STATUS OF WOMEN DURING THE TIMES OF BUDDHA

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ABSTRACT
Today, when the role of Women in Society is an issue of worldwide interest. Therefore, it is opportune that we should pause to look at it from a Buddhist perspective too. Women in Buddhism were active for gender equality from the days of the Buddha itself. But before getting into the details of the status of women in Buddhism, we must acknowledge the fact that all religions of the world in some or the other way discriminate against women. The prejudice and obstacles that women face around the world are almost identical and they stem from the gender bias that is so inherent in all the religions.

Buddhism as a religion is highly progressive in its outlook. Buddha was the first religious teacher who had given women equal and unfettered opportunities in the field of spiritual development. Although he had pointed out on several occasions, the natural tendencies and weakness of women, he had also given due credit to their abilities and capabilities. But, with time new interpretations were given to the scriptures and women were made to feel inferior to men at the time of Buddha as well. He provides eight percepts (heavy rules) or Garudhammas for women to enter in Sangha, but they are not applied to men. In this research articles, we have tried to chronicle the way women were treated then which paves the way for comparing it with times and religions.

KEYWORD: Buddhism, Women Status, Garudhammas