

Women in the mirror of society

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Women, like men, have participated in all of the activities performed in the society. But women have to perform some other roles meant for them by society. In a hunting society, for example, women contribute to subsistence. They control and collect materials for survival. In addition to this, women have to prepare food and perform other important activities like child-bearing and infant care. In pre-literate societies allocation of work is done on the basis of gender and generation. In the writings of some notable scholars of the 19th century, it is believed that the matriarchal family is the foundation of human society. Children are traced through the family of the mother, and newly married couples live together with the family of the mother and work for the mother-headed family. The economies of such families are fully controlled by the mothers. About five thousand years ago women were excluded from politics but they continued to exercise varied roles. They had to enjoy legal protection for the property. There prevailed patriarchal civilization. During this period a woman was given draconian punishment if she challenged male dominance. But in the Minoan society of Crete (which took shape in C. 3000 BC) women were provided the right to involve themselves in social, religious and political matters.