

BLOOMSBURY INDIA
Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd
Second Floor, LSC Building No. 4, DDA Complex, Pocket C – 6 & 7,
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070

BLOOMSBURY, BLOOMSBURY PRIME and the Diana logo are
trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in 2020

Copyright © Veenus Jain, 2020

Veenus Jain has asserted her right under the Indian Copyright Act to be
identified as the Author of this work

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying,
recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior
permission in writing from the publishers

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over,
or responsibility for, any third-party websites referred to or in this book.
All internet addresses given in this book were correct at the time of going
to press. The author and publisher regret any inconvenience caused if
addresses have changed or sites have ceased to exist, but can accept
no responsibility for any such changes

ISBN: 978-93-90252-87-9

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Typeset by PrepSol

Printed and bound in India by Replika Press Pvt Ltd

To find out more about our authors and books, visit
www.bloomsbury.com and sign up for our newsletters

Preface

vii

1. Norms and Departure: Locating Women's
Economic Agency within the Dharmaśāstras 1
2. Holy Women in Europe in the Early Middle Ages 14
3. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment 26
4. Progressive Women Members in Indian Constituent Assembly:
Their Views and Ideas about Gender Equality 35
5. Trade, Commerce & Women in North East: A Historical
Perspective 51
6. Constraints and Challenges towards Women's Education and
Leadership in India: Historical Tradition and Contemporary
Scenario 61
7. Aparna Sen's Sati : An Inadvertent Submission
to Indigenous Conservative Discourse 72
8. Ema Keithel 81
9. Swarna Chitrakar: A Personification 92
10. Women in Punjab in Precolonial Period 107
11. Stūpa: A Symbol of Evolving Cultic Practice
& Gender Equality in Early Buddhism 116

10

CHAPTER

Women in Punjab in Precolonial Period

Rupali Bhalla Mathur, Mata Sundari College for Women, University of Delhi

With all its colourful variations, strong and rigid hierarchical structure has been the common constant of the society of Punjab. Home to a number of races and religions, Punjab followed mainly three religions: Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam. Ibbetson in his compilation *Punjab Castes* gives 185 castes in the area of Punjab and many more minor ones. Each caste had its own rules and regulations. However one dark commonality was present in all castes and religions that they treated their women as subordinates and inferiors and the existence of patriarchal system was loud and profound.

Infested with many ills like the whole of India, Punjab society was plagued with many ills. There was existence of child infanticide, child marriage, no education for girls, dowry, Sati, no property rights for women and many more.

Iron Hold of Customs

Held in the vice like grip of customs which pervaded through the very fabric of the soul of Punjab its society was controlled in not only its special occasions like birth, betrothal, marriage etc. but day to day life also. "Custom is thus defined as a rule of conduct which the governed observe spontaneously and not in pursuance of a law set by a political superior. It is a rule of positive morality before it is adopted by the courts and clothed with legal sanctions."¹