist theory explain the issue of comfort women?
2. How did the patriarchal system affect the Korean women during the Japanese occupation? What is the relation of poverty in this system?
3. Is comfort woman a part of war crime? How are human rights movements supporting the feminist movement in Korea?
4. What is the role played by the elite group(Yangban) during this period?
5. Is the Korean Government supporting this social issue? What steps are been taken to provide justice to the individuals?
6. What is the current status in Korea regarding this historical past crime (Comfort Women)?

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW:

Nicole Henry in the article, 'Memory of Injustice: The 'Comfort Women' and the Legacy of the Tokyo Trial', argues the proceedings of the Tokyo Trail regarding the Historical War Crimes conducted in order to provide justice to the war victims and how it changes over the passage of time. The author focuses on the human rights and the serious violation of Humanitarian Law and stresses on the viewpoint on how the past memory of war crimes records are referred in order to provide justice to the victims

Healing Multidimensional Wounds of Injustice, Intersectionality and the Korean Comfort Women, the author Michele Park Sonen discusses the Redress movement and emphasizes on this movement's essential goal that is Social Healing, a way of repairing the wounds of the of individual and the way to heal the damage done to the society. The author discusses the intersection of race and gender. The gender inequality is overlooked and emphasis is given more on the changing behavior of the redress movement into social healing movement. The liberal values of freedom, tolerance, equality and individual rights are given less importance by the author in this article.

Paul Ruth Gilbert interprets Nora Okja Keller's novel 'Comfort Women' and in the article 'The Violated Female Body as Nation: Cultural, Familial and Spiritual Identity', the author analyses how the women body is used as an object to give society its identity. The author emphasis on the rights of human and the violation of the Humanitarian Law during the Sex Slave Trial in Dec 2000 in Tokyo. The author uses the Feministic viewpoint to bring into focus the view of 'Gender' where she describes the domination of male (Japan) represented by its Japanese military over the dominated conquered female (Korea) represented by its women and their bodies.

Hirofumi Hayashi in his article, 'Disputes in Japan over the Japanese military 'Comfort Women' system and its perception in history' discusses the denial of the Japanese of their involvement in the cruel military brothels during the Asia Pacific War period. The author also argues how Japan under the Leadership of Prime

Minister Abe attempt to reconcile the bilateral ties with Korea and China without a formal State apology and individual compensation to the victims. The Gender Inequality and the Right of Women or the Human Rights are given less importance in this article. Although the article talks about the apologies in a lesser depth yet it is more focused on the reconciliation of Japan with the East Asian neighboring countries.

Human Rights and The Comfort Women, Chunghee Sarah Son in this article analyses the criticism of the Asian Women fund by the Feminist activist. The author also talks about the Traditional Elitism behavior in Korea by focusing on how the Feminine activist robs off the Comfort women's right to Self determination regarding the AWF. The author from the civic nationalist viewpoint focuses more on the individual rights and equality whereas neglects the Gender perspective.

E.Tammy Kim through the liberalistic view where it has been stated that each man has a natural right to life, liberty and property the author discusses the kind of reparation that the former Comfort Women would want from the Japanese Government. The author does not use the feminist view 'Gender' which is one of the reasons behind the miserable lives of the Comfort women. The article analysis the mode of reparation in a deeper way and gives less importance to the other side issues interlinked to this social issue.

1.4.1 Gaps in the literature

Most of the literature has been selective in their case studies (Korean Comfort Women). The Japanese women were also employed in these military brothels but the Comfort women issues have overlap the understanding of human rights violation.

United Nations Commission Human Rights (UNCHR) documents are highlighted by the Korean people in the issues of Comfort women but no one has focused on the behaviour of Korean elites (*yangban*) in the process of comfort women.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study shall entail a deductive analysis examining the general information provided about the Comfort Women and then tries to come to a more specific conclusion, by testing hypotheses with certain data leading to confirmation of the theory applied.

Comparative methods since both the Korean Comfort Women and other Asian Comfort Women are seen as the victims. All of them were employed as sexual slaves in the military brothels by the Japanese military during the Pacific war. Moreover all were forcibly abducted by the Japanese military as they were the colonies of Japanese government during that period.

The data and information shall be collected from the secondary sources like books, articles, magazines ,newspapers and reports which contain the interviews of the victims and information. The quantitative approach will be helpful in this research. Feminist theory will be used to analyze the gender debate and the issues of Comfort women in Korea.

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

The practice of masculinity (patriarchal system) in Korea is the root cause of social injustice in Korean society (Comfort Women).

Gender along with poverty enforced the Korean Women to work as military slaves during the Japanese colonial period in the Japanese military brothels.

1.6.1 CHAPTER 1

The chapter is the brief description about the Korean Comfort women. It gives the background of this social issue which has still been barrier between the two countries Japan and Korea. The chapter has also discussed the Feminist viewpoint regarding this inhuman act of the Japanese Military Army towards the Comfort Women

especially the Korean Young girls who were abducted as sexual slaves during the war time period.

1.6.2 CHAPTER 2

The chapter discusses about the influence of Confucianism and explains in detail the main practice of patriarchy especially the male domination practice in the East Asian Countries. The Korean Comfort Women case has been used as a set of example to discuss the status of women. The chapter has looked into how Korea has been affected after its annexation in 1910 by the Japanese. The poverty that increased during the colonial occupation period among the Korean civilians and which forced young girls to work for their living in factories and later as sexual slaves in the Japanese military army during the pacific war. The main focus of the chapter deals with the interconnection relation between Confucianism, Patriarchal practice, Korea's Japanese occupation period, poverty, women status and Korean Comfort Women.

1.6.3 CHAPTER 3

Korea was a hermit kingdom before it was annexed by the Imperial Japanese. The ruling class of Korea was the Yang bans before the colonial occupation period. The Chapter discusses in detail about the Yang bans and mainly deals with the status of Yang ban women and how were they treated by the elite male mates. Though the role of the Yang bans hardly influenced the recruitment of young Korean girls for the military comfort stations during the colonial period yet their patriarchy practice became the major support for the processing of these comfort stations in every war zone area and where the Japanese army were deployed.

1.6.4 CHAPTER 4

The chapter discusses the colonial Japanese rule in Korea in detail and their dealing with the Korean Women especially their inhuman nature towards the Young Korean girls who were lured into false employment whereas they deployed them along with their arm forces in the war stricken areas to work as sexual slaves in the Comfort stations. The Comfort women were also the experienced and professional Japanese prostitutes so the chapter deals the comparative study between the Japanese and Korean Comfort women.

1.6.5 CHAPTER 5

The chapter is the conclusion drawn from the research done in each of the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 2

PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY OF KOREA

2.1 Introduction:

Patriarchal System of a society generally means the domination by someone superior. It is a structural violence where the power is exercised unjustly by one category of the social actors against others such as created in organized social hierarchal relations fathers against daughters, husbands against wives or power elites against ethnic minorities. In Korea each legal family had a head of the family in its familial hierarchy and the rest of them are under the authority of the head. As the author Eunkang Koh says, a family registration system known as *Hoju* system was introduced in 1953 under the Civil Law, and ‘All the members of the family were registered under *Hoju* or the Family Head, thus Family consists of the Family Head and the other members.’¹ The *Hoju* system was considered incompatible in 2005 by the constitution law and thus was abolished in 2008.

Patriarchalism was reinforced in East Asian especially South Korea during the *Choson* period (1392-1910) which was brought through the beliefs derived from the teachings of Confucian and the patriarchal system flourished and developed in its own unique features along with the Confucian beliefs. Although the origins of this system dated back to the social and historical conditions two millennia before it became prominent during the late *Choson* period. The term Confucianism according to *Insook Han Park* and *Lee Jay Cho* in their article ‘Confucianism and the Korean Family’ referred it as a popular value system of China, Korea and Japan which is derived from the synthesis of the traditional cultural values espoused by Confucius. Confucianism is not a religion but it is a political and ethical system advocating the creation of a new, orderly and harmonious society. The authority of the ruler was based on virtue and love of humanity whereas the general public was taught to be completely submissive to accept the ruler’s authority and to maintain power behavior.

According to the author Young-Hee Shim in her article ‘Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes’ says that “Although Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism regard union between men (Yang) and women (Yin) as the

¹ Eunkang Koh, 2008, *Gender Issues and Confucian Scripture: Is Confucianism Incompatible with Gender Equality In South Korea?* Pp 346.

roots of all human relations, human morality and the socialization process, it calls for a clear hierarchal orders of the sexes.....it thus accords women an inferior position.”²

Hence this strict Confucian patriarchal system placed women at the bottom of the strict social hierarchy who received no education and women were virtually bonded to abide by the ‘rules of three obedience’ to be subordinate to father before marriage, husband after marriage and sons after husband dies. In this respect Confucianism is viewed as a familial religion and it seems that no cultures have ever placed such emphasis on the family as have the Confucianist cultures of East Asia.

The current chapter traces the importance of Patriarchal System in Korea and its role played in the life of the Korean Comfort Women. It also discusses the influence of Confucianism and whether or not any attempts were made in order to Koreanize the Confucius beliefs. The chapter shall deal with the status of women in Korea, how women were treated during the *Koryo*, *Choson* periods and it shall also study the standard (comfort Women) Korean women were kept during the Japanese and the U.S occupation period. The chapter shall look into how poverty in Korea during the occupation period encouraged in the establishment of comfort station for the Japanese military army. Thereafter taking into account some articles the chapter shall try to look into the interpretation made by various authors regarding the comfort women. In the concluding section the chapter will discuss the actual reason behind the suffering of the surviving victims of this comfort station.

2.2 KOREAN CONFUCIANISM:

The trace of Confucian influence in Korea has a long history. Its goes back to the time when the peninsula was found and the states were formed in it. The influence was probably since the time the Koreans started using the writing scripts as the Confucian precepts were used as the object of study by the Korean elites or nobles in the court³. It was always that the ruling class of the country that was influenced by the Confucian classics as it acquired the knowledge of history and literature that is considered to be the most necessary concept for forming a government. Though the influence was

² Young Hee Shim,2001, *Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes*,pp.135

³ Key P. Yang and Gregory Henderson, 1958, *An outline history of Korean Confucianism*, pp 81

continuously affecting the peninsula but it was not pervasive. However the influence became intense over the government and society during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and by sixteenth century it had fully dominated the entire thought and philosophy of the Korean society. During the latter periods Confucianism and Korea was so interlinked that the history of Korea was incomplete without Confucianism. The Yi rule in Korea was the longest rule in the history of Korea and it was during this period that the greatness of Confucianism was greatly felt. Confucianism became the chief intellectual concern in the whole era though there were some shortcomings yet it was successfully followed as one of the religion.

After the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 Confucianism was deprived and it no longer dominated the Korean society however though it was deeply weakened the ideology of Confucianism did not die out completely. The Confucian thought was maintained in some degree like in functioning of family relations and in dealing with the community structure as all these fell out from the political and administrative realm of the state.⁴ The Confucian association after 1945 and Japan's surrender realized that its effectiveness quickly crippled as there was rise in Factionalism. The damage caused by Factionalism never allowed Confucianism to achieve its influence. Though it was regarded as an ancient philosophical tradition but after Korea's independence it could no longer make an impact on the national intellectual life of Korea. In addition to it the influence of western ideas in the country allowed only a limited role for the Confucianism.

There were certain modification in the Confucian ideology after it was introduced in Korea like the central familial relationship is not just the relation between wife and husband but rather between parent and child, moreover the relationships between family members are characterized more like authority and obedience rather than based on mutual love and equality. It was more like the authority was vested upon the male head and there were differences in status among the family members.

2.3 Women Status during the *Choson* period:

In Korea the customs of family drastically changed during the *Choson* period, as the Neo-Confucian belief entered Korea in the late 14th century. Korea by the 17th century

⁴ Yi Myonggu and William A. Douglas, 1967, *Korean Confucianism Today*, pp 44.

dramatically transformed with the dominant Neo-Confucian ideology. The native practices were altered with Confucian traditions, hence ancestral worship were given more emphasis. Although there was equality among the sons and daughters in regard to inheriting the property during the *Koryo* dynasty (918- 1392) and the early *Choson* period things changed. The hierarchical relationship was strictly observed between husband and wife in Korean families during the *Choson* period. The father and son relation was equal to the king and his subjects' relation. In an exemplary manner the woman had to sacrifice herself to serve her husband and family.⁵ Traditionally in the Confucian belief ancestors are highly regarded as a deity, the ancestral worship is encouraged which clearly depicted a special ritual and spiritual bondage of that of a father and son.⁶ Hence in the Korean family during the *Choson* dynasty period sons were always preferred over daughters. If a wife bore no son it was common for the couple to adopt one or for the husband to keep a concubine. The crimes committed by the wife against her husband, by son against his father or by the slave against his master all were punished in a same way. When a husband died the wife and her son had to observe a mourning period of three years. The eldest son was favored as a valuable gem and he was also the only one allowed to perform all the rituals.

There was gradual shift from equal distribution to unequal division and the eldest son was made the chosen head of the heir. The women's activities were mostly restricted to the home, they were not allowed to appear in public places without a veil and they were not allowed to take any part in any social role. Especially women of the *Yangban* family during this dynasty were not even allowed to talk to any men except to the close male relatives and after marriage she was not allowed to walk out of the house without her husband's permission. They were thoroughly discriminated at home, for they were given inauspicious names or names that reflected their parent's disappointment. Moreover the women were totally restrained to inherit a property of their own and which made them solely dependent on the male society all through their lives. The share of inheritance due to unmarried daughters was always given to the eldest son, who would pay for the daughters' wedding when they get married. However even though women were given a share of the family property at the time of

⁵ Insook Han Park and Lee Jay Cho, 1995, *Confucianism and the Korean Family*, pp 124.

⁶ Insook Han Park and Lee Jay Cho, 1995, *Confucianism and the Korean Family*, pp 118

marriage but it was never considered as an inheritance and their portion was smaller than sons' share. Women were powerless; they had no choices in marriage whereas men had every legal right to abandon their unwanted wives. Korean women were the most oppressed social class in the Korean society during the *Choson* dynasty. There were customs where a woman were required to be a domestic slave sacrificing everything just to earn a membership in her husband's family but women always felt that in every woman's successful career it is as important as to be a successful wife and a mother.

Korea had totally absorbed the patrilineal structure of the society by 17th century. The marriages during the Three Kingdom period and the *Koryo* period were free; couples could make their own choice. In contrast, during the *Choson* dynasty very strict rules were imposed on marriages. All marriages were arranged and there was four rites to be performed in the process of marriage as prescribed in *Mungung Karae*.⁷ The marriages were forbidden between relatives having the same family name and the same domicile, between the upper class and the commoners, between different factions, between officials and girls or women released from the court and with the offspring of traitors. Divorce during this period was rarely permitted but only in unavoidable cases. Men were the only ones allowed to file the divorce petition and the husband's prerogative in seeking divorce was honored whereas the wife's interest was not taken into consideration. All the seven reasons for permitting divorce were related to the maintenance of family order and male authority. As such divorce was a means of protecting the feudal family system. Though the Korean society was already a patrilocal and patrilineal formed society for past few hundred years but it was only the misinterpretation made with Japan's dealing of Korean Confucian ritual that proclaimed it to be the distorter.

2.4 Women Status in Japanese Labor Market:

In the labor markets the patriarchal domination of men were clearly observed in Korea. According to the gender ideology of the Confucian belief women were considered to be secondary than men. Though the system usually means the domination of women and children by the male section in a society yet in broader

⁷ Insook Han Park and Lee Jay Cho, 1995, *Confucianism and the Korean Family*, pp. 127

sense it also implies in social relation like in adult-child, senior-junior, employer-employee, teacher-student relations. Confucianism places the concept of family as the fundamental unit of society, incorporating the economic functions of production and consumption as well as the social functions of education and socialization guided by moral and ethical principles. The social hierarchy and the divisions between women and men were also practiced during the Japanese period in the labor market program. During the Japanese occupation period the social hierarchy was mostly observed between the Koreans who were considered to have come from low race with the Japanese, the high class people. The Koreans were to serve as the promoters and defenders of the Japanese emperor with total devotion of mind, body and spirit. However a public education system was also introduced during this occupation period and children from well to-do Korean families attended these schools in order to avoid any conflict with the Japanese government. Though the Confucian paternalism supported the colonial education but these schools were more like training and selecting institutions for future soldiers, producers and reproducers. In such an environment the patriarchal system of gender fully processed in such schools. The classrooms were gender segregated and gender specific. Females were assigned to clean Shinto shrines and had to sew supplies for the military whereas males worked in construction projects.

During the second Sino-Japanese war many young Korean females were recruited for the labor market and they were among the first to diverge from traditional roles. Many Korean women after marriage who held a college degree had to stay back home jobless because upon marrying in a patriarchal society like Korea the woman were expected to retire from most corporate sector jobs. However this system affected women's position not only in labor market but in the labor process as well. During the rapid economic development of Korea under the authoritarian regimes the practice of women domination by the male counterparts was very much followed. Women even suffered a lot from sexual harassment and abuse by her male co-workers. There was a discriminatory practice against women in hiring, pay and promotion. Women because of economic necessity almost took jobs outside their work place even though the status did not necessarily affect the male dominant authority structure of the family. In Korea this system of patriarchal system in labor control is largely found in the Korean companies. The main root or the laying foundation of this practice is likely to have

come from the strong Confucian values. However the combination of this cultural context with the information technology surveillance resulted in a strong form of labor control which strictly ignored the worker's privacy or restricted the worker's autonomy. However as Korea began to modernize, little changes took place regarding this patriarchal social discrimination between two sexes. In Korea it was during the rapid industrialization military kind of labor control prevailed in the Korean companies. Though it led to improvements in women's education and labor force participation rate but it did alter the economic status of the Korean women and their economic role in the family. This system squeezed workers through long working hours, low wages, and harsh working conditions and treated human being as a part of production machine. The government of Korea maintained this military like labor control through patriarchal ideology by controlling the factory workers to achieve rapid industrialization. This form of military form of controlling under the authoritarian state created a military camp like where the owner was treated as a 'big father'. The military control system and the verbal abuses, hitting and kicking seems to have been disappeared but the patriarchal system of hierarchal relation based on the strong ideology of Confucian belief continues to function in the Korean companies.

2.5 Kinship Custom:

In the practice of Kinship in daily life it was traditionally assumed by the father's relatives. Until 1960s this tendency continued in the rural areas among the older generation and the *Yangban* class considered the father's kin as more important than the mother's. Korean families maintained the kinship system until 17th century that distinguished between the mother and father decedents. However the changes took place during the Choson dynasty and this tendency of honoring only the father descendants became more prevalent during the latter phase⁸. The ancestral worship, the Confucian tradition still continues in the rural Korea but the system of honoring only the father's kin is weakened. However the patrilineal succession remains dominant and there is limit to the tendency toward bilateral kinship relation. Regardless of whether separate households are maintained for the parents and the eldest son, the relationship between parents and children is based on mutual reliance

⁸ Insook Han Park and Lee Jay Cho, 1995, *Confucianism and the Korean family*.

Pp131

and most children plan to rejoin their parents when they become too old to care for themselves. Even though industrialization has caused urban families to evolve into the nuclear type, parents and their grown children still depend on each other to a great extent. Gradually there are signs that are showing the tradition of Kinship getting weaker and fading.

2.6 Comfort Women in Japanese Period:

In regard to the comfort station during the Japanese rule the issue has been highlighted only because the maximum sexual workers were young Korean girls and they were inhumanly treated by the Japanese soldiers. “Systematic provision by the military for the sexual needs of its soldiers is common and may be understood as a paternalistic practice rooted in the masculinist view of female sexuality as a commodity- a prevalent view in patriarchal societies.”(Chunghee Sarah Soh 2000). Moreover, the Japanese during their colonial rule in Korea imposed their custom of household head system which degraded women more and women lost their status and independence in the society.

As per the historical background of the sexual work in Korea this system also existed in form of state organized women entertainers called *Kisaeng* who served the government officials and due to non commercialized economy, sexual work did not develop as a specialized occupation during the Yi dynasty period(1392-1910). This system of female entertainers dated back to late 7th century but became institutionalized only during the *Koryo* period early 10th century. These *Kisaeng* women were simply not sex workers but there was hierarchy the lowest *Kisaeng* specialized in sexual work; the middle group entertained and were part time prostitutes and the highest group served higher official since they considered themselves to be exceptionally beautiful and artistic. However this *Kisaeng* became popular in late Yi dynasty period and served the agrarian elites. It was only during the Japanese rule when the war efforts intensified the women were conscripted to serve the Japanese soldiers in the war fronts. During the Japanese rule there were three distinct organizations of sexual workers, first who served the elite Japanese and Korean men, secondly the ones who served both Japanese and Korean men in urban areas and thirdly the ones who young peasant women who served the Japanese soldiers. However this sexual work reflected the male domination and the power

structure of the patriarchal system of the colonized Korean society. Since men in comparison to women have biologically rooted sexual needs as such in a society of patriarchal system it is considered natural right for men to seek sexual comfort outside marriages. The traditional sexual culture to provide a systematic provision for the military for their sexual need is common and according to masculinist view of female sexuality it is kind of paternalistic practice which is prevalent in the patriarchal societies.⁹ The submission of women to the state and the emperor under the state patriarchal system of Japan was one of the ideal reasons for the establishment of comfort station for the Japanese military soldiers.

The comfort system in the patriarchal Japanese society was conceived as an institutionalization of considerate gifts to the Emperor's warriors for recreational sex. "The patriarchal fascism of imperial Japan, for example, encompassed masculinist sexism. That is, both the wartime and contemporary statist perspectives, as well as the generalized masculinist perspectives of the military and civilians, all share a common understanding of the ultimate function of the comfort system as a recreational sexual amenity for the troops"(Chunghee Sarah Soh 2000). Since Confucian belief is the main basis for the patriarchal system and its prohibition has put women's chastity on priority which has forced women to separate themselves from their own bodies. This patriarchal system has played a vital role in the lives of the military comfort Korean women and the survivors were forced to keep silent from speaking about their work as a sexual slave in the Japanese military army camps for half a century. The ideology of Confucian had taught the women that chastity was more valuable than their lives as such women either submitted or became a comfort woman or they killed themselves to protect their chastity.¹⁰ The patriarchal system forced the war victims of sexual slavery either to commit suicide or to stay far away from their families because they were ashamed of the loss of their virginity which was of great importance to the Korean girls during that century. One of the reasons behind targeting the young Korean women in forcing them to work as sexual slavery in Japanese military comfort

⁹ Chunghee Sarah Soh,2000, *From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the 'comfort Women'*. Pp 63.

¹⁰ Young Hee Shim,2001,*Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes*. Pp 137

station were that the Korean young women were sexually inexperienced and as such they did not carry all the venerable diseases.

2.7 Poverty and Women in Korea:

However, not all the young Korean women were employed in these brothels but most victims were from poor Korean families, landless tenants or the jobless immigrant groups in the city. Poverty in Korea during the colonization period along with the patriarchal system helped in playing a vital role in establishing and running of these military brothels. The false promises made by the Japanese as well as the Korean officials for well paid jobs lured the young girls from these poor families into these military brothels.¹¹ Moreover, it was also known that most of the abduction of these young girls was mostly from the weaker and poorer section of the society who was helpless and powerless. After the annexation of Korea by the Japanese in 1910, the latter took control over the former with full power and authority. Though one of the main motives of Japanese behind the annexation of Korea was to provide itself as a protector but many a times it failed and violated the promise to maintain the Korean national identity. The Koreans were deprived off their economic and political rights. The Korean currency was changed and the Japanese form of banking was introduced. The Japanese through their eight yearlong of extensive land survey (1910-18) by some semi-Japanese governmental company deprived the people of their private property. The farm land fell in the hands of the landlords mostly Japanese, as a result the tax burden fell heavy on the people as the taxes were increased at the will of the corrupted officials for their own benefits. Many of the farmers were left with no lands, forcing most of the commoners to live a life of unrelenting poverty, undernourishment and hunger. Since 90% of the Korean population were depended on agriculture during the Choson period (1392-1910) the taxes and the exorbitant poverty forced the Korean farmers to end the year in deficit, they were left with no job, no land. Poverty widely spread among the rural population in Korea, which obliged the inferior section of the society, the women to join these military brothels in order to earn a living for their family. The parents were also forced to sell their daughters in exchange for money and some of the self interested local Korean civilians aided in the recruitment of these

¹¹ Pyong Gap Min, 2003, *Korean 'Comfort Women' : The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class*. Pp 945

comfort women for personal financial gain. However though poverty was just an add-on factor for the progress of these military brothels but the role played by the patriarchal system proved to be main cause of suffering for these Comfort Women.

The large recruitment of these young girls was in 1941 when Japanese army was preparing for its war with the Soviet Union. The Japanese Kwantung army requested the assistance of the colonial government general of Korea in the recruitment of twenty thousand Korean women. The government assisted by providing so called head of the townships '*myongjang*' who persuaded poor families with many children to send their young unmarried daughters to work in Japan. Hence in the social history of Korea it was not only the pimps but the state officials took part in this systematic exploitation of the powerless and most vulnerable commoners. Thus the published stories of these comfort women survivors and this tragic humiliation of women cannot solely blame the Japanese military rule. It was this system of hierarchy according to the patriarchal system and the head system image of the Japanese which had created a racial identity of the Koreans as an inferior race and condemned Korean women to the lowest level in human worthiness. The suffering of the comfort women also seemed to vary not only geographically and chronologically but with ethnicity. Some of the Japanese sex slaves led a secure life as an imperial gift serving only the officers compared to the young Korean comfort women. Prostitution is a system which includes payment for sexual union but majority of the Korean comfort women testified that they were not paid for their sexual services to the Japanese soldiers. The work of a Japanese sexual worker is not counted to be a sexual slavery but a typical life of a woman performing her role in a patriarchal society whereas in the experiences of the Korean comfort women ethnicity was the fundamental source of social discrimination. This ethnic hierarchy practiced by the Japanese at the end of the war was ruthless and cruel. The Japanese sex workers fled away with the Japanese soldier after their defeat in the war whereas the Korean were abandoned or in some cases killed. In the extreme cases the Korean women were drove into caves, trenches and bombed, burned and shot. This massacre of the Korean women provides a reflection of the military's fear of revelation of their atrocities.

2.8 Comfort Women in U.S Occupation Period:

The liberation of Korea did not liberate the Korean sexual workers. Korea also operated a military comfort station during the Korean War from 1951-53. In the Colonial period they served the Japanese and after the independence in the Post Colonial period they served the Americans.¹² Though the U.S governmental constitution outlawed prostitution legally but it still prevailed in social reality. The comfort divisions disbanded after the war but the prostitution survived in different forms to serve the U.S soldiers. The women in the Korean society were given less opportunity for employment and continued poverty in Korea forced women to sell their body to the American soldiers for money. To entertain the America soldiers the entertainers operated a variety of institutions like coffee shops, bars, dance halls and brothels in the surrounding villages near the U.S camps. The Korean government by 1962 established 'special districts' which run legalized prostitution. Though there were many more unlicensed sexual workers.

During the post colonial era when U.S took over the Japanese rule in South Korea, the first Korean Assembly founded in 1948 declared the abolition of the evil effects of the Japanese and the establishment of a Modern Liberal Democratic State. However, since Korea after half a century was experiencing such a massive freedom U.S left some of the Japanese law system intact. As such family laws along with some colonial laws continued to bind in the lives of Koreans in the post colonial era. Though the Koreans wanted to take a break from the past yet the family law was seen as a way in restoring their lost identity. The tradition in the traditional Korean family served as a perfect way for the state's need to restore the authentic Korean Culture. However the constitutional ideals were different from the rule of a family yet the traditional Japanese version of male head system was viewed as the key component in Korean nuclear family system. Although in the initial phase the U.S tried to control the prostitution rather than suppressing it because the U.S officials were firmly convinced that the Korean women were ridden with terrible disease due to the absence of unhealthy practices of the comfort stations. The Korean government in the name of the national security promoted policies that exploited the lives of the Korean women. Hence despite the official illegality of domestic prostitution the Korean

¹² John Lie, 1995, *The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th Century Korea*. Pp 316.

government actively regulated the prostitution around the U.S military camps. Beside the U.S military the women entertainers or the traditional Kisaeng restaurants continued to serve the government and business elites in the 1950s and 1960s. The female sex work remained underdeveloped since more of the feudal relation like the concubines was more important during that period in 1950s.

The military prostitution centered on the U.S camp in South Korea has brought about a subgenre of literary works known as “camp town literature”. The majority of camp town literary texts authored by men are masculinist national allegories: Korean female sex workers catering to the Americans are figured as a nation violated. However the camp town itself serves as a metaphorical site of U.S hegemony over South Korea. The masculinist, nationalist camp town literature that protests the foreign domination however does not concern itself with the realities of these women’s lives. After the war the country was devastated and there was shortage of commodities so many of these goods were made available by women trafficking of their bodies. The close proximity between the female body and commodities and their materials profitability suspends the abstract metaphorization of woman’s body as a site of (masculinist) national victimhood.

However soon after the Korean war in 1950-53 women experienced an unprecedented freedom, the war brought dissolution of the traditional extended family and generally weakened the patriarchy authority in the post Korean war era. The widows who found themselves still having to support their families despite the conclusion of the war contributed to the continued sense of women’s paradoxical empowerment outside the domestic sphere. Moreover the Syngman Rhee government despite its corrupted and inefficient governing quickly organized South Korean society at a various levels including those associated with women bolstering the perception of a rehabilitated patriarchal national authority. Anti communism occurred in the post war South Korean society and the women’s issue were a part of this general trend. In the post-war era in South Korea the women’s economic and social role set out a different path when the triple alliance among patriarchy, the authoritarian state and the hegemony of U.S led global capital was formed. However in mid 1960s when the Park Chun Hee’s regime began to comply with the U.S design of Northeast Asia as an economic region, the South Korean state came to play the crucial role of an “active agent in structuring the exploitation” of female labor. The export oriented, light industry based

industrialization under the Park's regime during the transition of South Korea young female labor aged in their teens and early to mid twenties and from rural background were massively mobilized. Women contributed significantly to the state revenue and became the backbone of the nation's economic revolution. By the 1970s when women constituted the majority of laborers and union activists and when women dominated the light industry that was the major export led industry, gender issues was marginalized by the left labor movement. This issue was further exacerbated in late 1970s and 1980s when South Korea transitioned to heavy industry. Though the left faced the reality of women's presence in their midst, their subordination of women under the movement continued to be sustained by the patriarchalist conception of class as a masculine category and the equation of productivity with masculinity. However the patriarchal domestic space becomes the convergent basis upon which the South Korean state joins with the encroaching neocolonial force. Though women's work supports the national economy and global capital yet it is consistently subsumed under women's familial, affective- maternal, wifely and sisterly –ties.

2.9 Kisaeng Business:

Despite the freedom the women in South Korea experienced after the war the military sex workers continued to generate revenue for the state in the 1960s and 1970s along with sex workers in Kisaeng tourism, targeted at Japanese businessmen and in domestic prostitution industries. Hence Korean women in all sphere of life at all stages have been equally and differently exploited by patriarchy, the authoritarian state and the neocolonial capital. The policies and practices of military prostitution in South Korea were erected and deployed through the two phases of colonization. U.S continued what was left behind by the Japanese colonial rulers and the only difference was the former adopted policies to control STDs. The official abolition of prostitution another form of control similar to licensing was put into place with the assistance of Korea's elite leaders.¹³ Though many feminist scholars often emphasize on policies that seek to prohibit the prostitution yet this case seems to be complicated. South Korean policymakers are divided between those who sought to abolish this system and the ones who follows the Japanese model of regulated interaction between

¹³ Na Young Lee, 2007, *The Construction of Military Prostitution in South Korea during the U.S Military Rule, 1945-1948*. Pp 456.

soldiers and local women, using women body to protect the country and in general the Korean society by limiting prostitution to restricted areas directly around the bases and to women who have been marked by their employment there so that they will not easily, if ever, be integrated back into Korean society more broadly.

2.10 Confucianism and women in Korea:

Confucianism the base for the patriarchal system in Asia created a cultural double standard. It prohibited women's chastity and forced women to separate themselves from their own bodies. Women were not allowed to speak about their own sexuality. This was one reason why Korean comfort women suffered in patriarchal society, they were silenced for half a century. Confucianism had taught the comfort women that chastity was more valuable than their own lives. So after the war as they were ashamed of the loss of their virginity the survivors of the sexual slavery or several former comfort women either committed suicide or stayed away from their own families and lived in a lone place. A 'Namun House' was built in 1992 in the suburbs of Seoul to care a handful of these frequently ill elderly comfort women and in 1995 the House of Sharing was built on a piece of land donated by Korea's *Jogye* Buddhist order located on the outskirts of *Gwangju*, in *Gyeonggi* Province. The house includes a lecture hall, an outdoor entertainment stage and the museum of sexual slavery by the Japanese military. The museum was built in 1998. Outside the doors are rows of wood blocks engraved with the Japanese names given to sex slaves.



These women in order to enumerate their experiences took the means of songs which allowed them to express themselves precisely without explicitly divulging their past. The survivors are seriously traumatized, these women are deprived of not only from their sexual desires but also many were sterilized and had no ability to give birth to children. These women along with the patriarchal setbacks faced the ethnic drawbacks too. As the Japanese women consider these comfort women as cultural and historical “others” and they are ignored and their cries are left unanswered. More than half the population of Japanese women is believed to have no beliefs in the story of these comfort women. During the colonial period Japanese always seemed to prove itself as a superior race to the Koreans and the patriarchal tradition of serving the elders and seniors were clearly visible in the comfort women process. More of the Korean women were used as comfort women by the Japanese army in order to protect the chastity of the Japanese women. After half a century when the movement to seek redress from the Japanese government started in 1991 these women were became the center of the public cultural spotlight but the women continued to sing. They sang songs that displayed the identities that they had carved out of a lifetime of struggle and hardships, the untold histories of their lives and that helped them forge and maintain relationships with others.

2.11 CONCLUSION

The research done shows that in fact it is the patriarchal society followed in Korea since Choson dynasty all the way through Japanese Colonial period was the main cause that brought sufferings in the life of Korean women. Even after the independence from the imperial Japan this patriarchy practice did not leave the women alone. Young girls who were taken as sexual slaves by the Japanese army were not accepted in the society, they were left homeless and went through lots of sufferings and most importantly it was this patriarchy system that silenced them for half a century to speak out about their lives as a comfort women, till date they are still struggling to get the justification they have been seeking from the Japanese Government, an official apology which the later denies that they have already paid for.

CHAPTER 3

ROLE OF ELITES (YANG BANS OF KOREA)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the two dynasties of China, *Han* and *Chin* dynasty dated back prior to the birth of Christ, there was a basic distinction between the two social status *Yang* and *Chon* as used in China, these social differences between the two section were carried over to Korea during the *Koryo* and *Choson* dynasties. The *Yang* were referred to as Common men who had the freedom to become officials and provide military and labor service and they were also the one who bore the obligation of paying the land and tribute taxes. The *Chon* whereas were considered the lowest born and the ones who were the bonded slaves.

The Yang bans were a section of the Yang group who were considered to be the most privileged and special ruling stratum. They took control over the land and the slaves. The term Yang ban was created in the late 10th century to refer to the two files of officials lined up in order of rank facing the King, the civil officials and the military. (Yi Song-mu, 1980).

The Chinese characters describe them as the 'Dual Management' which proves that these section of the society were the most privileged and special group who supervised both the civilian and military offices of the Government. The moral value system of the Yang bans as settled in late Koryo and early Choson were based on the ideas and terms taken from Confucianism in China. In Korea the value system was far more exceeded than in China, it was more rigid and absolute. The Yang ban in Korea turned out to be almost Confucian Fanatics, as the Confucian terminology proved to be such a powerful and effective method of justifying their power over the Korean society (Miyajima Hiroshi, 1995)

The term Yang ban gradually included the families and relatives of the officials. The official posts were reserved and passed on the basis made on heredity and there was a strict set of rules in marriage, the closed system of marriage among the elites. Hence the Yang bans held the highest level in the social caste system of Korea. The power of the Yang bans broadened up more in the late *Koryo* and early *Choson* periods.

The management of the government by men of virtue and wisdom was one of the intrinsic parts of Confucian ideology. The Yi dynasty Korea during the late Koryo period was founded by scholars, officials imbued by the ideals of Confucianism and

who dedicated to realize the ideal world envisioned by the Confucian sagas.(Yong-Ho Choe,1974).

Hence the Yi Dynasty Korea till 1894 to recruit the men of wisdom and virtue depended on the competitive examination as the major channel of recruitment. However these examinations were exclusively conducted among the Yang bans and were closed for the others. The Late Professor Yi Sang-baek of Seoul National University wrote, ‘There was an important restriction based on one’s social status and in principal, no one but Yang bans possessed the qualifications allowing them to participate in the Civil Examinations.’

Thus this social system of civil examination of the Yi Dynasty was the laying stone in the foundation of the rigidified social structure of Korea. The strict hereditary system of the Yang bans during Yi dynasty reflects the virtue of caste society of Korea.

This chapter deals with the history of Korea, studying about the Yi dynasty in detail. The Yang bans of Yi dynasty will be discussed. Since the ruling hand of Korean society were under the mighty work of the Yang bans, the power they vested upon the common people and the administration of the Government shall be looked in detail in this chapter.

The chapter shall discuss in minute details the process of Civil Examination and the administration of the Government under the ruling hands of the Yang bans. The difference among the commoners and the Yang bans during the late *Koryo* and early *Choson* periods shall be studied in depth.

The main research in this chapter is the study of the women status or the women of Yi dynasty. The chapter shall deal with the treatment of women by the Yang bans. The study shall also see the role played by the Yang bans during the Japanese occupation period and their hand in the recruitment of Comfort women for the Japanese military army.

3.2 YI-DYNASTY OF KOREA:

The Korean society under the Yi- Dynasty had basically three large social groups namely the Yang bans, the commoners and the ‘mean’ people. The Yang bans originally meant to be the state officials both in civil and military services but in later

years the members of their families and their legitimate descendants were also included in this group. In a simple term Yang ban was a social hereditary status given as a birth right to an individual. The commoners known as *Yang'in* or *Pyong min* were the majority of the society who engaged in agriculture and the ones who bore the main load of taxes. There was a small section of group among the commoners who were the traders because of Confucian contempt for such activities they were forbidden to give the Civil Examination. The third group who belonged to the lower section of the society, men of 'mean' status or low birth known as *Chon min*. They were legally bonded and enslaved from generation to generation.

In 1932, after the founding of the Choson dynasty there was a dynamic change of Korean society from an aristocratic society to Yang ban- bureaucratic society along with the change in dynasties. The old hereditary elite were replaced by Yang bans whose power, wealth and status were more dependent on success in the Civil Examinations and office holding (Yi Song Mu, 1980). However this transformation was not completely dependent on office holding since the new elites were not thoroughly bureaucratized. There was reverse in the balance of power in the middle of fifteenth century among the Yang bans and the state since the former started to expand its land estates and their control over the peasants. The system despite the reverse of power as according to Yi Song-Mu in the year 1932;

'the founding Choson dynasty stripped off some of the late Koryo aristocrats of land and slaves so that the early Choson bureaucracy and land and slave owning class consisted of both old aristocratic elements and the "new and rising Yang ban" who achieved political power through the examinations and office holding.'

3.3 CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION:

In the Yi society for the formation of the elite the Civil Examination was one of the single most important channels. There was three regular normal opening for the qualified aspirants to enter this bureaucracy. One was to pass the Civil examination. Secondly to receive protection appointment through certain officials who were permitted to appoint their family members for governmental posts known as *Um*. Lastly the third one was the appointment through recommendation known as

Chongo.¹⁴ The civil examination were of two categories, the *Sama* (*Sokwa*) the lower examination and *Munkwa* (*taekwa*) also known as higher examination. The former exam is known as lower as the candidate is not qualified for the government appointment, he has to study further more for the higher examination. It was through this system intelligent, virtuous men were appointed for the Governmental posts. However there were certain stipulations to which the applicants were limited, the basic laws governing the Yi society '*Kyong guk tae jon*' (great codes for governing the states). There was also one important practice that prohibited the Non Yang bans in participating in this Civil examination. Each candidate required to present to the examination officer the names of his four ancestors (*Sajo*) during the time of the registration. In 1543 there was an addition to the stipulation regarding 'four ancestors' that:

"If a candidate, when registering [for the examination], does not have anyone among his "four ancestors" who is a well known public official, he must present an endorsement, if he is from a province, signed by three members from his county liaison office in the capital, and, if he is from the capital, signed by three members of appropriate public offices, before he is permitted to participate in the examination."¹⁵

However the stipulation was abused since men of low birth, completely disregarding their positions illegally took part in the examination either by fabricating their family registries or by falsely including the names of the governments among the four ancestors. Hence the examination came to be held in low esteem and as such new stipulation was added to *Taejon husongnok* that a candidate should present an additional letter of endorsement signed by three officials.

¹⁴ Yong-Ho Ch'oe, 1974, *Commentaries in Early Yi Dynasty Civil Examinations: An Aspect of Korean Social Structure 1392-1600*. Pp 613

¹⁵ The recruitment examination is one of the major importances to the state and the candidate is eligible only after the screening done by their four ancestors. This screening is done in order to learn their lineage background.

3.4 YI DYNASTY AND CONFUCIANISM:

The Yi dynasty was the period filled with the greatest richness of Confucian achievements. The longest dynasty period and Confucianism was the chief intellectual concern in the entire era. In the year 1335 when King Yi Taejo ascended the throne there was chaos in the country and it did not fall under the moral polity as according to Confucian sense.¹⁶ After almost a century of Mongol domination there was no effective revitalization in the country, royal authorities were eroded and the power fell in the hands of the aristocracy that built their power under the protection of foreign bodies. The administration was criticized by the scholar-officials. However the last Koryo rulers lost their credibility and the supreme power shifted to military hands. The alliance between the Confucian scholar officials, the military hero and Yi Song-ye, the appointed head of Koryo dynasty was the triumph founder of the Yi dynasty. The leaders of the Yi dynasty was determined to establish the intellectual and political leadership maintaining and implanting Confucianism. Though the early Yi dynasty did not bring an abrupt change but the Koryo political institution were taken over as the organizational basis of the new Government. The Korean instincts and Confucian tradition demanded a new dynasty different from the old Buddhism dominance which was morally and nationally wrong, a firm and a strong alliance with china to run the government policies. The motive behind the scholar-officials was just not to establish a new dynasty but to set up a Confucian dynasty.

The Yi dynasty was set amidst the chaotic religious background. Korea during this era was a Buddhist and Shamanistic country since there was the notion of death and the life after death. Shamanism was all pervasive folk phenomena while Buddhism was a well organized religion with coherent doctrine. (Martina Deuchler 1980). The rituals of Buddhism and Shamanism were performed at the royal courts and since Buddhism was believed to be the protective spiritual power of the state so it developed powerful economic institutions. Many people entered monkhood before the establishment of Yi dynasty because the egalitarian trends of Buddhism induced many people with the promise of spiritual liberation. However the Yi dynasty scholar-officials, majority of

¹⁶ Martina Deuchler, 1980, *Neo-Confucianism: The Impulse for Social Action in Early Yi Korea*. Pp 71.

them who passed the Civil Service Examination and had received Confucian education set to transfer Korea once again into a Confucian society.

During the Three Kingdom period in Korea, Confucianism was introduced as an instrument of learning and statesmanship. However in the *Koryo* period, scholar-officials were trained in Confucian education to provide an able monitor for the state. An educational system was established from the late 10th century to prepare students for their future roles as civil servants. (Martina Deuchler.1980).

During the Koryo dynasty, Confucianism along with Buddhism worked hand in hand fulfilling the two complementary functions. People's spiritual needs were fulfilled by the ways of Buddhism whereas the Confucianism provided fundamentals of statesmanship. Though Confucian was only a literary influence as in court, it did not make much recorded intellectual headway in Koryo dynasty. Moreover, *Yi Che Hyon* an early Confucian related Buddhist compassion (*Chabi*) to Confucian humanness (*in*), charity (*huisa*) to moral responsibility (*ui*). Confucianism was embedded to Buddhism till the end of *Koryo* dynasty but the tolerance under the rule of King *Kongmin* faltered. The late *Koryo* dynasty saw the decline in moral and spiritual legitimacy of Buddhism, the religious Buddhist leaders failed to provide requisite intellectual stimulus, conviction or faith. Economic status of the country declined as the Buddhist suffered from its association with the Mongols moreover the political section of the society also supported the Confucian renaissance in order to come into their own powerful bureaucratic ways to create a powerful state. The intellectual thought put forward by Chu Hsi's Confucian ideology was the chief concern of that time to powerfully influence the Korean thought.¹⁷ Confucianism came to the Korean officials as according to Yang and Henderson in their article '*An outline History of Korean Confucianism: Part 1: The Early Period and Yi Factionalism*' says,

'as a vehicle for reconstituting a stronger, centralized, bureaucratic state in which scholars-officials could prosper; a weapon honed through centuries of Chinese history for use against Buddhism; a quasi-religion whose wide cosmogonic presumptions and metaphysical scope were an effective substitute for Buddhist philosophy, and a great advance on humanly and socially centered Confucianism of earlier times, providing

¹⁷ Key P Yang and Gregory Henderson, 1958, *An Outline History of Korean Confucianism: Part 1: The Early Period and Yi Factionalism*. Pp 83.

some religious satisfactions and opening many intellectual and cultural doors.’(Yang and Henderson, 1958, pp 86)

Hence with the establishment of Yi dynasty the attack on Buddhism became more severe and intense both as religion and an institution. The rulers of early dynasty were under only one pressure of replacing the Buddhist traditional content of the people’s religious life with Confucian principles. Confucianism rapidly filled up the spaces in the new state. With the ecumenical system of Chu Hsi Confucianism flourished in the Yi dynasty. Chu Hsi’s Confucianism slowly captured the central institutions of highly centralized state just before Neo-Confucianism became internalized in Korea.

The Yi dynasty leaders were head on heels bent to implant and maintain Confucianism and to set up the political and intellectual leadership like Ming of China in Korea’s national philosophy. Though Buddhist traditions could not be completely removed among the people yet Confucianism in the political and intellectual levels were the touchstones of the regime’s success. Though Confucianism met with a lot of success and its auspicious beginning there was a great threat to its power rose following the death of King *Sejong*, whose younger son *Sejo* planned the murder of his father. This act of *Sejo* was outraged against Confucian precept and *Sejo* became a faithful follower of Buddhism who rebuilt the Buddhist temples. This reversal pitted Confucianism and Buddhism against each other.

However Buddhism and Confucianism both met with further crisis during the reign of King *Yongsan-gun*. Though it was not all a disaster as many scholars retired to their country places and gave local instruction in their homes. These local centers in future turned out to bring education and culture into the country. The end of Confucianism in Korea was deemed to be appropriate and reasonable since Korea’s factionalism in particular is condemned to be one of the political manifestations of Confucianism. Both bore the seeds destructive to the institutions around it. The failure of Korea’s inability to cope up with the swift progress in the later centuries of Yi rule , her lack to adapt herself successfully to the radical changes of the late 19th century ultimately to retain her own freedom were the main solid reasons for the failure and weakness of the Confucian institutions of the Yi dynasty.

However the development of political consciousness and political institutions made during the Yi period was never completely lost even though it suffered setbacks

towards the end of the dynasty in the intellectual sphere progress were increased under the influence of Confucian ideology. Moreover the bridge was formed for intellectual communication with China and even with Japan. The study of Confucianism in Korea was a merit as it was the critical formative institution for Korea's political and intellectual life. Confucianism in one way or the other is found in Korea even today. However 'The depth and complexity of Korea's Neo-Confucian tradition will certainly support an attempt at modern cultural integration which, beyond the formalities of social conduct, directs attention to the ideals of public consciousness and service in Oriental society, to the questions of the principles behind things, and to the vision of personal uprightness in men.' (Yang and Henderson.1959).

3.5 THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMAN IN YI KOREA:

In the Yi rule of Korea Confucianism became rooted in society and culture which brought significant changes that affected women as well as other members of society. As for women's history, the 'Confucianization' of the Korea during the *Choson* period meant a doctrine to subjugate and objectify women as a means of masculine empowerment. (Yongmin Kim and Michael J.Pettid 2011). Confucianism imposed upon woman of Yi dynasty rigorously standard the Feminine modesty and chastity. Since Confucianism emphasized on family system and on cultural imperatives such as ancestor worship, filial piety and a patriarchal family structure and all these ideology legitimized and privileged men as the sole bearers of the family names, women importance reduced as men were given more importance in the family line.

The Yi dynasty Korea was an agrarian society dominated by a small group of intellectual scholar officials Yang bans. The Neo Confucian ideology that was followed in this period justified that women were inferior and who were excluded from political and economic life. The Yang ban women were not allowed to walk outside freely or leave the house without a veil. They were not allowed to hold any property of their own. Men and women in Yang ban family lived separately in the inner and outer chambers of the house respectively using different closets and bathrooms. Women were banned in taking active part in the social intercourse between the two genders. The sexual activity of a son with his wife was also controlled by the patriarch. The yang ban women role was totally intertwined with maintaining and reproducing the lineage system. The only functioning role of women

in this period was to produce male heir to the family.¹⁸This preference of son in the family resulted into a most severe practice in future such as infanticides and concubinage. It can be taken into account that since Yi dynasty was a largely agricultural society hence the preference of son over daughters is quite justifiable. Since the physical strength of man is one of the most prevalent traditional culture of the agricultural society. The Yang ban girls didn't receive the same education that the boys received. It was only after the invention of Korean script *Hangul* that the women learned to read and write. The Yang ban girls were mainly educated the proper etiquette and manners as the work outside home studying, government business and greeting visitors were the work of man and women were seldom left at home. The married women during this period were not in the position to strongly voice their opinions and make important decisions. The hierarchal relationship between husband and wife was strictly followed during the Yi period. A wife would sacrifice herself completely to serve her husband and family in an exemplary manner. She was also taught not to enforce her views regarding the family life to her husband. This unequal relationship was written into laws of the state. The wife lived in constant fear of divorce and desertion by her husband. Under this system of inequality women of this period suffered a lot to voice their demands. The women especially of yang ban family were not even allowed to talk to any men except close male relatives and after marriage they were prohibited going outside the house without permission from her husband. However though education was introduced in the society but certain obvious gains like that of male superiority continued to dominate within the family and the entire society and did not improve the legal status of women. In contrast to the rapid changes taking place outside the home in the Korean economy and society within the family traditional Confucian values and roles persisted. Difference was maintained even in the labor division based on sex. The husband made all decisions and had primary responsibility for the family's economic well-being, while the wife occupied herself exclusively with childrearing and household chores.

The notion of Confucianism has always meant different things to different thinkers and intellectuals. As John Duncan pointed out in his study of Confucianism in *Choson*, *Choson* society like any other was one with multiple influences and multiple

¹⁸ John Lie, 1995, *The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th Century Korea*, pp 312.

responses to such influences. Thus there are varied responses to Confucianism dependent upon numerous factors including social status, interest, time, place and educational level. Confucianism as a social model does not tolerate the subordination of women rather advocates virtuous relations between men and women through cooperation and harmonization. It could not exclude women who composed about half the population from its philosophical and ideological program. Though it is clear that Confucianism does not discourage women from self-cultivation and nurturing within themselves but in later trends of Confucianism and mostly in Neo Confucianism women was a repressed and suppressed group within Chinese and Korean society. Even though the original Confucian teachings differ evil social practices and assumptions still prevailed in China and Korea. The term of authority and dominance as portrait is different to what the original Confucian ideology pertains. It considers as a different jobs and responsibilities between men and women. In traditionally agricultural societies, men were responsible for the physical labor required for farming and women were responsible for household work, men being physically stronger than women. Since men were dominant in matters of production, they also assumed a dominant position in the family. It was after the 19th Century when these two aspects became interpreted as the gender difference in authority.

However in later period of *Choson* dynasty things started changing. The right given to the eldest daughter in law (*Chongbu*) in the mid 16th century turned the notion and clearly demonstrated the ongoing settlement of Confucian norms in the legal and social system of Choson. In the first three centuries of Choson period long standing norms and freedom slowly regressed women were able to negotiate spaces where various rights could be maintained. Women were active participants in overcoming the various limitations imposed upon them by the Confucian social system. During the later years of Choson dynasty, the commoner women as compared to the Yang ban women specially the widows were least affected by the norms of Confucian regarding the remarriage. The lower status women did not have the same attitude towards remarriage as did the Yang ban woman. The main reason behind the difference lies in the economic position and social status of the widows. A widow with sufficient economic resources could have remained unmarried but otherwise would probably have been forced to find a new husband. However most of the Yang ban women had sufficient economic resources. Moreover by remaining unmarried

they can ensure that their children inherited these resources. Yang ban women also had to consider the fact if they remarried their descendants would be blocked from participating in the Civil Service Examination. By remarrying they would be giving up the future of their sons and grandsons. However it was different for the commoner women because they never had to fear of giving up their son's future as there was no chance for their sons to take part in the civil examination. Hence it is clear in the late *Choson* there remained much resistance to seceding important rights held by women. The examination is one example that allows a realization that women were not simply the victims of Confucian legislation but rather the influence of Confucianism has influenced in a different way to different people.

3.6 YANGBANS AND THE COMFORT WOMEN:

In context to the non commercialized economy and male political and social dominance sexual work did not develop as a specialized occupation. The state, however, organized *kisaeng*, who were "female entertainers assigned to duties in both capital and local jurisdictions, and who frequently were taken by Yang ban as concubines or secondary wives"(Eckert et al. 1990).

Kisaeng were not simply sexual workers but performed a variety of functions, ranging from medical work to needlework. *Kisaeng* constituted a caste and functioned as a guild. It was a caste, as daughters of *kisaeng* often followed their mother's occupation. It functioned as a guild because the trade skills were passed down within the caste.¹⁹ As a *kisaeng* aged, she trained her successors to sing, dance, perform musical instruments, and serve their "masters." Although they could not officially marry, some became concubines or secondary wives for government officials. Others had surrogate husbands (*kibu*) who were their managers. There was a hierarchy among *kisaeng*: the lowest rank specialized in sexual work; the middle group entertained and was part time prostitutes and the highest rank, considered either exceptionally artistic or beautiful, served high officials and performed at state functions (Y. S. Kim 1989). Commercialization stimulated the rise of prostitution in market towns by the late 19th century. *Kisaeng* restaurants, which served agrarian elites, became popular in late Yi

¹⁹ John Lie, 1995, *The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th Century Korea*, pp 312

dynasty Korea. There were roughly 20,000 to 30,000 *kisaeng* during the latter part of the Yi dynasty (T. W. Kim 1986).

However the collapse of the Yi state spelled the demise of the traditional *kisaeng* system, which was dependent on state patronage. When Korea was taken over by the Japanese there were three distinct social organizations of sexual work existed. First, *kisaeng* served elite Japanese and Korean men. Although they no longer operated as a caste or a guild, they constituted the elite stratum of prostitutes. Second, in response to commercialization, new sexual workers catered to both Japanese and Korean men in urban areas. Finally, the Japanese military mobilized predominantly young peasant women to serve Japanese soldiers.

Under the Japanese colonial rule, the Yi dynasty *kisaeng* system eroded. State patronage gave way to commercial interests, as *kisaeng* ceased to be a caste and a guild. Although Yang ban, rich urbanites, and high government officials continued to frequent *kisaeng* restaurants, the primary client of sexual work became Japanese colonial officials, soldiers, and businessmen. Unlike the Yi dynasty caste system or the Japanese-run schools for higher class *kisaeng*, these new sexual workers were drawn from poor rural families. They were often sold to sexual entrepreneurs by their impoverished families. Although they continued to sing, dance, and entertain like their Yi dynasty counterparts, they were primarily sexual worker.

In the latter part of the Japanese rule, a new organization of sexual labor emerged. The military organized its own sexual services. The military sought to prevent soldiers from contracting venereal diseases and antagonizing local populations by assaulting women. In the 1930s, the Imperial Japanese Army, in concert with the *Sotokufu*, created "comfort divisions" as an adjunct to Japanese military divisions flung across much of Asia and the western Pacific. The organizational autonomy and infrastructural capacity of the Japanese military facilitated the creation of the comfort divisions.

Initially, the military had relied on Japanese prostitutes, but many of them were found to suffer from venereal disease. Increased demands, furthermore, propelled the military to recruit Korean women in Japan and Korea. The military, in conjunction with the *Sotokufu*, relied on local *zegen* to recruit young women. The recruitment of these young women was initiated by the Korean collaborators along with the Korean

Elite women (O. J. Ch'oe 1989). As the military involvement escalated in the 1940s, Japanese colonial officials kidnapped young rural women and forced them into military prostitution.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The Yang bans as studied in the chapter fully followed the Confucian doctrines. Women during this Yi dynasty period were treated as machines that were used to produce sons for the generation to continue. They were considered to be the lowest section of the society. Women were not given any right, they were controlled and ruled by the male section of the society. Women were also used as entertainers for man. There was a group known as Kisaeng as mentioned in the chapter above. The Yang bans of Korea regarding the Comfort women had very little role or no role. Yang Ban women instead took part in the recruitment of these comfort women. It was also that this Comfort women issue started during the Japanese colonial period so the upper hands were the Japanese and the Yang ban man had no say in this issue.

CHAPTER 4

KOREAN WOMEN STATUS IN JAPANESE MILITARY ARMY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Japan during its forty years rule in Korea brought successful materials of modernization in the country. Japanese were able to establish an able government probably less arbitrary than the one that existed before and overthrew the impulsive rule of the House of Yi and the elites, the Yang ban class. During the post World War II partition South Korea benefitted more from the agricultural advances while the North Korea with its minerals and chemical factories became the main field for technological modernization.²⁰ In the words of Chong Sik lee

‘Japan through her conquest and rule of Korea, awakened and sustained Korean Nationalism. Japan provided the negative and yet most powerful symbol for Korean nationalism, a national enemy’.²¹

However the Japanese violated repeated pledges in order to establish itself as a protector. Japan explains its annexation by saying that it is all for the well being of the Korean Imperial family and to root the evil out and to bring Korea under the direct administration of the Imperial Government. Korea fell under the Japanese hands because of its weakness, Japan’s strength and western disinterest. The Japanese rule over the Koreans were more of a dictator Koreans were prohibited from possessing arms and weapons, the Korean newspapers were band, Korean history books were removed from libraries, schools and home. Koreans were discriminated in every possible way. The Japanese government encouraged education of Korean youths yet only a small amount of Korean children actually received education.

Since Japan like Korea was a patriarchal society where women were considered the lower section of the society. During the World War II many young women from the neighbouring countries were exploited by the Japanese military army. Among these women the majority were Korean young girls as Korea was the colony of Japan during that period. The soldiers used to refer to these women as *Pi*, a Chinese term meaning goods or articles, which as a slang term stood for female genitals (Nishino.1992). The Japanese imperial government involved itself in recruiting the

²⁰ David Brudnoy, 1970, *Japan’s Experiment in Korea*, pp 01.

²¹ Berkeley,1963, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*, pp 275

young girls during the war times hoping to contribute something to the enhancement of military morale. Though these comfort stations as a military sexual slavery was run by the state power and it resulted into gross violation of women, stealing off their human rights.

The ideology of Neo Confucianism followed during the Japanese colonization period justified the subservience and inferiority of women. Though during the Yi dynasty period under the context of male dominance in social and political sphere sexual work did not develop in Korea but the state tried to provide entertainment and organised *Kisaeng* who were female entertainers assigned to duties both in local and capital jurisdictions and who were taken mostly as concubines by the Yang bans. (Eckert et al. 1990). This *Kisaeng* organisation dated back from the Shilla period but was institutionalised during the Koryo period. It constituted as a caste and functioned as a guild.

During the colonization period there were three stages of Kisaeng, ones that entertained the elite Japanese and Korean men, second the ones who catered to both Japanese and Korean men in urban areas and lastly those who served the Japanese military soldiers.

The Japanese government exercised a balanced influence on this social organization of sexual work especially the comfort women stations. The Japanese state exploited colonized women's sexuality.

The chapter studies on the research of the Korean comfort women who were exploited in the military camps by the Japanese military soldiers. Looking into some articles the chapter shall also study the social living conditions of these comfort women in their camps. The study shall learn about the inhuman treatment these sexual slaves received from the Japanese soldiers.

Though majority of these comfort women were from Korea yet some of them were also professional Japanese prostitutes. The chapter shall discuss the difference in treatment among the Japanese and Korean women. Furthermore the chapter shall also look into the reason behind the recruitment of these Korean young women and why the majority of them come from Korea. The chapter shall discuss about the Kisaeng Tour which was operated after the country got its independence and the way the

government of South Korea forced the women to use their body in order to beat its trade deficit.

In brief description this chapter will also look into the role the Korean Government is playing regarding this issue and what are the steps different organisations inside the country and as well as outside Korea are taking in order to provide justice to the victims.

4.2 KOREAN WOMEN DURING THE LATE COLONIAL PERIOD

The Korean industrialization started to change after Japan annexed Korea in 1910. However there was a huge demand for the production after a decade during the World War I. After Japan started expanding its colony in southern China both male and female were redeployed by the Korean government to work in industries which were of importance at that war period like aircraft and ship building, iron and steel mining, manufacturing industries. Korea became an integral producer for Japan during this war time as there was much hyped demand for production and there was deficit of labourers. New industries even heavy industries hired and employed the Korean women. This shortage and demand shifted the whole focus from light to heavy industries. By the start of the Sino-Japanese war II there was a gross economic changes brought up in Korea. 'Economic development coincided with other features of modernization, such as population growth, urban migration, and the rise of an industrial workforce. By the late 1930s the Korean population was expanding at annual rates of 4–5 percent. Similarly, the rates of urban migration escalated, from around 4 percent in 1920 to 8.4 percent in 1939 to 14 percent by 1945. These developments supported the growth of the industrial workforce; while in 1931 there were around 1,200 medium-to-large-scale factories employing 65,600 laborers, by 1939 approximately 212,500 laborers worked in nearly 7,000 factories. In the span of less than a decade the Korean industrial labor force had nearly tripled in number.'²²

The Korean women all through 1920s and 1930s were employed in light industries such as rubber shoe making, knitting, cotton spinning and weaving. However very less is known about these light industry female workers during the war years.

²² Janice C.H. Kim, 2007, *The Pacific War and Working Women in Late Colonial Korea*, pp 83.

Whereas the later 1930s and early 1940s some of the factory Korean females during the War years were shifted to the comfort station for the Japanese military army.

4.3 CHONGSINDAE, THE VOLUNTARY LABOR SERVICE CORPS:

By the early 1932 this institution of Comfort Stations took place under the supervision of the Japanese state government in order to meet the sexual urges of its military soldiers. The stations were established wherever the Japanese soldiers were located inside Japan as well as abroad till the end of pacific war in 1945. Japan chose the Korean women as comfort women and encouraged its women the Japanese to marry young and bear many children to fulfil 'the national mission of motherhood'.²³

The Japanese military after invading China and after the rape of tens of thousands of women in Nanjing the state in order to avoid such a situation began recruiting Korean women in full force. Though there were comfort stations and the sexual slaves were from Japan, who was professional prostitutes since some of them had venereal diseases so in order to combat the spread of disease the Japanese military suggested the recruitment of the young females from colonial Korea who were presumed to be virgins and therefore free of sexually transmitted disease. The Japanese government by 1939 began to enforce the systematic mobilization of Koreans of both the sexes for the war efforts as a member of the *Chongsindae* (voluntary submitting body).

The drafting of the Koreans by the Imperial government became more compulsory and organised after the Sino-Japanese war turned and widened into the Pacific War in 1941. 20% of the Korean population were drafted as soldiers or forced labourers. The recruitment of women was legalized only in 1942 but still the drafting of women was normally carried on the basis of Voluntary participation because of which the Japanese government were continuously denying till 1993 regarding its involvement in recruiting the Korean women in to the *Yoja Chongsindae*. Though the Japanese government denies it has come to account that young Korean girls volunteered for work in factories and hospitals whereas many were lured with false promises of good compensation for their labour and were sent to these military comfort stations. Hence

²³ Chunghee Sarah Soh, 1996, *The Korean "Comfort Women": Movement for Redress, Dec 1996*, vol xxvi, pp.1228.

this organization of voluntary service, the name itself *Chongsindae* is set up as a military comfort stations in the minds of the general public.

The concept of comfort station as institutionalized by the wartime state of imperial Japan is being understood as a method of recreational sex for the emperor's warriors. The creation of these comfort stations was facilitated by the outstanding characteristic of organizational autonomy and infrastructural capacity of the Japanese military army. The different ideological perspectives, the images and specific terms referring to these sexual slaves are all very vague and permeable. It is simply understood that the comfort women were considered to be 'gifts' and they were unwrapped by the troops to be used as the communal and commercial 'Pi'. Similarly the patriarchal fascism of imperial Japan overlapped the masculinist sexism in the ultimate functioning of these comfort stations as a means of recreational sexual amenity for the Japanese military army in the war front. Similarly in a patriarchal society systematic provision of sexual needs to its soldiers by the military is common and is understood as a paternalistic practice rooted in the masculinist view of female sexuality as goods.

Even though this crimes or the provision of sexual needs to the army is a common factor in war times yet the issue of Korean comfort women has been hyped but the main matter of concern was the problem in the processing system of these comfort stations. The Japanese state provided regulated prostitution for its soldiers but this comfort women system as functioned by the Japanese military army brought lots of violence to the women, deprived off their rights and treated them inhumanly. Women body was referred to as 'Public Toilets' and also associated them with military 'supplies' and finally to the 1990's feminist label of 'Sex slaves'²⁴. The living conditions of these comfort women in the military camps differed with time and place and in regard to the treatment or the sexual violence faced by these women by the army men also seemed to vary not only geographically and chronologically but the ethnicity also played a vital role in it. Eventually the feminist scholars do deny accepting that socio historical and sexual cultural context of these comfort system.

However, it would be best if these strong adaption skills of the survivors and the mighty hand of the human agency are accepted rather than just portraying them as

²⁴ Chunghee Sarah Soh, 2000, *From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the "Comfort Women"*, pp.61.

mere helpless victims. As in some cases it has been studied that these characteristics might be one of the factors that lead these comfort women to these comfort stations but it is a fact to be believed that they themselves have contributed to their survival against all the difficult situations. As according to Foucauldian conception of power:

‘..a stream of energy flowing through every living organism and every human society, its formless flux harnessed in various patterns of behaviour...’(Miller:1993:p 15)

4.4 THE NATURE OF COMFORT STATIONS

The issue and the controversy behind this Korean comfort women ranges from the problem of ‘militarized prostitution’ to that of sexual abuse of women based on age, social class, gender and most importantly ethnicity. It is to the knowledge that women of these military comfort stations were mostly from lower class, young girls from colonial Korea were taken by the Japanese state during the Asia-Pacific War. However it is learned that not all comfort women were forced into this stations by the state power. It was that the young Korean girls from impoverished families that constituted the majority and then the older Japanese prostitutes and very few lower class women from colonized Taiwan and other occupied territories were taken as comfort women during the “Fifteen Year War’ lead by the imperial Japan from the time of Manchurian invasion in 1931 till its unconditional surrender in 1945.

However there are no original documents that gives a proof and which provides an evidence of how many were actually used as military comfort women and how many were forced into the role of military sexual slaves expect for the Dutch case which concluded that ‘the majority of the (Dutch) women concerned does not belong to the groups of women forced into prostitution’.(Poelgeest.1994).

The comfort stations operated from 1932 to 1945 in close proximity to the Japanese troops not only in Japan, Korea and China but also across the expanding empire of Japan like in Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Burma and many other pacific islands. ²⁵These comfort stations came into process no later than early 1932 in China in order to provide the soldiers their sexual needs mainly after the 1931 Manchurian

²⁵ Chunghee Sarah Soh, 2000, *From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the ‘Comfort Women’*. Pp 64

incident. The comfort stations at first during the Sino-Japanese War was established in the urban areas of Shanghai since there already existed clubs run by the locals where the military personnel enjoyed commercial sexual entertainment provided by the Japanese female employees. However World War II was not the first time that Japanese used comfort women but such kind of comfort women process also functioned when Japan invaded Siberia in 1918. The Japanese army took along Japanese prostitutes but after the Japanese army took over Nanking in 1937 more comfort stations were systematically established and supervised so that the soldiers could get their recreational sex. Such facilities helped to prevent the soldiers to commit random acts of sexual violence on women of the occupied territories and also to strengthen the soldiers' fighting spirit by giving them a way to vent the frustration engendered by military life. Apart from that the officials were more concerned with the health of their troops as such there was close supervision of the hygienic conditions in these comfort stations in order to keep control over the sexually transmitted diseases. This is when the Japanese military army started to target the young females of Colonial Korea as Comfort women since the young Korean women were not sexually experienced and were therefore free from all those venerable diseases.

The women who were taken to these stations were treated simply as sex objects referring them to *Pi* by the soldiers. The actual amount of women taken as the sex slaves is not certain as the Japanese burned the key historical documents. However studying the ratio of Japanese soldiers the study has come to the conclusion that approximately 80,000 to 280,000 women were abducted.

During the last years after Japan attacked the Pearl Harbor in 1941, many young girls from Korea were shipped to various palaces in South Asian countries which was under the Japanese occupation rule. It was during this period that the 1944 law creating the *Yoja Chongsindae* (Women's 'Volunteer' Labor Corps) in order to facilitate female recruitment for its war efforts was brought into effect by the Japanese army. Through the research and personal interviews with the Korean comfort women survivors it has been indicated that the majority of them were deceived by both Korean and Japanese enterprising middlemen into believing that they were going to work at factories or army hospital while half of them stated that they were forcibly abducted by the police or military. The false promises of employment worked

effectively since the Japanese colonial economic policy had fully devastated Korean agriculture leaving many Korean families to die of poverty as such the young girls of this poverty stricken families had to leave home for meaningful jobs in a foreign land. However it is to be noted that the recruitment of almost all the Korean women were either they belonged to low social class or they were a part of the unhappy family. Hence in the lives of the Korean women from the poor families gender was intersected with class by the colonial power.

The testimony of the first comfort women proved to be one. According to her she was taken to China in 1941 by her foster father who wanted to find a job for her. Based on the contract he had made with her mother (to whom he had paid some money), he trained his foster daughter as a *Kisaeng* (professional entertainer) and wanted her to make money by working in the entertainment industry. However she was only 17 yrs when she completed her training so she needed two more years before she could work legally in Korea. Her foster father took her over to china in order to help her get the job and according to her the Japanese army took her away to one of this military comfort station.

The soldiers who visited these comfort stations committed extreme forms of abuse and humiliation against the Korean comfort women and the officials did not prevent them from treating these women inhumanly mainly because of the high level of prejudice the Japanese held against Koreans. They were confined to filthy shanties and they were forced to have intercourse with Japanese soldiers from 10 to 30 times per day. The Japanese soldiers would stand in line outside in small rooms waiting for their turn. One of the survivors in her testimony expresses her anger and agony,

“I was born as a woman but never lived as a woman. ... I feel sick when I come close to a man. Not just Japanese men but all men - even my own husband, who saved me from the brothel - made me feel this way. I shiver when I see the Japanese flag. . . . Why should I feel ashamed? I don't have to feel ashamed.”(Kazuko Watanabe: 1999: pp 20)

These women were treated alike 'female ammunition' and that their dehumanized bodies were used as 'public toilets.'²⁶ For many comfort women the experience they went through was the more like the experience of sexual slavery. The women were brutally tortured and were inhumanly beaten up by the Japanese soldiers. As per the information from these comfort women it came to be known that the soldiers even gave them electric shocks for crying, talking, singing or when they resisted the captors. Thousands of these women were killed in the comfort stations, murdered or even committed suicide. The testimony of one of the survivors Chong Ok Sun recalls the soldier's cruelty and brutality:

“There were around 400 other Korean young girls with me and us had to serve over 5,000 Japanese soldiers as sex slaves every day - up to 40 men per day. Each time I protested, they hit me or stuffed rags in my mouth. One held a matchstick to my private parts until I obeyed him. My private parts were oozing with blood.

One Korean girl who was with us once demanded why we had to serve so many, up to forty men per day. To punish her for her questioning, the Japanese company commander Yamamoto ordered her to be beaten with a sword. While we were watching, they took off her clothes, tied her legs and hands and rolled her over a board with nails until the nails were covered with blood and pieces of her flesh. In the end, they cut off her head. Another Japanese, Yamamoto, told us that 'it's easy to kill you all, easier than killing dogs.' He also said 'since those Korean girls are crying because they have not eaten, boil the human flesh and make them

²⁶ Kazuko Watanabe, 1999, *Trafficking in Women's Bodies, Then and Now: The Issue of Military Comfort Women*, pp.20

eat it.” ...²⁷

The term ‘military comfort women’ was actually framed by the Japanese military officials and the middleman of the sex industry to hide the worse reality. It actually meant the collective and systematic rape of women and which is regulated by the Japanese imperial state. The prostitutes are the sexual workers who were paid for their jobs whereas slavery was totally a different conception of social outcast, where a person is possessed as a possession and are forced to labour. The majority of the survivors especially the Korean testified that they were not paid for their sexual services to the Japanese soldiers, though some stated that they possessed postal savings accounts to deposit tips given to them by the individual soldiers, but they lost their saving books when they returned back from the war.

The definition of slavery can be defined as an extreme domination of human being whereas the term sexual slavery of a women can be defined as an social abuse and the extreme exploitation of sexuality full of violence from which an individual cannot escape. Majority of these sexual workers in their testimonies have revealed that they were forced into conditions of slavery and could not get out of it. These comfort women were divided by the Japanese military according to class, race and nationality and also according to the rank of the soldiers they were assigned to service. Mostly Korean and Asian women were made to serve the lower class soldiers whereas the Japanese and Europeans were kept for the high ranking officers. The explicit ethnic hierarchy and the Japanese power brought this division among the comfort women.

4.5 JAPANESE AND KOREAN COMFORT WOMEN:

Japanese women who were taken as these comfort women were often reserved for officers. They were even paid for their services. In the testimony of one of the former military nurse named Nakazato Chiyo who was stationed in the Hainan Island off China stated that the Japanese comfort women were taken as mistresses by her boss of the Navy hospital and were kept as princess in a nicely decorated place with pretty dolls whereas the Korean comfort women were housed in primitive makeshift shacks constructed of tropical plant leaves. Ethnicity is the key source behind the social

²⁷ *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences*, 1996, pp 54

discrimination that the Korean women experienced in these comfort stations. The act of Ethnicity discrimination was more harshly exercised by the Japanese army during the end days of the war when the Japanese military fled away with only the Japanese comfort women after their defeat in the war whereas the Korean women were either abandoned or in some cases even killed by the retreating Japanese army. The Korean comfort women were drove into trenches or caves and were burned bombed or shot creating a huge mass graves on the spot. One reason the Japanese soldiers did this was to hide their act of crime, so that the rest of the world would not know about their inhuman side. This act of massacre by the Japanese army reflects the fear of the revelation of their atrocities. The Korean comfort women as stated earlier were compared to military goods so they were too cumbersome to be taken back home after the war ended. Fewer than thirty percentages of these women only survived. One such incident where the comfort women were forced into the torpedoed submarine is recalled by one soldier.

The Japanese soldiers' subjected Korean women into such inhuman treatment by keeping in mind the colonial history of Korea and Japan, and since the Korean women held the bottom section of the hierarchal stage of the Imperial Japan's human worthiness. Koreans were always racialized as inferior human being. This racial identity along with Japanese sexism collided to render the Korean women as dispensable sexual commodities. The social belief of Japanese regarding the Koreans as an inferior race reflected clearly on the brutal treatment of Korean women by their soldiers. They 'literally hunted Koreans like animals'- from the toilets, beds, rice fields and closets whereas they never forcibly conscripted the Japanese women. (Michele Park Sonen.2010). Japanese virgins were not use as sexual slaves in order to avoid the distrust it would create in the Japanese public. As such the Japanese women who worked in this comfort station were either professional prostitutes or they were women older than the Korean girls who were more prepared for the service before they were shipped to these stations.

Moreover the Japanese comfort women were kept away from the frontline battlefields whereas the Koreans always lived in fear of constant death as a result of bombings and frequent attacks on the frontline. The Korean women were the most targets of the Japanese army as one of the main motives of the Imperial Japan was to wipe out and destroy fully leaving no trace of the Korean people.

According to professor Yang:

“The ‘sexual expropriations’ of Korean women by Japanese men served to nullify the Korean ethnic identity”.

The Korean women from the patriarchal fascist view were just performing their gendered duties as imperial subjects by helping the soldiers to regain their strength by refreshing their mind so that they can rededicate selflessly in winning the ‘Sacred War’. One of the other main suffering these women had to bear during their service in these military brothels was the forced personal name change. It is said that the changes of name is the symbolic wrapping of non-Japanese comfort women with culturally appropriate labels suitable for imperial gifts to the troops. Moreover the dominant masculinist sexual culture of the Japanese society is also clearly reflected in their comparison between these women and the public toilet. This expression or comparison directly reflects generalized male contempt for female. This kind of sexual metaphor also existed in the agrarian Korean society where women were symbolized as the field (*Pat*) into which men cast their seeds (*ssi*). Delaney explains, “In this agrarian metaphor the sexual act is accomplished unilaterally by men’s ejaculation of semen into the motionless, mute fields standing for respective objects of male desire.”

This brutal, inhuman condition imposed on the Korean comfort woman and the racialized and sexualized identity manifested deep physical and psychological wounds in the lives of the Korean comfort women throughout their lives. Chronic pain, sexually transmitted diseases, permanent disabilities, inability to bear children and suicidal tendencies were a few known harms inflicted in the lives of these comfort women. The torment for the remaining survivors who returned home continued. Many of the survivors were unable to lead a normal family life. The Korea’s patriarchal society defiled and shamed the remaining survivors and kept them in silence for half a century.

Since Korea a patriarchal society all the while regarded “losing chastity as a personal shame”. Women who lost their virginity became a ‘damaged good, unmarriageable and socially ostracized’.²⁸

In Korea, regardless that the women according to Prof. Alexis Dudden were forced to have sex, or regardless that they were beaten for protesting, on a strong Confucian society like Korea women who lost their chastity or the survivors were considered impure as a result of their history. The war victims or the sexual slaves of the Japanese military were out casted by their family. For instance a survivor Oak Ju Mun reported that her family treated her as if she was ‘less than human’. Today even after many years with many survivors reaching ninety years old, the deep wounds of the past still persist. Many still feel the humiliation and isolation from their families and society. Whereas in contrast the soldiers who had sexual intercourse with these women had no difficulty in setting up their own family lives. Some of them even wrote about their sexual experience with women of different ethnic background in their wartime memoirs. (Kim 19

4.6 SOCIAL REPARATION AND REDRESS MOVEMENT

In 1988 an International Conference on women and tourism was organised by the Korean Church Women United in Chejudo island of South Korea to present a research underlying the connection between the issue of the comfort women in colonial Korea and the Kisaeng tourism in contemporary Korea yet the voice against the forced recruitment of Korean women as comfort women by the Imperial Japan was majorly raised for the first time by the Feminist activists in June 1990 in Japan’s National Diet during the state visit of then President Roh Tae Woo of the Republic of Korea. The women organisations during Roh’s visit had issued a long list of demands to be made by the Japanese government. However though the Japanese new Emperor Aki-hito formally apologised and expressed his regrets for the sufferings caused by the Japanese yet the government refused to investigate the military comfort women issue when the Councillor Motooka of the upper house of Japanese Diet demanded for it. Eventually the woman organization had no better option than to send an official

²⁸ Michele Park Sonen, 2010, *Healing Multidimensional Wounds of Injustice Intersectionality and the Korean ‘Comfort Women’*. Pp 288

letter to Prime Minister Kaifu prior to his visit to Korea in October 1990 demanding the apology, compensation for the sexual slavery of Korean women. By November 1990 various women organisation under the leadership of Yun Chung Ok and Lee Hyo Chae joined together to fight for justice. Then the first survivor Kim Hak Sun in her late sixties stood up with her testimony as former comfort women in August 1991 and a class action lawsuit was filed against the Japanese state two days before the 50th anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour demanding 20 million yen for each plaintiff. Nevertheless the Japanese state continued to deny its involvement until the official documents were discovered in mid 1992 by the historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki. The Japanese was compelled to finally acknowledge its involvement in the establishment and maintenance of the military comfort women during the period. Seeing the ignorance of both the countries regarding this issue the petition was forwarded by the woman activist to the U.N Human Rights Commission, requesting to investigate Japanese atrocities committed against Korean women during the World War two. The petition was responded by the UNHRC by placing the issue on the official agenda held in Geneva on August 1992.

Eventually the Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi apologized in his public speech to the Korean people during his state visit to South Korea in 1992. The Prime Minister promised to come up with some measures in lieu of legal compensation for the survivors though it was delayed by three years before Tokyo helped in establishing the controversial National/ Asian Women's Fund in July 1995 to show its moral responsibility towards the former comfort women.

Initially when the women activist raised its voice against this issue of comfort women the response of the Korean government was ignorance. The lack of documentary was one of the reasons why the Korean government could not press charges against Japan since all the documents were destroyed mostly the ones related to comfort women issue. Moreover the normalization treaty of 1965 between Japan and South Korea further stopped the Korean state to claim for reparation since the treaty did not include any debate on this issue. The ignorant response of Korean government to the Military sexual slave issue clearly indicates the patriarchal culture context and also reflects the traditional attitudes of the elites in dealing the social injustice upon poor and the powerless in Korean society.

In addition to it since 1960s as an economic development policy the South Korean government included the exploitation of young women not only as cheap labour but also as sex workers in the international tourism in order to earn foreign currency if not openly promoted and provided young women entertainers for foreign male visitors .(Chunghee Sarah Soh.1996). Furthermore the continuing U.S occupation has indirectly contributed to the creation of this localized sex industry around the military base. Though the sexual violence against the women by the U.S military have been on media always but the unequal terms in the Status of the Forces Agreement and the low standard of women involved in sex crimes committed by the U.S military has combined to help the criminals escape unpunished. The exploitation of women's sexuality as a commodity prospers under the political economy of transnational capitalism in contemporary South Korean patriarchy.

However since 1990 much devotion has been put by the activist, non-governmental organizations, academic scholars and journalist to uncover the extent of wartime sexual violence committed during World War two. They have not only dealt with the injustice of women but have also shed some light on the gendered injustice of flawed international criminal responses. For instance the report of UN's Special Rapporteur were issued discussing Japan's guilt and liability with special reference to the failure of the Tokyo Trial to prosecute sexual enslavement. Furthermore the Women's Tribunal declared that the Tokyo Trial as an incomplete case because the later failed to adequately consider sexual enslavement.(Nicole Henry. 2013).

There were Redress Movements like the Chongsindae movement and Kijich movements which together began as a part of a larger Asian women's human rights movement against the sexual exploitation of women. The founders of these movements shared values and concerns and both opposed the sexual exploitation and abuse of women. Both the women group in terms of exploitation and sufferings equally experienced the torture and abuse and both social movements grew out of the Christian leaders who were concerned for these women who were physically, emotionally and socially tortured. However there were significant ideological differences between the two groups regarding sex norms, nationalism and political activism. This lead the Chongsindae movement group to document the past abuses and demand legal and historical redress on behalf of the survivors whereas the kiiche movement began as an effort to aid and counsel sex workers.

4.7 ASIAN WOMEN'S FUND

The San Francisco Peace treaty and various other bilateral agreements between Japan and the South Asian nations though have settled all the post war claims of compensation and yet the pressure put on by the international court to compensate the former comfort women led Japan to acknowledge its moral responsibility and accordingly the government help establish the fund 'with the aim of expressing a sense of national atonement from the Japanese people to the former comfort women'²⁹.

The fund is nominally an NGO and is under the direct supervision of the Japanese government but the staff members were not employees of the government. However the activist in Japan and in abroad considers this fund as only an expedient designed to evade Japan's legal responsibility. The fund was caught up in controversy even before it was introduced in July 1995. This fund issue has more seriously contributed to fissures among the communities of victim survivors and their supporters. When the Prime Minister Miyazawa expressed his apology and promised that the government would conduct the formal investigation over this comfort women issue, the government report published on July 1992 revealed that the systematic involvement of the wartime government in institutionalizing the comfort system. This report was criticized by the activist both in Japan and Korea. This criticism leads Tokyo to conduct supplementary investigation beginning from December 1992 and also included a short visit to Korea to interview the comfort women.

The second report issued on August 1993 admitted coercion in some cases which also received a heavy criticism from both the Japanese social critics and the South Korean activists. The second report was found to be incomplete and devious and the Korean council clearly stated that it lacked the legal responsibility. The Korean government was looked upon for support by the Korean council but in contrast Seoul positively reacted to Tokyo's admission of coercion in the second report and the Korean government apparently declared that this issue would no longer be regarded as the current diplomatic issue.

²⁹ C. Sarah Soh, 2003, *Japan's National/Asian Women's Fund for 'Comfort Women*. pp 213.

In June 1994 about a year later when the leader of Japan's socialist party Murayama Tomiichi became the Prime Minister, the comfort women movement leaders had high hopes for achieving a satisfactory resolution to the comfort women issue. eventually it turn out to be unsatisfactory since Murayama as a leader of a coalition cabinet was himself caught up in between conservative resistance against and progressive clamour for state compensation.(C.Sarah Soh .2003). Instead the Prime Minister indicted his intention of seeking for a broader national participation in the project even the International Commission of Jurists concluded that Japan should make suitable compensation to the victims and their families. Despite the heavy criticism Tokyo finally announced in June 1995 the plan to establish a fund provisionally named "Josei no tame no Ajia Heiwa Yuko Kikin" (Asian Peace and Friendship Fund for Women) to deal with the comfort women issue.

The purpose of this fund was to make it seem like that the fund was originally granted by the Japanese government rather than from civilians or private persons. However, the opponents strongly objected to this thinking, stating that it obscured the war crime and the responsibility of the state, and which has majorly created an obstruction in the road to justice and to the recovery of the victim's dignity.

The business section of the society was reluctant in granting this compensation just when this Fund system got started since slavery and brutality according to them was a common war crime during the colonial rule. Consequently the fund raised was primarily from ordinary people. The government is expected to pay only for the medical and welfare expenses of individual survivors. The fund having been authorised to be operated as a non profit foundation, the Japanese government has regularly stated again that it supports AWF projects out of moral responsibility and that the legal compensation issues have been settled.

At the most, the government has also sidestepped the issue of whether the comfort system was a "war crime" with its rhetoric gesture of moral responsibility. This is the primary issue that has caused supporters for state compensation to continue to denounce the Fund as "trickery "(mayakashi) or "deception"(gomakashi) employed to put an end to post war compensation issues. Moreover over the years there is an internal controversy going on among the volunteers working for this Fund Mission.

Apart from the Fund controversy there is another fundamental issue regarding the Tokyo apology. It was uncertain who would honour a pledge whether Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro or Japan Bereaved families Association. Moreover the resignation of the former Prime Minister's wife Miki Mutusuko, a socially prominent figure further damaged the image of the fund despite her public renunciation she continued to help with the fund raising activities of the AWF. The widespread publicity generated by her helped mitigate the premier's militant posture on the issue of Japan's post war responsibility. So when the fund was sent after three months to the comfort women the letter of apology one from the Prime minister and the other from the AWF president was also sent. As such this partially erased the issue of state compensation for a war crime. However the letter of apology was further criticized since the apology was more of personal type and not of the government of Japan.

The Korean council and its allies in Japan have openly proclaimed the Japanese government for its ignorance regarding the comfort women issue and compensating it with the AWF project. The comfort women of Korea and Taiwan have taken a stern position against Japan and also against the Fund provided by the later. Moreover the movement leaders have earnestly advised the survivors of Korea to reject the AWF, considering the fund to be a deceptive measure of the Japanese government to avoid legal responsibility. Instead the Korean Government itself provides the survivors monthly pay and supports them and helps them to follow the formal position of the movement leadership. However in 1997 when the seven comfort women of Korea accepted this AWF there was split among the activist. In the autumn of 1997 the Korean council launched the fund raising campaign where the Korean government gave special payment as support money to each of about 140 survivors. This payment was made with the deal that survivors sign a pledge not to receive AWF money. This act was regarded as a victory by the Korean council which bend on to reinforce its campaign for Japanese government compensation. Furthermore the Korean council in 1998 pledged the Japanese state to stop this AWF fund and to take the alternative method of compensating the comfort women. Despite the opposition by the Korean council the AWF money tried its best to continue providing its resources till 2002 in an undisclosed manner to as many survivors in South Korea as possible. Meanwhile the Japanese government despite all the criticisms tried to take its moral responsibility

towards the issue by paying off the Comfort Women through this AWF compensation.

4.8 SEXUAL SLAVE PRACTICE IN KOREA:

Korea after years under the occupation of Japan and the division of the country into two halves North Korea and South Korea suffering of the Koreans became more intense. During the colonial period Koreans were deprived off their rights, Japan tried every possible way to wipe out the Korean's traditional culture. The Yi Dynasty women entertainers known as 'Kiseang' became prostitutes during this period. This prostitution business in Korea did not stop immediately after Korea got its independence. The Korean Government used these women as a means to entertain the tourist visiting Korea. Moreover the Japanese men could not get over the Korean women as such the maximum numbers of tourist were Japanese men, the visit of Japanese tourist to Korea started increasing immensely after every year since 1965. The Japanese travel agency hyped this system which lured 80% of Japanese men to visit Korea.³⁰

4.9 CONCLUSION

The Japanese after the annexation of Korea did bring some changes in the industrialization of the latter. The Korean women were also employed in light as well as heavy industries but during the last war years their attitude towards these women drastically changed. Though the system of the women entertainers already existed in Korea this comfort women issue has caught the limelight and it has been one issue that is spoiling the relation between Japan and Korea. Its just that the inhuman and the sexual abuse the Japanese military army caused to these comfort women the whole issue has been hyped.

There is still a virtual freeze in the relation between the two countries. Recently the two countries are still trying to resume the talks regarding this sensitive issue by holding monthly talks. However the recent June 2014 talk was suspended since Tokyo decided to review its landmark 1993 apology where the Japanese chief cabinet

³⁰ Matsui Yayori and Lora Sharnoff,1977, *Sexual Slavery in Korea*, pp 23.

secretary acknowledged had indeed forced women into sexual slavery and extended its sincere apologies. The review upheld the apology but this upset the Koreans who rejected the review's finding.

The rift between Japan and Korea are at the lowest level for years relating to the issues about Japanese harsh 1910-1945 colonial rule over the Korean peninsula.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

'Confucianism' as said by the feminist scholars is the root of the patriarchal system and some feminist has produced significant works of Confucianism discussing its role in preserving the idea of women's subordination to men. In the same vein, at least to some extent it can be suggested that the scholars also involves the exercise of their imaginative and creative faculties. However we seek validation of this 'absolute and eternal truth' through the materials presented to us.

The decisive factor played by the patriarchal society of Confucius belief and those reports found in order to provide understanding to us cannot be underestimated. Although it may have be undermined by some authors it may be safely concluded that the patriarchal society of Korea during the Choson and Colonial Korea brought great difficulty in the lives of women who were considered to be the lowest firm of a society. The issues concerned of sexual equality and equal opportunity have always been a part of women's societies. Although after the introduction of human rights and the rise of feminist movement in 1998 has brought some changes in the attitudes along with some western influences. But Like as *Kim Chong Ui*, wrote in *Korean Women Today*, a publication of the Korean Women's Development Institute(a government agency) that, "because of the wrong socialization process in our society which has continued for too long, not only men but women also themselves tend to recognize the inferiority of women, at least unconsciously. This is what remains as the major obstacle to achieving equality between men and women."

The feminist movement especially dedicated to eliminate or at least to address the sexual discrimination and inequalities have taken an active part. They have challenged the conventional views of traditionalist religions as monolithic sources of oppression and of women as victims of male domination. There also have been many active women's movements in Korea who made joint efforts to help the victims in legal matters and to counsel them. The feminist in order to promote changes in law and to help the victims of sexual discrimination and violence used the chastity ideology, the double standard of sexuality and conceptions on normal and abnormal sexuality.

As mentioned above the Korean elites known as the Yang bans of Korea were different from the commoners and they fully following the Confucian ideology snatched Korea from the hands of the Buddhist monks. The study also proves that in this Yi society women were subordinate to men; the patriarchal system of social

structure was strictly followed. Thus in order for a Yang ban family to retain its status, it was essential that it produce a son who acquired a formal Confucian education by enrolling in a public or private school and who maintained a minimum scholastic standing.

In view of the enormous power, prestige, and privilege enjoyed by the Yang ban, they understandably made every effort to preserve their status by motivating their descendants to take up Confucian studies as a profession and by making economic and other resources available to them to pursue such a goal. This factor, more than anything else, explains the strong tendency that existed in Yi society to perpetuate the Yang ban class

The Confucian state established by the Yi depended largely on the examination system for recruitment of state officials. Both in ideology and in practice, the civil examinations were conducted on a competitive basis, placing primary emphasis upon the candidate's proficiency in Confucian studies and moral cultivation. Contrary to a belief widely held by scholars in other times, the civil examination system during the early part of the Yi dynasty was not closed to all who were not members of the Yang ban class. It was open to commoners who qualified by devoting their energies to Confucian scholarship. While it cannot be denied that one's Yang ban lineage background and membership in a certain influential clan offered clear advantage in the civil examinations, there was at the same time no restriction against men of commoner origin taking part in this important state recruitment system. Hence the early Yi state did admit men of commoner origin, who comprised a majority of the population, to the civil examinations, giving them an opportunity to rise beyond the social status into which they were born. Since this major channel of upward social mobility was open to qualified commoners, the talented and ambitious among them could climb the ladder of success by first taking up Confucian scholarship and then by successfully passing a civil examination. As a consequence, the social stratification of early Yi Korea was probably not as rigid as has been once believed and the class barrier between commoners and yang ban was less insurmountable.

The most important study of this research is to learn about social status of women in Yi dynasty and also to study the role played by the Yang ban or the elites in the recruitment of Comfort Women during the Japanese colonization period. From the

study above it has been proved that women were subordinate to men and they were powerless. Though the Yi dynasty was ruled according to the Confucian ideology where it is taught that men are the head of a society and the all powerful person in the family structure but women as portrait and treated in China and Korea was quite extreme. Since Confucian ideology has lots of influences and this influence varies from one individual to another. Since the ideology of authority and dominance as portrait in the society is different to what the original Confucian ideology pertains.

The Confucian ideology of dominance is not what it is understood and followed by the Yi dynasty Korea because the actual teaching of Confucianism as a social model does not tolerate the domination of women who consist of half the population instead it advocates the virtuous relation between men and women. It's just the social mindset that proved that men are powerful physically than women so automatically they are superior to women. This concept did make a difference in Korean society and thus women were looked inferior to men and the Confucian ideology of submission was influenced in a slightly different way in Korea. Regarding the role played by the elites in recruitment of Comfort women during the Japanese colonial period, the elite woman along with Korean collaboration assisted the Japanese officials. Even though the commercialized sexual work was not operated during the Yi dynasty period yet there were the set of women entertainers who sang, danced as well as some of them played the role of mistresses. Hence this form of women entertaining male section of the society was nothing new it was a practice followed and practiced in Yi dynasty Korea. However the treatment of these women widely differentiated from the treatment the comfort women faced in the Japanese military camps. The Yang ban male society had no role in the selection of girls for this comfort stations since they themselves were involved in taking comfort from the women entertainers 'kisaeng' who were the part of entertainment in the Yi society. Thus it was the elite women along with Korean collaborators who provided some help in recruiting these young girls from lower class family into these comfort stations.

And regarding the studies about the status of women during the colonial rule in Korea. Though it is known that the system of women entertainment did prevail before the colonial rule in Korea yet the process of the same system during the Japanese rule has been hyped because the women taken as entertainers were brutally abused by the Japanese military army. Korea being a patriarchal society in addition to it the Colonial

rule of Japan and its head system caused more suffering to the women of this era. Women belonged to the lowest section of the society. As such they were as studied in this chapter considered as a mere commodity of the military and as such the inhuman treatment of these comfort women did not bother the military army of Japan. The way these women are wiped away at the end of the war clearly indicates that they were of no value in the society.

However the end of war did not end the practice of this comfort women system but has rather expanded. In the post war period women were used by the Korean government as a means to earn and economically grow faster by making them work as sexual slaves to the male tourist during their visit to Korea as well as some of them were bound for Japan mostly to work as sex workers. Wealthy Japan has become the most notorious country in the world for recruiting and exploiting such women. Japanese men's sex tours to other Asian countries are a contemporary version of Imperial Japanese army's sexual exploitation of Asian women as comfort women. The only difference from then and now is that men wear business suit now and not the military outfit. In both the cases it clearly reveals the male domination as well as the power of masculinity in a patriarchal society and men are commodifying and dehumanizing women.

Comfort women and prostituted women have no legal or psychological identity, they have lost it along with their culture and language. The chastity ideology of Confucianism has forced women to separate themselves from their bodies. It has created a cultural double standard. Moreover it has kept them from speaking even while making them into men's property. This ideology is the main reason that kept the survivors silent for half a century. Even today both the survivors of wartime and the present have been severely traumatized. The more inhuman act is that the Japanese women regard these trafficked women as cultural and historical "others" and try not to hear their cries. The study proves that more than half the population of women in Japan do not believe in the stories of the comfort women.

Regarding the AWF money though the activist are fighting for these women yet they are dominated in a way. They are not allowed to take their own decision regarding the compensation. The activists have been taking the decisions on their behalf. The research also studies that the Korean government is not too keen in this issue of

comfort women. Though they are provided financial support from the state government yet regarding the state apology the state government of Korea is keeping silent as they do not want this issue to be the central issue at this moment when the economic relations between the two countries are booming. Even the Japanese government does not take this issue seriously since half the Japanese population take this issue lightly and consider it to be a common matter during the colonial and war periods. They think it to be part of war crime and providing the victims with the compensation fund along with some personal apologies by the Prime Ministers, their part of sympathizing with the comfort women is done. Even though the apologies and the fund provided does not come directly from the state.

However the Japanese is sensitive to the international pressure and women's collective voices can force the Japanese to change its attitude regarding the comfort women. To abolish the male centred sexuality and culture, women must speak out against the violence against women. And lastly the Asian women need more opportunities for legitimate jobs and economic independence in order to be less vulnerable to the seductive voice of the smugglers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Sources:

Bardsley Jan, 1999, Spaces for Feminist Action: National Centers for Women in Japan and South Korea, NWSA Journal, Vol. 11, No.1, pp. 136-149.

Chandra Vipan, 2001, Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military by Sangmie Choi Schellstede, Pacific affairs, Vol. 74, No. 3, pp. 433-436.

Chinkin Christine M., 2001, Women's International Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, The International Law, Vol. 95, No. 2, pp. 335-341

Chunghee Sarah Soh, 2000, From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the 'Comfort Women' Social Science Japan Journal, Vol.3, No. 1, pp. 59-76.

Chunghee Sarah Soh, 1996, The Korean "Comfort Women" Movement for Redress, Asian Survey, Vol.36, No. 12, pp. 1226-1240.

Dennis McNamara, 1989, The Keisho and The Korean Business Elite, The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 48, No.2, pp 310-323

Deuchler Martina, 1980, Neo-Confucianism: The Impulse for Social Action in Early Yi Korea. The Journal of Korean Studies, Vol. 2, pp 71-111

Duus Peter, 1999, The Doomed Empire: Japan in Colonial Korea by M.J. Rhee, The international History Review, Vol.21, No. 2, pp 523-524

EunKang Koh, 2008, Gender Issue and Confucian Scriptures: Is Confucianism Incompatible with Gender Equality in South Korea?, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol.71, No. 2, pp.345-362

Gilbert Paula Ruth, 2012, The Violated Female Body as nation: Cultural, Familial, and Spiritual Identity in Nora Okja Keller's Comfort Woman, Journal of Human Rights, Vol.11, pp. 486-504

Hayashi Hirofumi, 2008, Disputes in Japan over the Japanese Military “Comfort Women” System and its Perception in History, *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.617, pp. 123-132

Henry Nicola, 2013, Memory of an Injustice: The “Comfort Women” and the Legacy of the Tokyo Trial, *Asian Studies Review*, Vol 37, No. 3, pp.326-380

Ion A. Hamish, 2003, Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation by Yuki Tanaka, *The International History Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp 473-475.

Izumi Mariko, 2011, Asian-Japanese: State Apology, National Ethos, and the “Comfort Women” Reparations Debate in Japan, *Communication Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 5, pp. 473-490

Kim Janice C.H.,2007, The Pacific War and Working Women in Late Colonial Korea, *Signs*, Vol.33, No.1, pp. 81-103

Karlin Jason G., 2002-2003, War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960 by Marlene J. Mayo; J. Thomas Rimer; H. Eleanor Kerkham, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 4, pp. 611-612.

Katharine H. S. Moon, 2007, Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treaties: Gender Politics in the “Anti-American” Movement in South Korea. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 66, No. 1, pp 129-157

Kazuko Watanabe,1999, Trafficking in Women’s Bodies, Then and Now: The Issue of Military “Comfort Women”, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, Vol.27, No. 1/2 , pp. 19-31

Kim Janice C. H., 2007, The Pacific War and Working Women in Late Colonial Korea, *Signs*, Vol. 33, No.1, pp. 81-103.

Kim Marie Seong Hak, 2007, Law and Custom under the Choson Dynasty and Colonial Korea: A Comparative Perspective, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.66, No. 4, pp 1067-1097

Kim Tammy E., 2007, Performing Social Reparation: “Comfort Women” and The Path to Political Forgiveness, *Women and Performances: a Journal of Feminist Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 221-249

Layoun Mary N., 1998, *The Comfort Women: Colonialism, War, and Sex*. Special Cultures Critique 5:1 by Chungmoo Choi, *The Journal Of Asian Studies*, Vol. 57, No.3, pp 872-874.

Lie John, 1995, *The Transformation of Sexual work in 20th Century Korea*, *Gender and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp 310-327

Lee Na Young, 2007, *The Construction of Military Prostitution in South Korea during the U.S Military rule*, *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 453-481

Moon H. S Katharine, 1999, *South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labor*, *Asian Survey*, Vol.39, No.2, pp 310-327

Mitsuhiko Kimura, 1995, *The Economies of Japanese Imperialism in Korea, 1910-1939*, *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 48, No.3. pp 555-574

Mitchell Richard H., 1997, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* by George Hicks, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 2, p 503.

Min Pyong Gap, 2003, *Korean "Comfort Women": The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender and Class*, *Gender and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 938- 957

Moon Katharine H.S., 1999, *The Comfort Women: Colonialism, War, and Sex*. Special Issue of 'Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 271-276.

Moon Sueng Gyu,1974, *Ancestor Worship in Korea: Tradition and Transition*, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol.5, No. 2, Family and Religion, pp. 71-87

Myonggu Yi and . Douglas William A, 1967, *Korean Confucianism Today*, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.40, No ½, pp. 43-59

Park You-Me, 2011, *Comforting the Nation: 'Comfort Women,' the Politics of Apology and the Working of Gender*, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 199-211

Park Insook Han and Lee Jay Cho, 1995, Confucianism and The Korean Family, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol.26, No.1, Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities. Pp. 117-134

Park Sonen Michele, 2012, Healing Multidimensional Wounds of Injustice Intersectionality and the Korean “Comfort Women”, *Berkeley La Raza Law Journal*, Vol.22.1, pp.269-300

Suleski Ronald, 1996, Yangban: Ri Chosen Shakai No Tokken Kaiso (Yang ban: The Privileged Elite of Yi Korea) By Miyajima Hiroshi, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.69, No.3, pp. 432-434.

Schultermandl Silvia, 2007, Writing Rape, Trauma, and Transnationality onto the Female Body: Matrilineal Em-Body-Ment in Nora Okja Keller’s Comfort Woman, *Meridians*, Vol. &, No. 2, pp 71-100

Soh Chunghee Sarah, 2010, Human Rights and the ‘Comfort Women’, *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 123-129

Soh Sarah C., 2003, Japan’s National/Asian Women’s Fund for ‘Comfort Women’, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 2, pp 209-233

Shin Susan S., 1975, Some Aspects of Landlord-Tenant Relation in Yi Dynasty Korea, *Occasional Papers on Korea*, No.3, pp 49-88

Takayama Keita, 2009, Globalizing Critical Studies of ‘Official’ Knowledge: lessons from the Japanese History Textbook Controversy Over ‘Comfort Women’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 30, No. 5, pp. 577-589

Vladimir Tikhonov, 2007, Masculinizing the Nation: Gender Ideologies in Traditional Korea and in the 1890s-1900s Korean Enlightenment Discourse, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.66, No. 4, pp. 1029-1065

Wakabayashi Bob Tadashi, 2003, Comfort Women: Beyond Litigious Feminism, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp 223-258.

W.Wagner Edward, 1974, The Ladder of Success in Yi Dynasty Korea, *Occasional Papers on Korea*, pp 1-8

Yang P Key. and Henderson Gregory, 1959, An Outline History of Korean Confucianism: Part 2: The Schools of Yi Confucianism, The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.18, No.2, pp 259-276

Young-Hee Shim, 2001, Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes, Human Studies, Vol. 24, No. 1/2 , pp. 133-148

Young Whan Kihl, 1981, Local Elites, Power Structure and Legislative Process In Korea, The Journal of Korean Studies, Vol.3, pp 147-180

Yong Ho Choe, 1974, Commoners in Early Yi Dynasty Civil Examinations: An Aspect of Korean Social Structure 1392-1600, The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.33, No. 4, pp 611-631