

# **Women in Indian Philosophy**

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## **Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

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**CHAPTER – 85**

**THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN VEDIC, BUDDHIST AND JAIN  
PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS**

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**Abstract---**Women have played a significant role in the religious and philosophical traditions of India. The Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain traditions offer unique perspectives on the status, rights, and contributions of women. This paper explores the role of women in the Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain philosophical traditions, examining their status, rights, and contributions across these traditions. It highlights how women participated in religious and philosophical discourse, the challenges they faced, and how these traditions shaped gender roles. Through a review of historical texts and scholarly interpretations, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of women's positions in these traditions.

**Keywords---**Women, Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain.

**Introduction**

Women have played a significant role in the religious and philosophical traditions of India. The Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain traditions offer unique perspectives on the status, rights, and contributions of women. While the Vedic period acknowledged the intellectual and spiritual capacities of women, Buddhism and Jainism introduced reforms that challenged some societal norms, advocating for greater inclusion of women in religious life. This article explores the role of women in these three traditions, highlighting their contributions, challenges, and evolving status.

**Review of Literature**

A variety of scholarly works and ancient texts provide insights into the role of women in these traditions. The Vedic texts, including the Rigveda and Upanishads, depict women as philosophers and spiritual seekers. Buddhist scriptures, such as the *rigatha*, contain verses composed by enlightened nuns, while Jain texts discuss the ascetic lives of women. Scholars like Wendy Doniger and Uma Chakravarti have extensively analyzed the status of women in ancient India, offering diverse interpretations of their roles and struggles.

One key aspect of this exploration is the examination of Vedic literature, whether Vedas one of the oldest sacred texts, reflects early conceptions of gender. The work of scholars