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WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INDIAN BUDHDHIST SOCIETY

Still twenty - first century, in India, many researchers highlighting their research on the contribution of female participation and demonstration within the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana (“Tantrayana,” or “Mantrayana”) of Buddhist world. In India, equal potentiality for enlightenment has been actively participated in Buddhism. Siddhhartha Gautama’s philosophy and beliefs spreading in many regions under these three panths. He went out to find a peace where he could feel a spiritual inner power in himself. There are many followers, who believe in his philosophy and practice all his sayings in their life. ‘Gautama would be considered a “sammasambudhdha.” He believed in teaching to others for enlightening whatever he had discovered in his life. However, he chose to be a sattharo, a “teacher/guru.” These teachers has an aim to teach dharma/the law/doctrine, which is the reality of truth’ (Murcott 15). In the context of religion, women have a religious space in Buddhism as they became/become siddha, dakini, and nun where they had/have separate accommodation systems for living. There is no any issue of caste, monks (bhbhikkus) and nuns (Bbhikkunis) can take food from anyone. It is clear that in Buddhism, there is no caste issue for taking bhiksha. Bhzikshu can take bhiksha without asking a caste of a person.

In addition, after 8th C. E. women have been participating as a major role of teacher in “Mahayana” and “Vajrayana” but to some extent in “monastic institution” and in “practice” have social constructions and assumptions of religious - social consciousness. ‘Samani, 'female wonderers' (spend their life in the forest lonely). They are Bhadda
Kundalakesa, Nanduttara, Dantika, Uppalavanna and Sukka’ (Murcott 16). Samani should follow Buddhist practices to be a part of this society. Though, the women’s participation is active but it is invisible and hidden in the history, which needs to approach for studying it. Also, about religious life, women have legal equal rights for remarry and divorce in marriage practices where they are enjoying the freedom. Nevertheless, this study also finding answers about what is role of women in Indian Buddhist society? and how social freedom for women has given in Buddhist societies? Therefore, it is significant to examine their role and contemporary changes in the theoretical construction of Buddhist philosophy and social and religious practices in Indian Buddhist society. Therefore, in the past, they could become a teachers and spiritual guides, but they are/were in less numbers. About the equal rights, it has been found that Buddhist philosophy brings equality in religious and social spheres. Thus, it enhances interest to find how they are bringing their contribution in religious spheres of life today. David writes, "she ... laid down all social prestige, all domestic success, as a daughter, mother, wife, queen, or housekeeper, and gained the austerer joys of an asexual rational being, walking with wise men in recognized intellectual equality on higher levels of thought” (72). 'Theri' means 'women elders' or women who have acquire more knowledge intellectually. While some of the women described in the TherTgathd (73 Poems collection in earliest Buddhist literature) commentary is a more as active agents in soteriological strategies engendered. In addition, the women are actively achieved the equal position as leaders and teachers, though, they portraits in the text as ‘asexual, rational beings.’ Interestingly, the story of Kisagotami (not untypical), Kisagotami is an emotional and domestic woman; her child’s death brought a deep grief in her life. Then, she became a disciple of Buddha. Even at the higher level of religious insight, intellect and reason are not what characterize the women’s experiences but rather desire to get and accomplishment of "self-mastery tearing or "asunder the mass of darkness of ignorance”’ (Collett 72; Murcott 15).

This paper has an intention to focus on religious social practice in Indian Buddhist society. Karma Leksh Tsomo argues, “In Buddhist society, women have freedom and independency than other societies but in the domestic and institutional levels, there are patriarchy exists. As an example, when people do show respect toward nuns and to monks having differences” (1). Therefore, the gender biases have been found in Indian society, where people give less preference to women in their practices too. Though, there are religious rights but social stratifications having some gender imbalances. However, the academic and religious
enlightenment must for bringing change in Indian society. Then, there would be some scope for bringing equality in the society.

**Works Cited**


