

## **Widowhood: A Curse in Medieval India**

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### **Abstract**

*Widowhood, according to Hindu religious philosophy was the result of karma, or the deeds in a previous life and as such, an experience which the widow amply deserved. Therefore, in medieval society, widow was considered a burden. She had to spend whole life in devotion and observance to religious rites in the hope of reuniting with her husband in the next life. She had to live a miserable life. She had to live on plain barley or wheat bread, and eat but once in a day. She had to cut her hair and abandon her ornaments. She had to remain content with worn out and discarded clothes. Thus, one of the factors, which encouraged the practice of sati was the degraded position of a Hindu widow. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to trace the position of widow and various features of her exploitation in medieval India.*

In medieval society, most traumatic moment for woman was the death of her husband because without husband she had no separate identity in the family and society. Widow had only two options either to burn herself with the dead body of her husband or to lead a tortured life, which was full of sufferings and misery. We have numerous records which show that the burning of a widow (sati) was better for her than the life of bitterness and shame which awaited her refusal to submit to this ordeal.

### **I**

In medieval India, like earlier period, Hindu widows had not much choice, second marriage was not allowed to them, and this has been noticed by the travellers who visited India during this period. According to Alberuni, an Arab traveller of eleventh century, 'if a wife lost her husband by death, she could not marry another man'. Even the widows of young age were not allowed to re-marry. Barbosa, a Portuguese official, who visited Vijayanagara in the first quarter of sixteenth century, mentions that if the husband died, the wife never married again, how young so ever she might be. Tavernier and Palsaert, described same fate of Hindu widow. J. Ovington, who visited Bombay and Surat in 1690, has mentioned that in Surat, widows of six or seven years had remained unmarried for the rest of their lives. Manucci, the Venation traveller (1699-1709), mentions that when a Brahman died, the widow could never marry again, though she might be only four or five years of age.

Widow's re-marriage was considered bad. Della Valle, an Italian traveler, who visited India in 1623-24, mentions that among the Hindus, if any widow wanted to re-marry, she was accounted as bad and infamous. Thevenot, a French traveler visited Surat (India) in 1666, mentions that if a widow married again, she was turned out of the caste or tribe. To dissuade the Kunbis and other castes of Maharashtra where widow re-marriage was common, Santoji, a deputy-subadar of

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Marathas in 1760, had imposed a tax on re-marriage of Hindu widows. A sum of one rupee and four annas was to be paid at the kotwal's office to enable a widow to secure permission to re-marry.

Though widow re-marriage was rare, the practice of karewa or karao (second marriage), by throwing sheet of cloth on the head of widow was prevalent in some parts of the country in the later period. In some castes of Punjab, putting the nath (nose-ring), in the nose of a widow, constituted the marriage ceremony. This was practiced purely to produce a male heir or to avoid the issue of property. Karewa was followed by Sikhs, Jats and the people of lower castes. The widow was allowed a choice between the brothers, but the elder generally had the first right. Widow re-marriage in Himachal Pradesh was prevalent among the Rathis of Kangra. On the death of the elder brother, the widow lived with the next brother. If a man took a widow as his wife when she was pregnant, the child born was regarded as his child. In Rajasthan, the middle castes, the artisans, and the menial castes followed the practice of widow marriage within the framework of their caste regulation as prescribed by the panchayat or the jati. The formal recognition to such marriage contracts was granted by the state through an official order or parwana. Thus, one can notice that widow re-marriage was prevalent, but was not the norm among the higher castes like Brahmans and Khatris or those castes that practiced seclusion of women and did not work in the fields. The castes where it was a norm, widows were remarried within the husband's family, to be very precise with his brother, she had no choice to marry anyone else.

## II

It is mentioned that if a widow did not burn herself or to perform sati, but preferred to remain alive, the heir of her deceased husband had to provide her with nourishment and clothing as long as she lived, but in actual practice, she was mal-treated throughout her life. Terry, an English Clergyman in Jahangir's court (1616-19), has well remarked that widow had to spent her life as 'neglected creature' and one way to escape from this miserable life was to seek 'martyrdom' by burning herself. Tavernier remarked that widow remained rest of her life without any consideration and worse than a slave, in the place where previously she was mistress. This miserable condition caused her to detest life, she preferred to ascend at funeral pile to be consumed alive with the body of her husband. Careri, a traveller of Italy, who visited India in 1695, remarked that the widows who refused to burn themselves had to remain widows all their lives; they were despised by their family and tribe, because they had feared death, and they could never recover their reputation, whatsoever good actions they did. Bernier, a French physician (1656-68), mentions that widow who had not burnt herself with her dead husband could not hope to pass her days in happiness, or to be treated with respect or affection.

Widow had to remain in this position throughout her life. Manu described that if husband died, a widow should live an ascetic life. She had to leave all bodily pleasure aside, she should pursue religion with her whole mind, words and deed. She should control her senses by vows and austerities and remain subservient to her son or relatives for the remaining period of her life. Similar kinds of instructions have also been given to Sikh widows in Prem Sumarag. She was advised to live life of chastity and modest conduct after her husband's death. She was advised to bear the memory of her husband in mind and repeat the name of Shri Akal Purakh (the supreme being; god), read the sacred scriptures (shabad bani), and continue to discharge her normal responsibilities. She should live a secluded life in remembrance of her husband who was her god

(paramesur) but has now departed, she too will (one day) breathe her last and vanish as a dream. Realizing this, she should live life of renunciation. The widow who would follow this precept would achieve ultimate fulfilment. George Forster, writing in 1782-84, has mentioned that widow was instructed to be employed in constant worship of God, and the purification of her mind, from anger, malice and avarice, she was to withdraw herself from all concerns of the world. If her life was passed in these acts, she was promised after death to enter heaven, without suffering intermediate purgation.

Barbosa says that the widows were held in great dishonour, their kindred shaved their heads and turned them away as disgrace and a shame in their families. Ralph Fitch, Nicholas Withington, Terry, Della Valle, Tavernier, Thevenot, Manucci and George Forster, all European travellers noticed and mentioned that widows were compelled to cut their hair off forever after (though they be five or six years old) and to live in perpetual mourning. Widows were not allowed to wear coloured clothes. Ibn Battuta reports one case from Ajodhan (known as Pakpatan), of a widow who had been dressed in coerced garments and lived with her own people in misery. In Prem Sumarag, instructions were given to widow that she should remain in purdah and never speak to any strange man, her clothes should be of coerced white cloth. Abbe J.A. Dubois, who recorded his observations of South Indian beliefs and practices between 1792 and 1823, mentions that widow was not allowed to wear coloured clothes, but only pure white ones; she must not put saffron on her face or body, or mark her forehead. She was not allowed to wear ornaments. Nicholas Withington, Tavernier, George Forster and Dubois mentions that on the demise of the husband, the wife was divested of the marks of ornaments and distinction, she broke all her jewels and was never allowed to wear them again. She was not to use perfumes or wear a nose-ring at all.

For widows, Keshavadasa, author of Rasikapriya, has mentioned stern and harsh injunctions. He writes that 'a widow should not seek enjoyment, or take part in laughter and merriment. She should abandon all pleasure-giving things. She was prohibited from listening to music or songs, for desiring honour or homage. She should not joke or jest with anyone, or use anything pungent, like perfume and not apply oil, and should refrain from all amusements. She was not allowed to sleep on a bed, or wear shoes. There were certain religious ceremonies not lawful for her to perform, and in some instances, she was held unclean, but on all occasions, after the husband's death, the widow was classed in the house as a slave or a menial servant. According to Dubois, after the death of the husband 'a widow had to be in mourning till her death. Furthermore, she was forbidden to take part in any amusement or to attend family festivities, such as marriage feasts, the ceremony of upanayana, and others, because her presence was considered an evil omen'.

Regarding the food for the widows, Manu mentions that a widow should survive on fruits, and become weak in body. Keshavadasa mentioned that she should not drink cold water and eat sweets. Nicholas Withington, visiting India in 1612-16, remarks that a widow was not allowed to eat, drink, or keep company with anyone, she lived in this miserable condition till her death. She was not allowed to chew betel. Prem Sumarag refers to a number of restrictions on food imposed on the Sikh woman who had lost her husband or a son. It is instructed that she should eat little ghee and very little salt. Indeed, it was much better if she renounced salt altogether and avoided meat. She was advised to eat only khichari (rice-water gruel), that too, only once in 24 hours. George Forster mentions that widow was not allowed to eat flesh, fish or butter, but to live on plain barley,

wheat bread, and eat but once in a day.

Tavernier mentions that 'the widow had to pass her whole life in severe penance and in doing charitable deeds. There were some who frequented the great highways either to boil water with vegetables, and give it as a drink to passers-by, or to keep fire always ready to light the pipes of those who desired to smoke tobacco'. Sometimes, widows had to go from door to door selling rice. Widows were also killed for adultery. Manucci mentions that Hindus observed much more restraint on the widows, if the men came to know that any widow of their caste had misbehaved, they used to kill her. In Rajasthan, violation of the code of conduct for widows belonging to the upper castes was considered a very serious offence but the killing of a widowed daughter by her father was treated as a less serious crime.

### III

Widow re-marriage was common among the Muslims, however, this privilege was not appreciated by the Hindus. It was so repugnant to the Hindus of the orthodox society that the author of the *Manasa-Mangal*, a contemporary of Alauddin Hussain Shah (1494-95) of Bengal, composed a poem and tried to portray a Muslim woman 'who was marrying three husbands in course of a month and yet longing for another, while the dead body of her husband had not yet been committed to the grave'. Little wonder that an orthodox Hindu whose ideal was sati, would frown upon the idea of widow re-marriage which for him was nothing but the infidelity of Muslim women. Amir Khusrau also disfavoured widow marriage, he writes: 'one who takes a widow as his wife, in the household everything will be as desired and wanted by the woman'.

Though, Muslim widows were allowed to re-marry but after the period of *iddet* (period of probation i.e., three months, it designates the number of days of divorced and widowed woman had to wait before she was allowed to marry again. It is a time of probation during which it may be ascertained whether she is pregnant or not, and lasts for three months). But the Muslim widows were influenced by the Hindu idea of widowhood, in many cases, they chose to remain widows throughout their life. They started to give up wearing certain ornaments and coloured clothes. In 1520, son-in-law of Sultan Muzaffar Shah II (1511-26) of Gujarat died, his daughter was brought before him, clothed in white garments, as was the custom of the people of India. Monserrate, who visited India in the second half of the sixteenth century (1580-82), mentions that one of the wives of Humayun, named Haji Begum, after his death had a small house built close by his tomb and watched it till the day of her death. Throughout her widowhood, she devoted herself to prayers and to alms-giving, she maintained five hundred poor people by her alms. Like Hindu widows, Jana Begum, daughter of Abdur Rahim Khan-i Khanan, after the death of her husband, always dressed in white to such an extent that she never used even a coloured cloth-piece to dry the body nor one to cover the head. She lived for many years but until her last breath, as each day of her widowhood was the first day.

The widows of the deceased king were not allowed to remarry, they were to spend their remaining lives in a separate garden-enclosure called *suhagpura* (hamlet of happy wives), where the widows and families of deceased emperors lived in retirement, it existed on the bank of the river Yamuna at Agra. After the death of Shah Jahan in 1666, the wives of Shah Jahan were sent into retirement in this palace meant for royal widows. Aurangzeb ordered that those maid-servants and ladies who were not wives of Shah Jahan could marry freely to anyone they pleased. He took Begum Sahib

(Aurangabadi) away with him to Delhi, conferring on her the title of Pacha Begum (Badshah Begum) that is 'Empress of Princess'. He allowed her to live in her own mansion, a concession he did not grant to Roshan Ara Begum. After the death of Jahandar Shah in 1713, Lal Kunwar, his favourite concubine, was sent to suhagpura. This shows that widows of the late king were not allowed to re-marry, but for the rest of their life they were all confined, except the mother of the ruling king, to a palace reserved for them, separate from the royal harem, but they were also guarded.

#### IV

Thus, we can conclude that woman's personal life was cantered around her husband, and with the death of her husband it ended. Thus, widowhood was another sad aspect of women's life in medieval India. One result of child marriage was that if the girl child died after the marriage, boy married another, but if the boy died, girl was not allowed to marry again, but was compelled to perform sati at a young age or to remain a widow rest of her life. Widow re-marriages were rare except in some castes. If not performed sati with her dead husband, she had to live a miserable life. She had to cut her hair and abandon her ornaments. She had to live on plain barley of wheaten bread, and eat but once in a day. She had to remain content with worn out and discarded clothes, sleep on ground and eat only as much as was necessary for bare subsistence for life. She had to spend whole life in devotion and observance to religious rites in the hope of reuniting with her husband in the next life. She was denied to attend family functions or public festivals, as her presence was to bring bad luck to those who were participating in such functions. Her presence was regarded inauspicious.

Widows were also killed for minor offences. By killing widow, family easily got rid of her, because she was considered a burden and stigma on the family. However, in case of adulterous men such was not the scene. We do not have many references of adulterous men being punished or killed, it seems that all the rules and regulations were meant only for women, men were free from such restrictions, because they themselves were makers of these rules and regulations.

#### Notes and References

1. Abu Raihan Alberuni, *Tahqiq-i Hind or Kitab-ul Hind*, tr. Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Custom, Laws and Astrology of India About A.D. 1030*, Vol. II, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002 (first pub. 1910), p. 563. Manu mentions that a man should re-marry after his wife's death in order to carry out his duties as a householder but a woman should not re-marry: Manu, *Manusmriti*, tr. Madhukar Deshpande, ed. Narhar Kurundkar, *Manusmriti: Contemporary Thoughts*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993, p. 63.
2. Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants, Including the Coasts of East Africa, Arabia, Persia and Western India as far as The Kingdom of Vijayanagar*, Vol. I, ed. Mansel Longworth Dames, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989 (first pub. 1812), p. 117.
3. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, tr. Valentile Ball, London, 1899, second edn. William Crook, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2001, pp. 163-64. See also, Francisco Pelsaert, *Remontsrantie*, tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, *Jahangir's India*, Delhi:

- Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1972 (first pub. 1925), pp. 78-80 & 84.
4. J. Ovington, *India in the Seventeenth Century: A Voyage to Suratt in the Year 1689* by J. Ovington, Vol. I, ed. J.P. Guha, Vol. I, New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1976 (first pub. 1929), p. 144.
  5. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, Vol. III, tr. William Irvine, Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1907-08 (reprints 1990 & 1996), pp. 56-57. See also, Jean de Thevenot, *India in the Seventeenth Century: The Voyages of Thevenot and Careri*, Vol. II, ed. J.P. Guha, Vol. II, New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1976 (first pub. 1949), p. 144.
  6. Pietro Della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India, 1623-24*, Vol. I, ed. Edward Grey, London: Hakluyt Society, 1892, p. 83. It is written in the first part of the Mahabharata that a woman who has lost her husband may lawfully take another: Zulfeqar Mubed, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, tr. David Shea and Anthony Trayer, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib: Hinduism During the Mughal India in the 17th Century*, Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, 1993 (first pub. 1843), p. 66.
  7. J. Ovington, *India in the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. I, pp. 143-44.
  8. If anyone conducted a marriage party (janj) of woman from the city to some village outside, he had to give a composite nazrana of four rupees, i.e., for the nazim for the daroghas of the cloth-market, and for the faujdar of the suburbs. Similarly, such a marriage party wanting to enter the capital had to pay ten annas: M.S. Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat: With a Survey of its Monuments and Inscriptions, The Mughal Period: From 1573 to 1758*, Vol. II, Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1957, pp. 555-56.
  9. The custom of karewa was also known as chadar dalna or throwing the sheet. On such occasions, the neighbour including the lambardars and other respectable members of the village community were invited to witness the ceremony: Henry Steinbach, *The Punjab Being A Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1976 (first pub. 1845), pp. 115-16; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs: Trans-Sutlej Sikhs 1769-1799*, Vol. III, Lahore: The Minerva Book Shop, 1944, pp. 166-67.
  10. J.S. Grewal and Veena Sachdeva, 'State and Society in the Himachal', J.S. Grewal (ed.), *State and Society in Medieval India*, PHISPIC, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 320-22 & 345.
  11. Dilbagh Singh, 'State and Society in Medieval Rajasthan', J.S. Grewal (ed.), *State and Society in Medieval India*, pp. 247-48.
  12. Lepel Griffin, Ranjit Singh, New Delhi: S. Chand, 1957, pp. 65-66. As for the Jats, it was noted in 1825 that while the ordinary Jats followed the practice of widow remarriage, and their women went about unveiled, but 'those (Jats) who have reached the status of estate-owner (riyasat) and chieftains, did not practice widow re-marriages': Irfan Habib, 'Zamindars', J.S. Grewal (ed.), *State and Society in Medieval India*, p. 151.
  13. Abu Raihan Alberuni, *Tahqiq-i Hind or Kitab-ul Hind*, Vol. II, pp. 563 & 573. See also, Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. III, tr. H.S. Jarrett and rev. Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: The Royal



- Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1948, p. 356.
14. William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619): Collection of Narratives of Ralph Fitch, John Mildenhall, William Hawkins, William Finch, Nicholas Withington, Thomas Coryat and Edward Terry*, Delhi: S. Chand, 1968 (first pub. 1921), p. 323.
  15. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 163-64.
  16. Jean de Thevenot, *India in the Seventeenth Century: The Voyages of Thevenot and Careri*, Vol. II, p. 301. Giovanni Francaso Gemelli Careri (1651-1725) of Italy visited India in 1695. He had interview with Aurangzeb at Galgala. Careri acknowledged his indebtedness to his predecessors like Maffacus, Thevenot, Tavernier, Bernier and Teixeira.
  17. Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire AD 1656-1668*, tr. Vincent Smith, Delhi: Oriental Reprint, 1997 (second edn., first pub. 1891), pp. 313-14.
  18. Manu, *Manusmriti*, pp. 63-64; Keshavadasa, *Rasikapriya*, tr. K.P. Bahadur, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972, p. li.
  19. Anonymous, *Prem Sumarag Granth*, ed. Randhir Singh, (Punjabi), Patiala: Sikh History Society, 1965 (first pub. 1953), pp. 44 & 75. The book in which elaborate code of belief and conduct (karma) of the Sikhism are mentioned and which all members of the Khalsa are required to obey is called rahitnama. Rahitnamas are numerous and written by concerned Sikhs (premi Sikhs), according to their intellect and determination. There are many rahitnamas of Sikhs like, Gurbani Bhai Gurdas ji ki, Bhai Nand Lal ji ki Rachna, Chaupa Singh Rahitnama, Prahlad Rai Rahitnama, Daya Singh Rahitnama, Desa Singh Rahitnama besides Tankhah-Nama, Prem Sumarag and Sakhi Rahit ki, the names of their authors are not known: Gur Shabad Ratnakar Mahankosh (Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature), (Punjabi), ed. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Patiala: Punjab Languages Department, 2011 (first pub. 1930), p. 1015. These rahitnamas, prescribed norms for Sikh men and women but at the same time, they reflect the attitude of the contemporary society towards women. From the study of these rahitnamas, we can know about the status of women of eighteenth century.
  20. George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England: Through the Northern Part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia by the Caspian-Sea, 1782-84*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997 (originally pub. by London: R. Faulder, New Bond-Street, 1798), Vol. I, pp. 58-59.
  21. Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. I, p. 216.
  22. Pietro Della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India, 1623-24*, Vol. II, pp. 275-76; William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, pp. 14, 22, 219-20 & 223; Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 163-64; Jean de Thevenot, *India in the Seventeenth Century: The Voyages of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. J.P. Guha, Vol. II, pp. 143-44 & 301; Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs, etc., of Hindus*, ed. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1897, pp. 353-54; George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, Vol. I, p. 58.
  23. Ibn Battuta, *Kitab ur Rehla*, tr. Mahdi Husain, *Rehla (India, Maldive Islands and Ceylon)*, Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1953, pp. 21-22.

- Anonymous, Prem Sumarag Granth, pp. 44-46 & 75.
24. He mentions that many unfortunate girls of five or six years of age, married to Brahman of over sixty, very often became widows before they attain the age of puberty: Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs, etc., of Hindus*, pp. 353-54.
  25. William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, p. 220. For more details, see, John Huyghen Van Linschoten, *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies: From the Old English translation of 1598*, Vol. I, eds. Arthur Coke Burnell and P.A. Tiele, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997 (first pub. 1935), pp. 249-50 & 263; Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 163-64; George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, Vol. I, pp. 57-58. See also, Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs, etc., of Hindus*, pp. 353-54.
  26. Keshavadasa, *Rasikapriya*, p. li.
  27. George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, Vol. I, p. 57.
  28. Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs, etc., of Hindus*, p. 353.
  29. Manu, *Manusmriti*, pp. 63-64; Keshavadasa, *Rasikapriya*, p. Li; William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, p. 220; Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs, etc., of Hindus*, p. 354.
  30. Anonymous, Prem Sumarag Granth, pp. 75-76 & 82.
  31. George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, Vol. I, p. 58.
  32. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 164-66.
  33. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, Vol. III, pp. 58 & 63-65.
  34. In Rajasthan, Balkishan Vyas of village Thalheta in pargana Dausa had killed his widowed daughter because of her misconduct: Dillbagh Singh, 'State and Society in Medieval Rajasthan', J.S. Grewal (ed.), *The State and Society in Medieval India*, pp. 245-46.
  35. Momtazur Rahman Tarafdar, *Rahman, Husain Shahi Bengal, 1494-1538 A.D.: A Socio-Political Study*, Decca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1965, p. 317.
  36. Amir Khusrau As a Historian: *Collected Works of Prof. S.H. Askari*, Vol. 2, Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, n.d., pp. 37-38.
  37. Mohammad Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India 1605-1748*, Lucknow: The Upper India Publishing House, 1958, p. 90.
  38. Sikandar Ibn Mohammad, *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, tr. Fazlullah Lutfullah Faridi, *Mirat-i-Sikandari: A Study in the Medieval History of Gujarat*, Haryana: Vintage Books, 1990, p. 104.
  39. Tr. Antonio Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J. on His Journey to The Court of Akbar*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, annotated by S.N. Banerjee, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2003 (first pub. 1922), p. 96.
  40. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, Vol. III, tr. H. Beveridge, Delhi: Ess Ess Publication, 1977 (first



- pub. 1973), p. 1255; Chhotubhai Ranchhodji Naik, Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan and His Literary Circle, Ahmadabad: University of Gujarat, 1966, pp. 36-37.
41. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, Vol. II, p. 118. Suhagpura or the Bewa Khana (widow house) was one of the establishments (karkhanajat) attached to the court 'where in the practice of resignation they passed their lives, receiving rations and a monthly allowance'. The name, Suhagpura, may have been due to delicacy for the feelings of the ladies, or it was perhaps given in derision.
42. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Oriental Reprint, 1971, p. 254.