



Research Article

## Feminist Consciousness in the Indian Knowledge Tradition: A Historical and Philosophical Analysis

Dr. Rakesh Mohan Nautiyal <sup>1</sup>, Dr. Deepti Bagwadi <sup>2\*</sup>, Dr. Madhuri Rawat <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of History, Government Degree College, Kamand, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India

<sup>2,3</sup> Department of English, VSKC Government PG College, Dakpathar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

Corresponding Author: \*Dr. Deepti Bagwadi

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18845200>

### Abstract

This paper presents an in-depth analytical study of the emergence, development, and gradual transformation of feminist consciousness across the vast expanse of the Indian knowledge tradition and ancient Sanskrit literature. While feminism is often considered a Western concept in current intellectual discourse, this research substantiates the argument that, in the Indian context, the consciousness of women's rights and identity is very ancient, indigenous, and fundamental.

The study is divided into four main periods. The Vedic period is analysed as a golden age of women's freedom and intellectual equality, where Brahnavadini, & quot women like Gargi, Maitreyi, and Lopamudra not only composed the hymns of the Vedas but also challenged the sages and saints in debates. Following this, the transition to the Smriti period (especially the Manusmriti) is discussed, where the status of women declined due to the rigidity of social structures, and patriarchal norms limited their rights. A significant portion of the research focuses on the epic period (Ramayana and Mahabharata), where Sita's silent self-respect and Draupadi's fierce resistance

are seen as early uprisings of feminist consciousness. In particular, Draupadis questions about dharma and justice in the Kuru Sabha are relevant even today in discussions of women's rights. Finally, the research examines the medieval Bhakti movement, where saint-poets like Mirabai, Akka Mahadevi, and Laladhya, rejecting the patriarchal family and conservative society, declared their independence through a spiritual path. In conclusion, this paper establishes that Indian feminist consciousness is not based solely on protest, but rather is a continuously flowing philosophical stream of self-realisation, dignity, and equality, which has guided Indian society for ages.

### Manuscript Information

- ISSN No: 2583-7397
- Received: 13-01-2026
- Accepted: 23-02-2026
- Published: 03-03-2026
- IJCRM:5(2); 2026: 01-08
- ©2026, All Rights Reserved
- Plagiarism Checked: Yes
- Peer Review Process: Yes

### How to Cite this Article

Nautiyal R M, Bagwadi D, Rawat M. Feminist Consciousness in the Indian Knowledge Tradition: A Historical and Philosophical Analysis. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2026;5(2):01-08.

### Access this Article Online



[www.multiarticlesjournal.com](http://www.multiarticlesjournal.com)

**KEYWORDS:** Feminist Consciousness, Indian Knowledge Tradition, Patriarchy, Identity and Existence, Brahnavadini

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Feminist Thought in the Indian Context: Growth of Feminist Consciousness in Indian Society and Culture

The study of the role of women in Indian society and culture is a complex and multifaceted subject that occupies a central place in modern academic discourse. In this context, analysing ancient Sanskrit literature from a feminist perspective is an important research task. This article is an attempt to understand the historical roots and evolution of Indian feminist consciousness in the context of different literary eras such as Vedic literature, Smritis, epics and devotional literature. This study is based on the fundamental premise that Indian feminism is not a mere imitation of Western thought; rather, it is an indigenous, historically developed, and ever flowing consciousness. From the examples of learned women like Gargi and Maitreyi in the Vedic period to the strong characters of Sita and Draupadi in the epics, and the rebellious voices of Mirabai and Akka Mahadevi in the Bhakti movement, Indian women have always struggled for their identity and dignity.

This article attempts to show through these literary sources how the status and role of the Indian woman have evolved, and how she has made her presence felt while facing various challenges. In the Indian context, famous thinker Golendra Patel has defined feminism as "feminist discourse in a woman's perspective", which awakens women's consciousness and advocates their independence.<sup>i</sup> It is an ideological process and social movement that aims to ensure gender equality at political<sup>ii</sup>, economic and social levels. In this respect, Indian feminism differs from Western feminism, which focuses primarily on individual freedom and self-reliance.<sup>iii</sup> In contrast, the Indian feminist movement has its roots in the socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century, where thinkers such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and Jyotiba Phule led mass struggles against sati, child marriage, and<sup>iv</sup> other social evils. This movement was not just a rebellion against men, but a comprehensive social reform against<sup>v</sup> the patriarchal system, superstition and conservative traditions.

It is important to understand that feminist consciousness in ancient Sanskrit literature should be viewed through a modern<sup>vi</sup> academic lens. This does not mean that the feminist movement existed in the ancient period in the same form as it does today, but rather it is an analytical tool that highlights the hidden prejudices, contradictions and voices of women's resistance contained in these texts. For example, British colonialism and the Islamic invasions of the Mughals limited the position of women in Indian society, necessitating modern reform movements. It shows that feminist consciousness was not merely a result of internal social degradation, but also a reaction to external cultural and political influences. Thus, this study goes beyond a linear interpretation and attempts to understand the complex and multidimensional portrayal of women within the Indian knowledge tradition.

### 2. Vedic Age: Glorious Form of Woman

The Vedic period (around 1500-500 BC) is considered a 'golden age' for women in Indian history. In the literature of this

period, women had equal social and religious status as men, which was extremely advanced compared to later eras.<sup>vii</sup> Not only did they have complete freedom to participate in religious rites, but they also had the status of priests and sages, and participated in debates on religion and philosophy with male scholars.<sup>viii</sup> In the Vedas, women are She is called Brahma, which means that she herself is a scholar and also makes her children well-educated. A verse from the Rig Veda establishes this dignity of women:

"स्त्री हि ब्रह्मा बभूविथ" "Stree Hi Brahma Babhuvith"<sup>ix</sup> That is, being a scholar herself, she makes her children well-educated.<sup>x</sup>

In this era, women had the full right to education, and they could be of two types: Brahmavadini (one who studied while remaining unmarried) or Sadyodhava (one who received education before marriage)<sup>xi</sup>. In Vedic literature, we find the names of many learned women who made significant contributions in various fields of knowledge. Among them, names like Apala, Ghosha, Aditi, Gargi, Maitreyi, Sandhya, Shachi and Sulabha are prominent.<sup>xii</sup> These women not only conducted yagnas but also proved their proficiency in philosophy, politics and even the art of war<sup>xiii</sup>. They had the right to choose their life partner through swayamvara and also had full rights over property.

The highest symbol of feminist consciousness of this era is found in philosophers like Gargi and Maitreyi. Gargi Vachaknavi has been hailed as a great philosopher in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad<sup>xiv</sup>. In the Brahmayagya of King Janaka, he challenged Maharishi Yagyavalkya with sharp questions on Brahmajnana, which led to the creation of many verses of the Upanishads. This dialogue shows that women could be as knowledgeable as men<sup>xv</sup>, even more so. Similarly, Maitreyi, one of the two wives of Yajnavalkya, was more interested in the pursuit of immortality and enlightenment rather than wealth.<sup>xvi</sup> When Yajnavalkya started dividing his property, Maitreyi asked him:

सा होवाच मैत्रेयी येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्यां यदेव भगवान्वेद तदेव मे ब्रूहीति (Sa Hovacha Maitreyi Yenahan Naamrita Sya Kimhan Ten Kurya Yadev Bhagwanveda Tadev Me Bruhiti) That is, "What should I do with that which cannot make me immortal?"<sup>xvii</sup> This dialogue establishes the superiority of spiritual knowledge over materialistic knowledge, where a woman raises questions for her own liberation. The philosophical significance of characters like Gargi and Maitreyi lies not only in their scholarship but in the fact that they were publicly discussing esoteric subjects like Brahmgyan. This situation largely ended in later ages, where women were excluded from religious and philosophical debates. The consciousness of this high status of women during the Vedic period became a source of inspiration for the social reform movements of the 19th century. Reformers like Swami Dayanand Saraswati, citing the Vedas, advocated women's education, widow remarriage and the right of Dalits to wear the sacred thread, so that Indian society could regain its ancient glory.

## 1 for Appendix:

name of the scholar	period	Major contributions
Gargi Vachaknavi	Upanishadic period	In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, there was a debate on Brahma Gyan with Maharishi Yagyavalkya. The verses of the Upanishad were created from his questions. <sup>xviii</sup>
Maitreyi	Upanishadic period	Philosophical dialogue with Maharishi Yagyavalkya on immortality and self-knowledge. He gave importance to spiritual knowledge instead of wealth and property. <sup>xix</sup>
Evening	Vedic Period	She defeated Maharishi Medhatithi in a debate. She was the first woman priest to perform Yagya. <sup>xx</sup>
Shachi (Indrani)	Vedic Period	Indra's wife was a great scholar of the Vedas. She researched many verses of the Rig Veda. <sup>xxi</sup>
Shakalya Devi	Vedic Period	Wife of King Ashwapati, who established schools for girls. <sup>xxii</sup>
Apala	Vedic Period	Composed many hymns of the Rigveda. She was a Brahmavadin and scholar. <sup>xxiii</sup>
declaration	Vedic Period	Composed <sup>xxiv</sup> two hymns of the Rigveda ( 10.39 and 10.40). She was famous for her title of Brahmavaadini.
Sulabha	Upanishadic period	The greatest scholar of Maharaja Janak's kingdom, who defeated King Janak in a debate and established a school for women's education. <sup>xxv</sup>

## 3. Memory period: loss of rights and rise of patriarchy

About 500 BCE, the status of women in Indian society began to decline. This was the period when the Smritis, especially the Manusmriti, became the basis of social and legal order. In the texts of this era, while on the one hand, there are idealistic verses respecting women, on the other hand, there were also rules made that limited their rights and freedom. There is a famous verse in Manu Smriti expressing respect for women:

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।

यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥

Yatra Naryastu Pujyante Ramante Tatra Devataah.  
Yatraitaastu na pujyante sarvastatraphalah kriyah.<sup>xxvi</sup>

That is, where women are respected, gods reside there, and where they are not respected, all actions become fruitless. This shloka depicts an ideal situation. Sometimes this text, i.e. another shloka of Manusmriti, deprives women of Vedic studies and religious rituals:

नास्ति स्त्रीणां क्रिया मन्त्रैरिति धर्म व्यवस्थितिः ।

निरिन्द्रिया ह्यमन्त्राश्च स्त्रीभ्यो अन्तमिति स्थितिः ॥

Naasti streenam kriya mantrairiti dharmae systematih.  
Nirindriya Hyamantrascha Stribhoyo Anritmiti Stitih.<sup>xxvii</sup>

That is, there is a provision in religion that women should not perform any rituals with mantras, because they are senseless (powerless) and mantraless, and it is also said that women are 'Mithya' ( false). But it is generally believed that many materials in ancient Indian literature have been written as interpolations by later writers because ancient Indian literature considers the status of women important in society, so it can also be considered an interpolation. Yet this contradiction highlights the fact that the status of women in society was a complex issue, which cannot be understood from a single point of view. On one hand, society considered them worshipful, while on the other hand, their freedom and rights were snatched away. This was probably the result of the socio-political conditions of the time. Due to foreign invasions, the feeling of insecurity increased in society, due to which, priority was given.

For the safety of women, their work area was limited to the home.<sup>xxviii</sup>

During this period, the identity of women changed from 'Vidushi' ( Brahmavaadini) to ' Grihastha' ( one who performs.

family duties)<sup>xxix</sup> The birth of a girl child was considered inauspicious<sup>xxx</sup>, child marriage became prevalent<sup>xxxii</sup>, and widow remarriage was prohibited.<sup>xxxii</sup> Social evils like purdah

system and sati also became a part of Indian society during this period.<sup>xxxiii</sup> This was a sign of change from a knowledge-based society to a society where the role of women was limited to the confines of social order and lineage continuity, thereby reinforcing the mindset of relegating women to the category of weaker sections.

## 4. Women in the Epics: Ideals, Struggles and Resistance

Ramayana and Mahabharata, written after the Vedic era and during the decline of the Smriti period, women's characters emerge as more complex and multifaceted. These characters reflect the changing and contradictory status of women in society, where they were not only portrayed as ideal, but their voices of struggle and resistance also became vocal.

## 4.1 Sita: The conflict between ideals and the ordeal of fire

In the Ramayana written by Valmiki and Tulsidas, Sita has been presented as an ideal of a devoted and well-behaved woman. The incident of her Agni Pariksha (fire test), which is often seen as proof of her purity, is a complex issue from a feminist perspective. This episode reflects the patriarchal expectation of forcing a woman to publicly prove her honour and morality. Tulsidas wrote This incident is described as a divine leela in the Ramacharitmanas:

सुनहु प्रिया व्रत रुचिर सुसीला । मैं कछु करबि ललित नरलीला ॥

तुम्ह पावक महुँ करहु निवासा । जौ लगि करौ निसाचर

नासा ॥<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Listen, my love, my dear, I will do some Lalit Narleela.

You should reside in the fire, if I touch the nose of the demon

**That is, " O virtuous one who observes a beautiful fast!  
Listen, I am now going to perform some beautiful human  
pastimes, so you stay in the fire until I destroy the demons.**

This shloka indicates a pre-planned event, where Rama did not doubt Sita, but it was an obligation to follow the ethos. This incident was a message to society that a woman may have to undergo a test as severe as fire for her honour, even if she is innocent.

#### 4.2 Draupadi: Rebellion and the question of Dharma

is a powerful symbol of resistance, in contrast to the humility of Sita. During his disrobing at the Sabha Parva, he raised a question which silenced the entire Kuru dynasty – "तस्याः क्रन्दन्त्या दीनयाः पाण्डवाः पश्यतां सर्वे। सभामध्यगताः सर्वे न केचित् प्रत्यभाषत" Tasyaḥ krāndantya dināyaḥ paṇḍavaḥ paśyatāṃ sarve. Sabhamadhyagataḥ survey na kechit pratyabhat. <sup>xxxv</sup>Meaning " When she (Draupadi) was crying in a pitiable state, all the Pandavas were watching, and all the people sitting in the middle of the assembly remained silent, no one said anything." In the Mahabharata, the silence of the entire assembly at the time of Draupadi's disrobing is considered the biggest sin. Some important verses related to this silence are given here, which show the dilemma of Dharma at that time and the reason for the downfall of the Kuru dynasty. Draupadi repeatedly asked questions of Dharma in the full court, but even the Gurus and warriors like Bhishma, Drona and Kripacharya could not say anything against this injustice. Their silence was considered a violation of Dharma.

**न धर्म जानतो भीष्मा न च धर्मविदो जनाः।  
तस्मान्नाहं प्रपश्यामि धर्मं यो मां प्रपद्यते॥**

**Neither Dharmam Janato Bhishma nor Cha Dharmavido Janah.**

**Tasmannaham Prapashyaami Dharmam Yo Maa Prapadyate.** <sup>xxxvi</sup>

That is, " Neither Bhishma knows Dharma, nor these other people who know Dharma. Therefore, I do not see any Dharma that can protect me." Then, in the full assembly, she asked: " After Yudhishtira had staked himself, did he have the right to stake me ?" she said.

**"किं नाहं जितपूर्वा वै दास्यं पत्युरिव स्थिता।  
अजितोऽयं स्वयं भूत्वा कथं मां प्रपजेत् स्वयम्।।**

**" Kim Nahan Jitpurva Vai Daasyam Patyuriv Sthitha.  
Ajitoyaam swayam bhootva katham maa prapajet  
swyam."** <sup>xxxvii</sup>

That is, " Haven't I already become a slave? (i.e., when my husband gave himself up ). How could he (Yudhishtira), who himself was defeated, put me at stake ?" This question was a powerful and rebellious voice towards the rights of women in the society of that time. When even great men like Bhishma and Dhritarashtra could not answer this question, Draupadi challenged the legitimacy of patriarchy with her questions,

proving that a woman, in her moment of distress, can interpret religion and morality. His biggest argument in this context was that Yudhishtira had already become a slave by losing himself in gambling, and a slave has no right to gamble away his wife. With this argument, he presented himself as an independent entity. **Patriarchy** challenged the notion of.

**अहमेव दासी यदा मे न पतिः।  
कथं सोऽसौ दासो मां प्रपजेत् स्वयं ॥  
Ahmeva daasi yada me na patiah.**

**Kathan So-hundred slaves Maa Prapjet Swayam ॥** <sup>xxxviii</sup>

When the religious scholars in the assembly did not give any answer, he considered their silence as unrighteous and said that a gathering in which religion is not followed is not really an assembly.

**नैषा धर्मः सभा यत्र न धर्मं प्रयुज्यते।  
तत्र धर्मः कथं स्यात् यत्र नास्ति धर्मः ॥**

**Naisha Dharma: Sabha Yatra Na Dharmam Prayujyate.  
Tatra Dharmah Katham Syat Yatra Nasti Dharmah.** <sup>xxxix</sup>

The philosophical background of Draupadi's question is similar to the question raised by Maitreyi in the Upanishadic period, where a woman gives utmost importance to moral and spiritual issues (salvation) rather than worldly gains (wealth). Draupadi, in a similar fashion, raised the question of moral rights and honour rather than physical slavery.

#### 4.3 Kunti: A mother and her moral dilemmas

Kunti's character shows the conflict between being a mother, a ruler and a woman trapped in the fear of public shame. She gave birth to Karna but abandoned him due to social fear. <sup>xl</sup> In the Karna Parva of the Mahabharata, the dialogue between Kunti and Karna is very touching. Kunti requests Karna not to fight with the Pandavas and advocates for Karna to join the Pandavas-

**अद्यप्रभृति कौन्तेय! न ते संशयकारणम्।  
अभिगच्छ स्वपुत्रत्वं भ्रातृश्च पाण्डवान् प्रति ॥**

**Adyaprabhrutti kaunteya! Neither is there any doubt.  
Abhigaccha svaputratvam bhatraanshcha pandavan prati.**

In this dialogue, Karna questions Kunti's affection and challenges her loyalty. This incident depicts the moral dilemma of a mother who is torn between her social prestige and her duty towards her son. Thus, women in the epics are presented not simply as ideal goddesses or subservient slaves, but as complex, conflicted and multifaceted characters. Sita's humility and Agni Pariksha, Draupadi's anger and question of dharma, and Kunti's moral dilemmas all reflect the complex position of women in a patriarchal system. Feminist analysis of these characters challenges traditional notions, where their actions can be seen not simply as religious duty, but as symbols of resistance and highlighting the limitations of patriarchal morality.

## 5. Bhakti Movement: A Spiritual Revolution and Women's Liberation

In medieval India, where the condition of women had become even more deplorable since the Smriti period, the Bhakti movement emerged as a spiritual revolution that provided an alternative path of liberation to women. This movement challenged the monopoly of men in the field of religion and gave women equal freedom to conduct religious ceremonies and preach. This movement was a continuous struggle to break social inertia, hypocrisy, and exploitation<sup>xliii</sup>,

### 5.1 Prominent women saints and their rebellion

In the Bhakti movement, women saints such as Mirabai and Akka Mahadevi led a radical rebellion against social norms through their devotion and writings.

- **Mirabai:** Meera rejected the marriage and accepted Krishna as her husband<sup>xliii</sup>. His work was a radical rebellion against social norms and the patriarchal family.<sup>xliv</sup> He opposed the purdah system and the sati system, which were widely prevalent in society at that time. Meera was not only a symbol of love, but she also helped in achieving the challenging goals of women in Indian history.
- **Akka Mahadevi:** This saint-poetess from Karnataka was so engrossed in her devotion that she gave up her worldly relations, even her clothes<sup>xlv</sup>. Her nudity was a powerful feminist symbol that reflected her rejection of social norms and material existence. Her work directly challenged the society's imposed female identity.<sup>xlvi</sup>

### 5.2 Tulsidas vs Surdas: Comparison of Women's Perspective

The poets of the Bhakti period did not have a uniform attitude towards women, which shows that even at that time, there was an intense ideological struggle going on over the status and role of women.

- **The Paradox of Tulsidas:** Tulsidas, on one hand, portrayed an ideal and devoted woman like Sita<sup>xlvii</sup>, while on the other hand, he saw women as objects of illusion and enjoyment.

ढोल गँवार सूद्र पसु नारी ।  
सकल ताड़ना के अधिकारी ॥

**Drum, illiterate, Sudra, animal and woman.  
Deserves all punishment.**

That is, the drum beaters, the idiots, the Shudras, the animals and the women, all of them deserve <sup>xlviii</sup>punishment (education, care). This couplet puts women in the category of Shudras and animals and reflects the patriarchal mindset prevalent in society. Although Indian society was affected by Islamic invasions at this time, some historians associate the use of the word Tadan with the word Bandhan because bondage or being connected or controlling is also a meaning of the word Tadan. It is said that literature is a mirror of society, and in the society of that time, some strict controls might have been made to protect women and maintain their identity. At another place, he says,

"जिमि स्वतंत्र होइ बिगरहिं नारी" Jimi Swatantrata Hoi Bigarahi Naari " ( Just as a woman becomes spoilt after becoming independent), which reflects the mentality of feudal society.

- **Generosity of Surdas:** On the contrary, Surdas saw women as spiritual equals. He paved the way for devotion through Radha and the gopis, which had no gender-based discrimination. Gopis were given equal status to Krishna (male), which is proof of their ideological liberality. Surdas's gopis were able to unravel the tangled web of Nirguna with their innate intelligence and determination.

Despite the pitiable condition of women during this period<sup>xlix</sup>, saints like Meera and Akka Mahadevi fought through their consciousness and art. It shows the resilience and resurgence of feminist consciousness, which survived even under difficult circumstances. It was the Bhakti movement that laid the ideological ground for the modern feminist movement, which inspired Indian women to move forward on the path of spiritual and personal freedom.

## 6. Conclusion: A constantly flowing consciousness

The analysis of feminist consciousness in Indian Sanskrit literature reveals a complex historical journey, full of contradictions and reversals rather than a simple linear progression. The report begins with the glorious era of the Vedic period, where women were Brahmavadinis and enjoyed the same philosophical and social rights as men. Scholars like Maitreyi and Gargi established their intellectual equality by debating on profound subjects like enlightenment and religion, which reflects the advanced nature of that society. However, social and political degradation during the Smriti period led to a decline in the status of women, which limited their rights. During this period, the patriarchal system strengthened, which deprived women of education and religious rituals. The contradictions contained in Manu Smriti highlight the complexity of this transitional period, where women were considered both respectable and subordinate at the same time. The epic period presented complex and multifaceted characters of women. Sita's Agni Pariksha and Draupadi's question of Dharma both depict the struggle and resistance of women in the patriarchal system. These characters teach us that feminist consciousness was not only rooted in rebellion, but also in raising questions of morality and self-respect while staying within limits. Finally, the Bhakti movement offered women a new path to spiritual liberation. Saints such as Meera and Akka Mahadevi challenged social and familial norms for personal freedom, marking a spiritual revolution. <sup>1</sup>In the literature of this period, Surdas's vision of women, which gives women a spiritual status equal to that of men, in contrast to the narrow vision of Tulsidas, clarifies the ideological conflict going on within the Indian knowledge tradition. Thus, feminist consciousness in the Indian knowledge tradition has been a constantly flowing and flexible consciousness. It manifested as philosophical equality in the Vedic period, as ethical resistance in the epics, and as spiritual liberation in the Bhakti period. This

historical understanding also strengthens the modern Indian feminist movement, which draws inspiration from its roots. In future studies, feminist ideas contained in the literature of Pali, Prakrit, Tamil and other regional languages, as well as folk tales

and oral traditions, may also be analysed for a deeper understanding of the subject. Should go.

## Appendix

**Table 2:** Comparative analysis of the image of women in different periods of Sanskrit literature

period	Socio-economic status of women	Education and religious status	Key examples and the nature of consciousness
Vedic Period	High social status, equal rights as husband, right to property.	Full right to the Upanayana ceremony and study of the Vedas, status of priest and sage.	Gargi, Maitreyi, Apala, Ghosha. Philosophical equality and intellectual consciousness.
Memory span	Degradation in status, subordination to men (father, husband, son). Rise of child marriage and the purdah system.	Deprived of Vedic education, limited to domestic education only. Excluded from religious rituals.	Contradictions of Manusmriti. Loss of authority and rise of patriarchy.
Epic period	Subject to social rules, but complex in character.	Lack of the right to education, but the ability to raise moral and philosophical questions.	Sita (ideal and sacrifice), Draupadi (rebellion and question of Dharma), Kunti (moral dilemma). Resistance and struggle.
Bhakti Era	Socially weak, but spiritually strong.	Emphasis on devotion and personal practice rather than religious rituals.	Mirabai, Akka Mahadevi. Spiritual liberation and rebellion against social norms.

## REFERENCES

<sup>i</sup> It is yet [to be written](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Writing remains to be done

<sup>iii</sup> Rama, Bhagwana: Feminist Perspectives in Hindi Literature, International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), Volume 13, Issue 1 January 2025 | ISSN: 2320-2882, Page No. 124-133.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.drishtiiias.com/hindi/blog/the-diverse-dimensions-of-feminism-challenges-and-possibilities>

<sup>v</sup> Patel, Dr. Vibhuti and Radhika Khajuria, Political Feminism in India (An Analysis of Actors, Discourses and Strategies, EFQM, ISBN- 978-969-9675-06-5.

<sup>vi</sup> Kale, Gaurav: FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF ANCIENT INDIAN PHILOSOPHY, GAP BODHI TARU A GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES, April-June 2024, Impact Factor: SJIF - 5.551, IIFS - 5.125 Globally peer-reviewed and open access journal, ISSN – 2581-5857, Page: 379-384.

<sup>vii</sup> Chaudhary, Manoj Kumar and Upma Verma, Social Change and Status of Women in the Post Vedic Period, HUMANITIES AND DEVELOPMENT, VOL.18, NO.1, JAN-JUNE,2023 /67, ISSN 0973-8541.

<sup>viii</sup> Yadav, Shailendra Kumar, Exploitation of Indian Women: From Vedic Age to Present, International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology ([www.ijrst.com](http://www.ijrst.com)), 2017 IJRST | Volume 3 | Issue 7 | Themed Section: Science and Technology, Print ISSN: 2395-6011 | Online ISSN: 2395-602X, Page Number: 1246-1249.

<sup>ix</sup> Rigveda - 4/33/19.

<sup>x</sup> Shiv Sagar, Vipul: Women's Rights in Vedic Literature, International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology ([www.ijrst.com](http://www.ijrst.com)), IJRST September-October-2019 [ 6 (5) ] Themed Section: Science and Technology, Print ISSN: 2395-6011 | Online ISSN: 2395-602X, Page : 85-90.

<sup>xi</sup> <https://hastakshep.com/respect-for-women-in-ancient-india-and-the-challenges-faced-today>

<sup>xii</sup> It is yet to be written

<sup>xiii</sup> It is yet to be written

<sup>xiv</sup> Prahasan, Marimuthu: Feminist Insights from Gārgī and Maitreyī in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad – A Philosophical Perspective, South Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, SAJSSH, VOL 6, ISSUE 2, ISSN: 2582-7065 (Online), PP. 96-110.

<sup>xv</sup> Namdev, Manju and Dr. Saroj Gupta, Women's Consciousness in Maitreyi Novel, Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR) [www.jetir.org](http://www.jetir.org), December 2022, Volume 9, Issue 12, (ISSN-2349-5162), Page : C279-C282.

<sup>xvi</sup> Namdev, Manju and Dr. Saroj Gupta, Women's Consciousness in Maitreyi Novel, Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR) [www.jetir.org](http://www.jetir.org), December 2022, Volume 9, Issue 12, (ISSN-2349-5162), Page : C279-C282.

<sup>xvii</sup> Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (2/4/3).

<sup>xviii</sup> Still to write

<sup>xix</sup> Gupta, Mani: Evaluation of learned women in the Vedic period society, Anthology The Research, VOL.- VIII, ISSUE- III June - 2023, ISSN: 2456-4397.

- <sup>xx</sup> Gupta, Mani: Evaluation of learned women in the Vedic period society , **Anthology The Research , VOL.- VIII, ISSUE- III June - 2023 , ISSN: 2456-4397.**
- <sup>xxi</sup> Gupta, Mani: Evaluation of learned women in the Vedic period society , **Anthology The Research , VOL.- VIII, ISSUE- III June - 2023 , ISSN: 2456-4397.**
- <sup>xxii</sup> Have to write right now
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Have to write right now
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Have to write right now
- <sup>xxv</sup> Have to write right now
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Manu Smriti 3/56.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Manusmriti 9/18.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Singh, Shibu and Dr. Virendra Mani Tripathi: Status of Women in Ancient Indian History: An Assessment, *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)* [www.ijcrt.org](http://www.ijcrt.org), Volume 10, Issue 3 March 2022 | ISSN: 2320-2882 , Pages: a 892- a 896.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Chaudhary, Manoj Kumar and Upma Verma, Social Change and Status of Women in the Post Vedic Period, *HUMANITIES AND DEVELOPMENT, VOL.18, NO.1, JAN-JUNE,2023 /67 , ISSN 0973-8541 .*
- <sup>xxx</sup> Dhaka, Dr. Suman, in Vedic period and medieval period Indian Comparative Study of the Status of Women , *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (A High Impact Factor, Monthly, Peer Reviewed Journal)* Visit: [www.ijrset.com](http://www.ijrset.com) Vol. 7, Issue 8, August 2018 , ISSN(Online): 2319-8753 ISSN (Print): 2347-6710 , Pages: 8678-8688.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Singh, Shibu and Dr. Virendra Mani Tripathi: Status of Women in Ancient Indian History: An Assessment, *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)* [www.ijcrt.org](http://www.ijcrt.org), Volume 10, Issue 3 March 2022 | ISSN: 2320-2882 , Pages: a 892- a 896.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Chaudhary, Manoj Kumar and Upma Verma, Social Change and Status of Women in the Post Vedic Period, *HUMANITIES AND DEVELOPMENT, VOL.18, NO.1, JAN-JUNE,2023 /67 , ISSN 0973-8541 .*
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> It is yet to be written
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Tulsidas , Ramcharitmanas , Lankakand
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Mahabharata , Sabha Parva , Chapter 68, Verse 16
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Mahabharata , Sabha Parva , Chapter 67, Verse 40
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Mahabharata , Sabha Parva , Chapter 67, Verse 41
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Mahabharata , Sabha Parva , Chapter 67, Verse 41
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Mahabharata , Sabha Parva , Chapter 68, Verse 15
- <sup>xl</sup> Pathak, Prasad & Deepali Shahane : **Knowing, Doing, Being — Management Lessons by Satyawati , Kunti, Gandhari, Neuro Quant ology, June 2022, Volume 20, Issue 6, e ISSN 1303-5150, Page 8714-8723.**
- <sup>xli</sup> Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, Chapter 145/8.
- <sup>xlii</sup> Sharma, Dr. Jaiveer Pratap and Mani Gupta: Women Saint Tradition in India, *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences(IJRESS)* Available online at: <http://euroasiapub.org> Vol. 9 Issue 5 , May- 2019 | Impact Factor: 6.939 , ISSN(o): 2249-7382 , Page No: 753-755.
- <sup>xliii</sup> Sharma , Dr. Beena: Features of beauty of Mirabai's poetry, *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 21 , Issue 2 , Ver. I (Feb. 2016). [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org), e-ISSN: 2279-0837 , p-ISSN: 2279-0845 , PP 107-109 .
- <sup>xliv</sup> Premvati, Bhakti Movement and Meera (Special Discussion), *Shabd Brahma (International Monthly Research Journal of Indian Languages)*, [www.shabdbraham.com](http://www.shabdbraham.com) in Vol 2, Issue 6 , ISSN 2320 – 0871 , Page No. : 24-27.
- <sup>xlv</sup> Dabbe , Vijaya and Robert Zydenbos : Akka Mahadevi , See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324115838>
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Das , Arunav & Prof. Rajeshwar Mittapalli : **The Contribution of Akka Mahadevi and Mirabai to Bhakti Literature: A Comparative Study from the 21st-Century Perspective , International Journal of Language, Literature and Culture (IJLLC) , Vol-3, Issue-6, Nov-Dec 2023 , ISSN: 2582-9823 , PP- 1-6.**
- <sup>xlvii</sup> Shrivastava, Dr. Shilpi: The role of women described in the epics , *International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology ( www.ijrst.com )* , | Volume 4 | Issue 5 | Print ISSN: 2395-6011 | Online ISSN : 2395-602

<sup>xlviii</sup> Singh, Dr. Anita: Women in the View of Saint Poets, International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology ([www.ijrst.com](http://www.ijrst.com)), Volume 2 | Issue 3 | Print ISSN: 2395-6011 | Online ISSN: 2395-602 X, PP-440 -443.

<sup>xlix</sup> Dhaka, Dr. Suman, in Vedic period and medieval period Indian Comparative Study of the Status of Women , International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (A High Impact Factor, Monthly, Peer Reviewed Journal) Visit: [www.ijirset.com](http://www.ijirset.com) Vol. 7, Issue 8, August 2018 , ISSN(Online): 2319-8753 ISSN (Print): 2347-6710 , Pages: 8678-8688.

<sup>l</sup> Premvati, Bhakti Movement and Meera (Special Discussion), Shabd Brahma (International Monthly Research Journal of Indian Languages), [www.shabdbraham.com](http://www.shabdbraham.com) in Vol 2, Issue 6 , ISSN 2320 – 0871 , Page No. : 24-27.

#### Creative Commons (CC) License

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license. This license permits sharing and redistribution of the article in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, provided that appropriate credit is given to the original author(s) and source. No modifications, adaptations, or derivative works are permitted under this license.

#### About the corresponding author



**Dr. Deepti Bagwadi** is a faculty member in the Department of English at VSKC Government PG College, Dakpathar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. She specialises in English literature, gender studies, and cultural discourse. Her academic work reflects a strong engagement with contemporary critical theory, research, and higher education pedagogy.