



## Widowhood in History : Reformers, Widow Homes and the Nation

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### Abstract

To begin with, the section on the mainstream reformers offers a brief overview of the nature of reform carried out in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal and Maharashtra. The second section, on widowhood and nationalism, looks into how the Hindu women in general and the widow in particular were 'recast' by the urgency accorded to the redefinition of the subjected-self as against a 'glorious' Hindu past. This article does not stop with their recasting, it goes beyond into the realm of widows' self-perception and self-making.



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The Hindu widow's condition received more attention towards the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century than it did when the matter was at the legislative level in 1855-56. Mainstream social reformers such as D.K. Karve, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Keshab Chandra Sen and Sasipada Banerji initiated reforms for the Hindu widow which were structured by their own evaluation of the meaning of *in modernity* and *tradition* from within their individual social positions. The process which produced and structured the consciousness of these reformers was a complex one, and did not simply mean a 'response'<sup>1</sup> to a historical moment within the colonial structure. It was a complex process in the sense that this consciousness meant combining with one's own

idea of gender justice the possibility of its realization with the support of the Hindu social structure, whose rearrangement on the colonial premises had activated and lent voice to both the elements of continuity and change. Most of the studies on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian intellectual history<sup>2</sup> have shown interest in the social positioning<sup>3</sup> of the individual reformers to identify the nature of the challenge so as to make a very clearcut connection between their class, caste, gender status and social agenda. Such a framework tends to magnify individuals and marginalize the issue of reform itself. While the defense of an individual reformer of his or her own position against certain social pressures might unveil forces of patriarchy, it does not complete

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the entire survey of 'resistance' and 'response' to these forces. This article aims at looking at those levels of resistance which do not find a place in the history of social reform.

The prime reason for this lack of recognition is the vagueness of the sources themselves because they are not officially recorded versions of social history. For instance, these could include anonymous writings on the widowhood issue. Here the social position of the person becomes vague and the evidence is incomplete without a reference. However, this does not justify the negation of this evidence itself. It must be contextualized, and seen as a valid source for historical reconstruction. Considering the necessity to do so, an effort has been made here to approach the sources of studying widowhood thematically-wherein implications are drawn from diverse patterns of ideas and actions of reform for the Hindu widows. As sources, the ideas and details of reform action for widows of the mainstream social reformers from Maharashtra and Bengal have been woven with the voices of concerned men and women from the Hindi women's journals published from all over the United Provinces, spanning the period of first three decades of the twentieth century. The objective is to critically analyze and contextualize the themes, which dominated at both these levels. The study in this article is premised upon the assumption that there existed another level of concern for the widows which mostly consisted of men and women who could read and write Hindi and expressed themselves through articles, short stories or poems. They are addressed as *local* voices which do not figure in the history as mainstream reformist ideas. Having acknowledged that neither the mainstream reformers nor the *local* reformers produced a homogenous discourse, this chapter works out the specificity that the context demands. The themes which dominate at both these levels vary from the idea of widow remarriage to a discussion on the activity of the widows' homes; from the notion that widows were a national shame to the poetic articulations about the sexual death of the widow.

### **The Mainstream Reformers**

Between the years 1856 and 1900, within the mainstream reformist efforts there seemed to have been a shift from the idea of widow remarriage to the idea of widows' homes. Neither the idea

of remarriage or of widows' homes was an innovation of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century reformers. However, temples had existed as centers where destitute women, men and saints gathered for food and the concept of *dharamshalas* also makes evident the fact that lodging was also provided for them, though for a short stay.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, D.K.Karve, Ramabai Saraswati, Sasipada Banerji and Keshub Chandra Sen worked for the widows' cause under certain limitations. The case for remarriage had to be supplemented by evidence from Hindu scriptures besides the legal provision of 1856 Act, otherwise they would not have got much social acceptance.<sup>4</sup> The widows' remarriage as a reform did not find support of the orthodox sections of the Hindu society, even among low castes who were customarily allowed to remarry, since they were aspiring to attain a higher social status through an emulation of the high caste customs where the ban on widow remarriage was a primary compulsion. Considerable amount of research has been done on Bengal and Maharashtra to focus on the relation between the process of *sanskritisation* and its effect on the remarriage campaign.<sup>5</sup> Shekhar Bandhyopadhyay observes that "popular Hindusim inculcated an ideology of discipline, which was enforced or maintained through a hierarchized structure of social authority that expressed itself through the idiom of caste."<sup>6</sup> He has used the 1891 Census of India Report to show that the number of castes that forbade widow remarriage included the middle ranking and low castes as well. He also points out the hostility faced by couples of widow remarriage: as they were referred to as *Krishna-Paksha* (dark fortnight after full moon), whereas the couples of regular marriage were called *Sukla Paksha* (bright fortnight after new moon).<sup>7</sup> Benoy Ghose has pointed out certain factors that were responsible for widow remarriage "not gaining momentum but gradually losing ground before the slow but steady advance of Hindu reaction"<sup>8</sup> after the 1860's.

Vidyasagar had to face violent hostility personally from the anti-widow remarriage group. The Hitabadi Patrika in 1891 reported that whenever Vidyasagar came out of his house, people surrounded him and passed bitter remarks on his widow-remarriage

activities and often threatened him with physical assault. Stones and mud were thrown at him. It was organized violence patronized by certain rich Hindus of Calcutta.<sup>9</sup>

The other reason was that there was a split in the Brahmo moment. A section of Brahmos under the guidance of Keshub Chandra Sen, largely influenced by Ramakrishna Paramhansa, swung over to *Pauranic Avatarved* and *Bhaktivad*, leaving the fortress of Brahmonationalis, monotheism and liberal reform.<sup>10</sup>

According to Gopal Haldar, the widow remarriage moment began to languish in Bengal due to the gradual, rise of Hindu Nationalism (from the 1870s) and the Hindu revivalism in the educated Hindu circles, "this made reform through government legislation by alien rulers suspect, even undesirable, and indirectly put a premium on orthodoxy and even on obscurantism."<sup>11</sup>

Besides these structural causes for the widow remarriage moment movement? waning from Bengal, Vidyasagar's own limitations also need to be pointed out. Ashis Nandy<sup>12</sup> thinks that working for the cause of women through understanding women and feminity is the single most important theme in the history of social creativity in India. For Nandy, both Ram Mohan Roy or Vidyasagar tried to redraw traditional definitions of womanly identity, mainly by reinterpreting traditions and by indigenizing certain western themes. This creativity was based on compassion, but did not see the welfare of the Hindu widow beyond remarriage. Sumit Sarkar finds a link between the failure of Vidyasagar's effort to modify the conditions of widows who did not remarry, to the 'somewhat paradoxical' appeal of a figure like Ramakrishna by the closing decades of the nineteenth century. According to him, "the Saint's conversations were full of references to the dangers flowing from woman kind, yet middle aged and elderly wives and widows flocked to Dakshineswar. Like the men caught in the toils of chakri they sought solace from the burdens of household routine in the message of *grihastha bhakti*, which promised a certain distancing through the cultivation of an inner devotional space, even while remaining immersed outwardly in the mundane everyday."<sup>13</sup> As for Bengal, it was becoming clearer that the

majority of the widows' problems had to be addressed also from outside the remarriage campaigns and other aspects of the widow's existence like her economic independence or her shelter and survival.

One of the contemporary reformers from the Brahmo Samaj, Pandit Sitanath Tutuvabhushan, makes a note of the limitations of the remarriage campaign. He wrote "in many cases marriage is neither possible nor desirable and yet the conditions of such widows is miserable in the extreme, and calls for the efforts of reformers and philanthropists."<sup>14</sup> He also suggested educating the widow: "it is curious that Keshav Chandra Sen did not take up this large problem of education of widows."<sup>15</sup>

Babu Sasipada Banerji was the first to educate the widow by opening a school at his house in Barahanagar in 1864. This evolved into a widows' Home in 1887. Tattvabhushan mentions that though the idea of a widow leaving her home for a boarding institution was a 'revolutionary' one. Banerji succeeded in getting the sympathy and goodwill of the orthodox leaders because "to the orthodox Pandit visitor of his home, it seemed more like the holy ashrams of the ancient *rishis* than like a Christian Boarding Institution".<sup>16</sup> This was indeed indicative of the fact that there was a shift of emphasis from other worldliness and super naturalism to the social problems of this worldly existence within contemporary religions thought.<sup>17</sup>

This Barahanagar Home, however, saw an increase in the number of 'orthodox boarders', that is, those boarders who observed orthodox widowhood rites and ritual. An altogether separate building was bought and added to the old premises. In that each orthodox widow was lodged and fed-each according to her own ideas about what was fitting for her. The Hindu orthodoxy received so much respect in this institution that even Brahman leaders in Bengal freely recommended it to other classes of Hindus after having inspected it.

Besides the above-mentioned modernization of the tradition to serve the purpose of carrying out meaningful reform, the novel thing about the end decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the response and expression from the widows themselves. Pandita Ramabai Saraswati emerged as the single most

eminent widow to drive the attention of the male social reformers towards the austere rituals enforced upon the high caste widow. She spoke out from her own lived experience of widowhood and that made her discourse on reform for widows different from that of the male reformers. Her critique of the brahman patriarchy needs an overview here for the purpose of elaborating this difference. In her book called *The High Caste Hindu Woman* a friend of Pandita's, Rachel L. Bodley wrote that.

"The silence of a thousand years has been broken, and the reader of this unpretending little volume catches the first utterances of the unfamiliar voice"<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting to note the way her critique is directed towards the ritual-cultural structure of the woman or a girl after the death of her husband. The critique marks a break from the earlier debates within legislative and the male Hindu circles, which were entirely focused on the question of remarriage. Ramabai says on the practice of shaving the widows' head.

"What woman is there who does not love the wealth of soft glossy hair with which nature has so generously decorated her head?"<sup>19</sup>

Pandita's critique of the brahman patriarchy provoked a controversy because she converted to Christianity. This happened around the time when Banerjee's attempt in Bengal had already begun and the widow' issue was being addressed by him. Pandita also started her Widow' home in 1889 in Bombay called the SharadaSadan. An elaborate analysis of the Widows' Homes has been made in a different chapter, but what largely becomes apparent is that the meaning of 'reform' was revitalized by the modernization of tradition and the categories of reform and 'revival' had coincided. However, her home did not attempt a modernization of tradition it rather spelled 'contestation'. An ambiguity persisted because Ramabai sought support from Brahman men, which was the social group from which high caste widows were to be drawn. Chakravarti is of the opinion that Pandita reconceptualised widowhood and womanhood because, besides remarriage, the male reformers did not see any other way of the widow's 'return to Society'.<sup>20</sup> The institutionalization of the widows might have lent a life to the widows, but Pandita

aimed at no serious rearrangement of gender relations and attitudes. It cannot be simply inferred from her example that her conversion to Christianity sowed seeds of challenge against Hindu patriarchy. Tilak and Vivekananda had critiqued her because Christianity at that historical moment was equated with colonialism.<sup>21</sup> It was a reaction from the emerging Hindu "nationalist" rather than from a group of orthodox men safeguarding the patriarchal sphere. However, the very fact that she attacked the scriptural position of the Hindu woman, challenged not only the Hindu orthodoxy but also those Hindu groups, which sought liberal reform. It can be deduced from the reaction to Pandita's conversion and her critique of the brahman patriarchy, that any questioning of the established gender relations in colonial India could only be endorsed by a larger social group, if this questioning was one of the ways to move towards reinventing the past which glorified Hindu woman. The following paragraph introduces another widow who was a brahman-Parvati Athavale. She held a similar concern for the widow as Ramabai did but she did not critique the Hindu scriptures or the brahman community for the miseries that the widows lived in.

Parvati Athavale, a brahmen from the village of Devrukh in Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra, assisted D. K. Karve, her brother-in-law at the Widow's Home at Poona since 1896. Athavale used prefixes like 'orthodox' to identify any traditional method of subjugating widows.<sup>22</sup> She did not exclusively address the high caste Hindu women as Ramabai did. Athavale discarded the signs of widowhood, especially tonsure, on the ground that 'it was right that the widows should assert their right to their own heads.'<sup>23</sup> There seems to have been a widening of the magnitude of Hindu women's own consciousness within which the widows' problem was located. Widows were not an exclusively a brahman group in Athavale's autobiography. Athavale interestingly did not associate the idea of reforming the conditions for widows with simple procurement of food and shelter. She went beyond it. Athavale was critical of the temples in Malabar where a free distribution of food, induced widows from distant places. "Their (widows') food costs them nothing and they spend then time in idleness.... The condition of widows who wander from sacred place to place with a religious purpose is one that excites pity. They have neither worldly nor spiritual riches."<sup>24</sup>

More significant and less explored than the issue of widows' homes was the process of simultaneous rethinking of the widows' issue by those men and women who were not mainstream reformers but had vibrant ideas and experiences to share on the issue. The next section looks at four Hindi women's journals – which contain 'local' voices that lie non-contextualized within a larger orbit of the social reform history.

### The Hindi Women's Journals

#### Chand

*Chand* was a monthly journal launched from Allahabad in the year 1922. It claimed to be the 'Indian women's self-portrait' (Bhartiya Mahilaon Ka Sachitra). It was edited by Ram Rakh Singh Sehgal and Rama Krishna Mukund Laghate, with Vidyawati Sehgal as the manager. *Chand* brought out three issues especially on widows, education and child-marriage.

It was between the years 1923 and 1926, that *Chand* came out with articles, letters and short stories on Hindu widows. This corpus of information includes not only the ideas of the concerned men and women, but also of that strata of people for whom the reform was meant. Some of the letters sent by widows were from those who could not even read, but got someone else to write for them. What is crucial here is their sheer act of channeling ideas through this vernacular journal. Some widows who merely heard of *Chand*'s sympathy for widows thought it worth while to communicate out of some expectations. *Chand* did not aim at the creation of an ideal Hindu woman who could find pride in her traditional role and identify herself with nation's subjection at the same time.<sup>25</sup> *Chand* struck at the root cause of the widows' issues by identifying those diverse matters which determined the well-being of the widow. For instance, some articles which discussed the remarriage issue for the widows, also touched upon some reasons that linked widowhood with poverty. At the same time, through the medium of cartoons, *Chand* expressed its anger through humor poking fun at the western concept of feminism. There were cartoons of a man polishing his wife's shoes or a man preparing tea for his wife, or while she is writing the husband takes care of the baby. It suggested that any degree of role reversal was unacceptable. There were also, however, colored pictures of a widow and of a married woman

attending a marriage ceremony, or in another picture a child-widow and an ascetic widow standing, both of them had sadness writ large over their faces. The two different kind of images which appear in these cartoons tell us about the ambiguous perception of the women's liberation. The liberation was sought within the improvement of her status as a wife and mother. Any kind of activity by the women outside the home such as learning to read or write seemed, however, to challenge the sanctity of the home.

*Chand* had a wide circulation all over North India.<sup>26</sup> It was priced at Rs 3 for a six month subscription. It invited some hostile reactions from some sections of Marwaris from Calcutta. *Chand* had made a critique of some of the Marwari community's social practices in the Marwari special issue. The president of the Marwari Traders Association (Calcutta) lashed out in reaction: "today why is Miss Mayo's *Mother India* so unpopular? One, because it does not aim at reforming India, it aims at degrading India in the eyes of other nations by declaring Indians incapable. What right does an American woman have to focus on the negative aspects of Indian India? before the entire world without looking at her own country critically? The same goes for the editorship of *Chand*."<sup>27</sup> This explains the degree of involvement of the readers of *Chand* with the content and direction in which the critique of social practices went. *Chand* had felt the colonial pressure also at the time of its inception. In the first issue of November 1922, an editorial explained the reasons for the delay in *Chand*'s launch. The provincial government had asked them to pay rs 1500 as security, besides the assurance that the journal would be discussing only social and literary subject-with nothing to do with political matters. This assurance was given but the arrangement for the money had taken time.<sup>28</sup> This kind of colonial impediment has been an extension of the vigilance over the vernacular publications which began in post – 1857 period.<sup>29</sup>

#### Stree Darpan

This women's monthly journal in Hindi was launched by Rameshwari Nehru in 1909. She also started the Prayag Mahila Samiti in Allahabad. She was the only Indian woman included in the Select Committee to which the Sarda bill was referred in 1927. Concern with the traffic in women and girls led to a re-consideration of the age of consent and

ultimately to proposals in the Indian Assembly, and this resulted in the introduction of the Hindu child Marriage Bill by Rai Sahib Harhilas Sarada.<sup>30</sup>

This journal carried articles and poems on varied issues of concern to women but it took a special interest in redefining the Hindu women in relation to the nationalist consciousness and articulated their role in it. Most of the articles did not focus on reforming the Hindu Society for women but, rather, the aim was to reform the Hindu women herself. Some historians have called this process 'recasting,'<sup>31</sup> irrespective of the fact that women were simultaneously realizing that they had a separate set of issues that required urgent attention. The editorial contained a detailed account of the latest political developments such as the imprisonment of Annie Besant in 1917 June or what Sarojini Naidu had spoken in her lectures to schools and colleges. There were two aims of the journal.

- a) the popularization of a new perception of education for women which did not imply the creation of an economically productive women trained in a vocation. it rather meant a different set of principles by which the women should live... they were to share the burden of national struggle with men folk and work out their identity within those limits. What was interesting was the growing emphasis by the women writers to link their own subjection to the nation's and Rameshwari herself stressed the need to *rethink gender issues in relation to the nation*.
- b) The other aim seems to have been the creation of political awareness amongst women in order to *create a political arena* for the women's issue.

In an editorial in September 1918, Rameshwari spoke of a proposal by Sarojini Naidu which asked for incorporation of women into the selection machinery of whatever reform that India was to be given in near future by the government. She asked for the voting rights of women in a similar capacity to what Indian men were to get. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya opposed this proposal, saying that because of the *Purdah* it seems unlikely that the women could go to municipalities to vote. At this juncture Rameshwari raised a very pertinent question "we want to ask Malviyaji that if a man or a woman

does not exercise voting rights then do you think it is right to snatch away their right itself? a majority of Indians are notliterate, the British officials say that Indians do not understand the meaning of the vote and that they don't deserve the right to vote. don't you then protest? You say that the British are making excuses...we very well know the meaning of the vote. We also tell you the same thing that men are responsible for our pitiful condition (*durdasha*)"<sup>32</sup>

Most of the articles on widows voiced the need to do something for them, because the widows were a national shame, and had to be either remarried or morally and professionally trained for the good of the nation. Serving the nation was of supreme concern to some of the widows. It is the emphasis on the *purposefulness* of the widows to the national pride and progress that makes this journal the most important instrument in the women's movement in the Hindi provinces.<sup>33</sup> *Stree Darpan* was very comfortable priced at Rs 2 per year but there were not too many letters in response. The cover of the journal was plain and did not contain any pictures. The cartoons are also conspicuous by their absence.

#### **Abala Hitkarak**

This journal in Hindi was entirely devoted to the cause of getting the Hindu widows remarried through classified advertisements. It was started in 1904 by Jagdish dutt Sharma from Bijnore, whose father, Shankarlal Sharma started the association for the promotion of child-widow remarriage. It was called the "*Bal Vivah Pracharini Sabha*". The journal contained an attractive cover with the pictures of Vidyasagar, Parasara (ancient Law giver), Vishnu Shastri and Shankarlal in the middle. The journal on the very first page stated that "any man willing to marry off his daughter who is a widow, or any widow who wants to improve her life by remarriage will be assisted and remarried according to the shastrs. We are prepared for a debate with the opponents of remarriage".<sup>34</sup> Strikingly, this journal has more *bhajans* or devotional songs than any other journal consulted here. They are mostly by men, except for Poorna Devi, who was the widow of Shankarlal. The *Bhajans* in general made most of the 'immorality' aspect of the widows' issue, but in the garb of compassionate voices. There were news items which pertained to widows running away from house. The central idea was to awaken a sense of sympathy through fearful descriptions. The journal



was also careful in preserving the caste identity of the widows. It specified whether a brahman or Kshatriya widow was required.

One of the classifieds for a widow went like this. "A Brahman child-widow wanted. We are looking for a healthy and well-cultured widow for a 32 year old man, who is highly respected in his community."<sup>35</sup>

There were other classified advertisements which specified the income of the prospective groom. It is not known if any widows themselves came forward in response to their advertisements. It is known from the biography of Shankarlal published in the journal itself that he himself had married a child-widow, and there were several cases where he assisted widow remarriages and faced social oppositions. He even put out 25,000 advertisements inviting Sanskrit scholars for a debate on widow-remarriage.

The publication in the years between 1912 and 1917 has been consulted, but there seems to have been no change in the format of the journal. Interestingly, the journal did not get a very positive response, perhaps due to the growing unpopularity of the idea of remarriage itself, the reason for which have already been cited in the first section. The significance of *Abala Hitkarak* is in the fact that it combined what it stood for with 'action'. It focused on remarriages alone, acting like a mediator between the willing parties. It is interesting to note that remarriage is not supported by the Shastric evidence here. Rather, cases of widows turning immoral were considered valid reason for remarriage.

### **Arya Mahila**

This was a quarterly in Hindi, perhaps funded by the *Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal* in Benaras.<sup>36</sup> *Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal* was founded by Pandit Din Dayalu Sharma from Jhajjar. It was organized into various departments that focused on preaching by paid missionaries of the Hindu orthodoxy.<sup>37</sup> Started in 1917, it contained articles and opinions that demanded education and status for women on the basis of the Vedic ideals. It continuously remained focused on mythological figures from antiquity. *Bhagwati Gita*, *Garbhan*, *Kunti*, *Tulsidas* were often pieces of stories from *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana* with the twin aim of revitalizing Hinduism and redefining women's role

in safeguarding its sanctity. The editorship of *Arya Mahila* was held by Mahrani Surath Kumari Devi<sup>38</sup> and the journal itself belonged the *Arya Mahila Hitkarini Mahaparishad*. In the first issue in 1917, the editorial pointed out that the objective of the journal was to uplift the status of the *aryamahila*, to educate her according to *aryadharm*, to rid the Hindu society of social evils; to inculcate within the *arya Purusha* sense of marital love and thereby counter polygamy.

Surath kumara explained what she meant by *pativrata*. It meant being one and same as one's husband. But she recognized that the women have two dominant features one was '*gauri*', that is, the kind of woman who does not identify herself with any other person besides her husband. But the other, '*durgadevi*', was above this dependence and she is self-powered, "*Sarva shaktimaya*". These are the ideals of Hindu womanhood-both Gauri and Durga. She points out that *Maharishis* have entrusted the married women (*Sadhwa*) with a lot of responsibility because of her procreative power. But the *vidhwa dharmor* the duty of the widows was supposed to lie in being as an ascetic, serving society by propagating purity and selflessness. The first issue also carried articles on the 'greatness of the widow'. It informed the old Brahman widows on various arrangements for them for a pilgrimage. This invocation of the images of the duties of women in different situations, whether *sadhwa* or *Vidhwa*, was a common enterprise of orthodox Hindu groups such as to which this journal belonged. The significance of this journal lies in the fact that the woman editor Surath Kumari belonged to a royal household and upholding the women's traditional role alone could articulate her active role. She was therefore perhaps negotiating with her preconceived notions of the *arya* woman her own designs for liberty. Her recognition of the fact that there were two features of a woman, the dependent and the independent one, might have been a part of her own lived experience where she had not experienced the latter role. The journal contained articles which invoked the ancient past to the critique of contemporary ills of the Hindu society such as child-marriage.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Problem of Reform and Revival**

This section looks into the *Arya Samajist* and the *Sanatan Dhram* viewpoints on widowhood at the

institutional level, and compares it with the local level voices of the followers of the two groups. For both the groups, addressing the widow's issue became urgent due to the sensational reporting that deemed widows as a source of national shame. Secondly, addressing the women's issue was a gateway to justifying their claim to capture the ancient glory

of the Hindu past by redefining the past and providing justifications of authenticity for it.

The Census Reports show that there was not any substantial rise in the number of Hindu widows per thousand females in India between the year 1881, and 1921.

**Hindu Widows Per Thousand Females**

Age	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
0-5	0	1	1	1	1
5-10	2	3	5	4	5
10-15	19	14	18	15	17
15-20	44	35	44	37	41
20-30	69	81	82	28	92
30-40	225	208	214	200	214
40-60	517	513	503	501	494
60 and above	846	849	825	830	814

The year 1911 had lesser numbers of widows per thousand females than in 1881. However, there was a considerable link between the restriction on widow remarriage and almost stunted growth of the Hindu population. According to the 1911 Census Report, there were a total of 21 crores 73 lakh Hindus, in 1921 it increased to 21 crores 76 lakh 596 Hindus. The Census Report said "the number of Hindus has increased since 1901 by 5% while that of Mohammedan, Sikhs and Buddhists has increase by 7%, 37% and 13% respectively. As is now well known, the Hindus are less prolific than the Mohmmedans, Buddhist and Animists and other communities owing mainly to their social custom of early marriage and compulsory widowhood."<sup>40</sup>

The report also stated that there is some reason to believe that the restriction on widow remarriage was actually increasing among the classes in the lower ranks of the social male and was likely still further to rise. "To initiate the customs, of the highest classes is to acquire [the?] same increase of tone and respectability; and this desire to better then? their? status which as the country develops in gaining in extent and intensity especially among the depressed classes and the aboriginal tribes, finds its first expression in an assumption of the most

characteristic and imposing traditions of the twice born castes".<sup>41</sup> For the United Provinces it was said "in the United Provinces although the Bhumihars (240),<sup>42</sup> Brahmans (234), Kayasthas (210) and other high casts have the highest proportion of widows, the figures suggest a tendency among the lowest castes to regard widow-remarriage with increasing disfavor, the Pasis, Bhangis, Charmars and Dhobis all have appreciably more widows than they had ten years ago."<sup>43</sup>

E.A.H. Blunt, the Superintendent of the Census operations in 1911 in the United Provinces observed: "it may be taken for that fully 1/3 of the total Hindu population does not permit its widows to remarry and that this figure tends to increase".<sup>44</sup>

P.K. Datta<sup>45</sup> has made an in-depth study of the link between the Census reports and the response of the high caste social reformers to it, in the context of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. He observes that the Census was detached from the problem of low-caste reform and aligned to the question of widow remarriage. This, according to him, took place against a background in which gender started occupying the most important place among Hindu communal concerns. He uses P.C. Ray's pamphlet written in 1924 called '*Bangla Hindu JatirKhoy*



*O Pratihar* (The Decay of Hindu Society and its Remedy). P.C. Ray was the President of the Faridpur Provincial Hindu Sabha. In his speeches Ray asserted that the drop in Hindu numbers was caused by the ban on widow remarriage. Datta says that 'this attitude related to widows in the same manner as newspaper articles of this time did to cows, both posing the problem of efficient breeding'.<sup>46</sup> Ray's pamphlet argued that the decline in Hindu population was due to the low castes. This was the outcome of the growing ban on widow remarriage among the low castes themselves. 'The widow centred preoccupation revealed the underlying methods and trends of Hindu communalism rather than supplying its central concern'.<sup>47</sup> The widow's issue did surface in the discourses of the religious reformist groups in United provinces and they also applied a somewhat similar logic as the Bengali communal groups did, but the widowhood issue had varied responses from different religious groups, and these responses did not filter downwards into the minds of the followers of a particular sect in its pure form. The Census Reports apparently testify to the prevalence of an orthodox and conservative attitude of the people of the United Provinces, followed by the process of *sanskritization*. Working within a similar framework, J.T.F. Jordens points out that in the region of Doab, Swami Dayanand had as an audience, among traditional Hindu elite of brahmins, Kshatriyas and pandits in a rural setting-whereas Calcutta gave him a different audience. the educated, the mostly western urban middle class.<sup>48</sup>

Kenneth W. Jones, in a similar vein, has shown how the *Bharat Dharma Mahamandala* (founded in 1887, by Din Dayalu Sharma, a brahman from Jhajjar) strove to defend Hindu orthodoxy against all opponents whether they lay outside of or within Hinduism. The project of the *Mahamandal* rested heavily on large donations from Hindu princes, wealthy landowners and merchants. The Arya Samaj was understood to have serious ideological differences with the Sanatanists<sup>49</sup> (the future name of the *Mahamandala*). Jones holds that the arrival of the British rule did not create as fundamental a restructuring of the society as it had through the Permanent settlement in Bengal for the economy. The study of the English language was not encouraged in the United provinces by a need to know it for professional purposes.

By 1865, some knowledge of English was required for upper-level judicial posts, but it was not until 1889 that a Bachelor of Law degree was needed before beginning a legal career.<sup>50</sup>

The inadequacy of such a framework lies in the assumption that the infiltration of Western education necessarily pushed social reform in a 'progressive' direction and the appeal to the indigenous tradition alone tightened the patriarchal hold over Hindu women. However, through the widowhood issue it even seems that both Sanatanists and Arya Samajists were sometimes positioned in favor of remarriage of the widow.

Jordens points out that Punjabi *Aryas*<sup>51</sup> were in favour of widow remarriage and did not accept the *niyoga*<sup>52</sup> -as conceptualized by Dayanand in his *Satyarth Prakash*. There was a letter in *Chands* from a Sanatan Dharmi, who requested the editor to find a suitable match for his 18-year old widowed daughter.

He made it clear that he would not mind marrying her in the Arya Samajist way if the parents of the groom wanted it.<sup>1</sup>

There is another example of Swami Radhacharan Gowswami who was a staunch Sanatani Acharya from Vrindaban. He complained that Hindus were not *daring* enough to break with tradition and remarry their widows.<sup>54</sup>

*Stree Darpan* carried an article by a Sanatani Kashmiri who pleaded for a change in social attitude towards the remarriage question. He said that it was the call of the time that 'tradition' gave way to 'modernity'.<sup>55</sup> However limited the scope of the so called orthodox Hindu revivalist Sanatani concern for the widow, it underwent a 'change' that is crucial. This puts into question the supposed homogeneity of a religious movement and, subsequently, the 'force' of the so called 'revival'.

### **Widowhood and Nationalism**

While it cannot be denied that the idea of chaste and pure Hindu widow became urgent in the colonial presence, there were other ideas, especially of women and among some widows themselves, that haven't been so far read by the school of feminist scholars who generally identify the women's position at a given point of time and space with the economic-

political structure. There is a need to look at how women proposed social reform for themselves and what governed the direction of these proposals. It will be seen that in the opening decades of the twentieth century the nationalist consciousness reigned supreme over the male and female concerns for the Hindu widow. The degenerated and the bleak status of the women under the colonial rule was contrasted with the women of the remote Hindu past when there was supposed egalitarianism in the relationship of the sexes.

One of the woman writers stated that in the Vedic times "women were equal to man, after adequate education (*vidhoparjan*) she herself looked for a groom".<sup>56</sup>

"Women used to receive good education in this century in the past. Now courage and knowledge of *Bharat* has disappeared. She was physically stronger, her off- spring were healthy and had more sexual potential in terms of more semen (*virya*).<sup>2</sup> Because of fearlessness and independent attitude *bharat bhumi* had earlier reached new heights.<sup>58</sup>

It was asserted that the Hindu widows' problem was presumably taken well care of by the *Maharishis* of the *aryajati* in the past. The Hindu widow was supported materially by the community for raising her children. *Sati* was seen as a culmination point of the widows suffering in through colonial presence.<sup>59</sup> Here reform is wedded to an imagined tradition.

Hindu political activism stood in contrast with the ignorance and comparative silence over the widow's issue. A pattern of diverse reactions grew out of the realization of neglect of the Hindu widow.

"You (nationalists) can show your resentment against the unkindly rule of the British because you have a voice. But how will the widow protest against your conservativeness"<sup>60</sup>

The widow's celibacy posed a problem of a different kind, "the day Hindu widow like the European widow, herself goes out to find a second husband, what will happen then?"<sup>61</sup> The fear that extreme suppression would invite a reaction of the widow against the nation or the community she belonged to, was prominent.

A Hindu widow from Rawalpindi wrote to Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya that because of the insensitivity towards the widows, the widows were converting to Islam and Christianity. She suggested some kind of professional training for the widows and nowhere is remarriage preferred.<sup>62</sup>

These concerns were novel in the sense that earlier the question of widowhood had emerged out of compassion (I.C. Vidyasagar), traveled into religions domains (Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj) and now it had entered the public discussion forum through the medium of vernacular journals. It is almost certain from '*Stree Darpan*' which was a major journal containing articles on nationalism and women, that most of the Hindu women, better educated or not, found themselves empowered in their redefinition of the tradition for themselves-as an ideal wife and mother.

Their idealization was distinct from the men's idealization who had found in their homes a site for regaining the lost prestige at work and politics.<sup>63</sup> However, it was not as though there existed a well marked private and the public sphere where the men belonged to the latter and women to the former. It is this presumption which fails to make note of the women's own perception and creation of her own sense of public sphere. In the case of widows, it is particularly interesting to note how through the participation in the national movement they redefined their role. Geraldine Forbes<sup>64</sup> cites the example of the widow Ambabai from Karnataka who was married at twelve and widowed at the age of 16. She joined in the picketing of foreign clothes and shops, at Udipi. She was arrested and sentenced to four months in prison, released and re-arrested. Between these prison terms she made speeches, taught spinning and organized *prabhatpheries* (march at dawn). She regards these times as the happiest days of her life. Her life was transformed from one of purposelessness and boredom to one of vital engagement and commitment. On the darker side, involvement of the widows, particularly in national movement, often meant humiliation by the colonial police. In one such case of January 1931<sup>65</sup> when the police beat the women of Borsad, Kasturbai Gandhi reported that she had seen police grab women by the hair, hit their breasts, and utter indecent insults. The colonial authorities

denied the charges but occasionally the assaulted women pressed the charges and the courts heard their cases. In another case following their arrest and detention for picketing a cloth shop in Benaras, a group of women complained that they had been beaten and stripped. The police denied the allegations and claimed it was a Congress plot, the judge agreed that it was all made up. During the trial each woman who testified was discredited in moral terms. Kulda Vedi was revealed as an 'unattached' woman, a maid servant by trade and the kept woman of a Bengali man, Munni, a widow was described by the police as a woman who lived off the proceeds of a brothel. Khanto was another widow who lived in a house for women. Manorama was a widow, Shybolini was a widow and Gauri was a child widow. Discussing the charges the judges declared that these were the 'flotsam thrown up on the streets, hardly the respectable women of India'.<sup>66</sup> The British like the many of their Indian subjects did not regard women without male guardians worthy of protection from physical and sexual harassment. In another context, the women were relating to their own subjection, which was a lived experience for most of them, the larger context of national subjection.

"The nation has especially pinned high hopes on you (the Hindu women). The time has come for you to think of the nation as your husbands' house (*sasuraal*). Think of the entire Hindu community as your family, you have more work to do than men.. at home and for the nation."<sup>67</sup>

The significance of the women's own attempts to link the specific issues of widows with Nationalism lay in using the national sentiment to meticulously articulate their smoldering consciousness of gender inequalities.

"Look, these days men are asking for Home Rule, and the women are asking for freedom, but I am sorry to say that the humiliation the widows have to face has not even been noticed by our country people."<sup>68</sup> These humiliations were elaborated as exploitation of widows in her in-laws home, the hostility of their own parents and brothers and, as a remedy, she suggested that instead of behaving rudely with the widows, society ought to be kind to her and educate her morally and professionally.

In this statement, nationalist demands foment and encourage the articulation of an interior set of grievances, which are flung at nationalists men themselves.

Moreover, the domestic sphere seems to have been problematized here and the welfare of the nation (*deshka kalian*) was understood to have begun from the surface of the home. There was a constant deepening of inquiry into the root cause of the widow's misery. One woman wrote, that if it is the practice of patrilocality or *sampradan* or giving away of the girl to the groom because of which remarriage for the widow is so unthinkable.<sup>69</sup>

Rather than evaluating the widow remarriage campaigns in terms of success or failure, we should note that there were also some voices questioning the men's ideological basis of proposing the widow remarriage as a measure of reform. A Bengali woman wrote to *Stree Darpan* challenging the male understanding and control of the widows' welfare issues.

"Till you don't place her (widows) hand in the hands of another man, you (men) cannot rest in peace. but if you force them, the widows will begin preaching the conjugal rights".<sup>70</sup>

She was particularly enraged over the fact that the immorality of the widows was made a solid basis by male reformers for remarriage. She asked, "you are defaming women, don't your immoral hearts have anything to do with it? If you really desire social welfare first reform the men, teach them self-control".<sup>71</sup>

This rhetoric against widow remarriage differs entirely from Gandhi's position on remarriage. Gandhi intertwined his emphasis on renunciation and purity of the woman's character with the idea of the new woman whose space outside the home was inevitably carved out by the nationalist programmes. For him, the widow should strive to make her late husband's ideals and virtues live again in her actions, and thereby win for him the crown of immortality. Knowing that the soul of him, is not dead but still lives, she will never think of remarriage.<sup>72</sup>

Though Gandhi had the view that the widow had as much a 'right' to remarry as a widower, he, for some reason, thought that if enforced widowhood was a curse, 'voluntary' widowhood was a priceless boon in Hinduism.<sup>73</sup> Gandhi instead called for a ban on child-marriage [which?] neglected and marginalized the question of these widows who were adults and were experiencing a sexual death. The question of sexual death was taken up primarily in the reporting on pieces of scandalous events and by contrasting them with the widow's own voice. It is striking to observe how women themselves addressed the question of sexuality in such a different way than men did. Gandhi or Swami Dayanand by passed the main issue

of sexuality while suggesting 'voluntary remarriage' or *niyoga* respectively. It is in the women's own voices that one finds a complete survey of agencies determining the widow's welfare.

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None

### References

1. This framework has been used by some historians who presume that any social, intellectual and cultural regeneration in colonial India was indebted to the western influences on the Indian mind through the colonial rule. Such a school of thought consists of historians like Charles H. Heimsath, J.N. Farquhar and R.C. Majumdar amongst others. Farquhar is of the opinion that the stimulating forces were exclusively Western viz. the British Government, English education and literature, Christianity, oriental research, European science and philosophy and the material elements of the Western civilization. J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967 p.433.
2. Benoy Ghose and Gopal Halder have focused on the life of Vidyasagar to understand the issue of widow remarriage. This kind of a narrative is preoccupied with the developments at only one level viz. the mainstream reformist one, and overlooks all other factors which can qualify as social reformist efforts. Benoy Ghose and Chandra Vidyasagar, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi, 1965. Gopal Halder Vidyasagar: A Reassessment, Peoples' Publishing House, Delhi, 1972.
3. Jyoti Atwal, *Real and Imagined Widows: Gender Relations in Colonial North India*. Primus Books, Delhi, 2016; Mohini Giri, ed., *Living Death: Trauma of Widowhood in India*, Gyan Publishers, Delhi, 2008.
4. There were certain plays by the mid-nineteenth century which took up the widow's cause. Bharat Durdasha Rupak (not dated) by Pratap Narayan Misra (1856–94) provided a Vidyasagar-like shastric defence of widow remarriage and in the play the widow is remarried to her childhood friend. The most celebrated and fatherly figure in Hindi literature, Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850–85), wrote *Vaidiki Himsa Himsana Bhavati* (1873) which again ridiculed the shastric prohibition of widow remarriage. One of the earliest poems to be written in Urdu was 'Munajat-e-Bewa' by Altaf Hussain Hali in 1884. He describes the sadness of a widow and appeals against child marriage. The first novel to bring the widow into focus was *Yamuna Paryatan* in Marathi by Baba Padmanji Mulay, written in 1857.
5. Malini Bhattacharya, *In Radha's Name: Widows and Other Women in Brindaban*, Delhi: West Bengal Commission for Women and Tulika Books, 2008; *Report on Easing the Plight of India's Widows*, Delhi: Loomba Trust, 2009
6. Shekhar Bandyopadhyay 'Caste, Widow-Remarriage and the Reform of Popular Culture in Colonial Bengal' in Bharati Ray (ed.) *From the Seams of History: Essays on Indian women* Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997, p. 14.

7. Ibid, p 12.
8. Benoy Ghoselswar Chandra Vidyasagar Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi, 1965, p.98.
9. Ibid, p 97.
10. The widow remarriage moment naturally could not gather strength in this social situation. It began to weaken after the 1860s. Ibid, p. 99.
11. Gopal Halder Vidyasagar: A Reassessment, Peoples publishing House, Delhi, 1972, p.48.
12. Ashis Nandy 'Woman versus Womanliness in India: An Essay in Social and Political Psychology' in Rehana Ghadially (ed.) *Women in Indian Society: A Reader*, Sage, Delhi, 1988, p.77.
13. Sumit Sarkar *Writing Social History*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997, p.278.
14. Sitanath Tattvabhusan, *Social Reform in Bengal: A Side Sketch*, Calcutta, 1904, Papyrus reprint 1982, p.30.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid. p.31.
17. Even those who assigned a dominant role to religion like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Vivekananda, were not indifferent to the needs of material existence over religions demands. K.N. Panikkar *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony: Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* Tulika, Delhi, 1995, p.97.
18. Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, Philadelphia, 1888, p.i.
19. Ibid.p.82.
20. Ibid. p. 328.
21. Mrinalini Sinha refers to the controversial book by American born author Katherine Mayo, Called 'Mother India' published in 1927. Sinha observes that in Mother India, the Indian woman appear either as the object of the benevolent salvation of British imperialists or the object of the Indian male's cruel and barbaric practices, Mrinalini Sinha 'Gender in the Critiques of Colonialism and Nationalism: Locating the Indian Woman' in J.W.Scott (ed.) *Feminism and History*, OUP, New York. 1996, pp.80-81. For remarriage of widows, Mayo said "As to remarriage in orthodox Hinduism is impossible...of recent years however gradual if unrecognized influence of western teaching aroused a certain response", Katherine Mayo *Mother India*, Jonathan Cape 30 Bedford Square, London, 1927,p.84. The male rationalist critique of Mayo's book was propelled by the "alienness" to the Hindu ideals and culture which she was critiquing to justify the British rule. Critique of Indian society came from Hindu women themselves, but they invoked the same Hindu past for proving that women in India were capable of redeeming themselves.
22. Parvati Athavale, *My Story: The Autobiography of A Hindu Widow*, Translated by Rev Justin E. Abbott, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1930.
23. Ibid.p.47.
24. Ibid.p.45.
25. Himani Banerji points out to some women's journals like *Bharti*, *Antahpur*, *Sahitya*, *Mukul*, *Sakha*, and *Pradip* in Bengal published between 1880 and 1910. These journals contained arguments and sentiments by Bengali middle class bhadra mahila women- which expanded in "concentric circles from the mother, the home, the national from the self improvement of the woman, through her son to the nation." Himani Banerji 'Fashioning A Self: Educational proposals for and by women in Popular Magazines in Colonial Bengal', *Economic and Political weekly*, October 26,1991, p.51.
26. "Chand has both women and men as subscribes from every community and every states." Chand, Jan 1930,p.351.
27. Shri Bij Nath Devra, President, Marwari Trader's Association (Calcutta) S, Chand, Jan 1930 , p.534.
28. Editorial, Chand, Nov 1922, p.2.
29. Vasudha Dalmia concludes that the tone of the vernacular press as early as seventies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was sufficiently conspicuous to provide cause for serious alarm in official circles. The social and political critique voiced most of all by the 'vivacious and articulate Bengali language theatre and press in the immediate vicinity of the seal of government in Calcutta, was registered with displeasure but there was close scrutiny and control of the Hindi press as well." Vasudha Dalmia *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhartendu Harischandra 19<sup>th</sup> century* Benaras OUP, Delhi,1997, p.231 Sarda bill



- was referred in 1927. Concern with the traffic in women and girls led to a re-consideration of the age of consent and ultimately to proposals in the Indian Assembly, and this resulted in the introduction of the Hindu child Marriage Bill by Rai Sahib Harhilas Sarda.
30. Geraldine Forbes *Women In Modern India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p.85.
  31. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid believe that the historical role of the modernizing movements was that of 'recasting' women for companionate marital relationships and attendant familial duties as well as of enabling middle-class women to enter the professions and participate in political movements, in a limited way. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (ed.) *Recasting women: Essays in Colonial History Kali for Women*, Delhi, 1987, p.20.
  32. Editorial, *Stree Darpan*, Sept 1918, p.20.
  33. "There was no other magazine which brought such gravity and depth to the examination of the women's issues. Vir Bharat Talwar' *Consciousness in Women's Journals in Hindi: 1910-1920'* In Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (ed.), op.cit. p.202.
  34. *Abala Hitkarak* January 1912.
  35. *Abala Hitkarak* January 1912, p.65.
  36. The main activities of the Mahamandal in Benaras included efforts to uplift women through education, founding almshouses for indigent women, widows' homes, and the publication of journals, books, and tracts for women. Kenneth W. Jones *Socio-Religions Reform Movements in British India*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p.82.
  37. 'Orthodox movements attempted to maintain existing religion and drew their support for mainly the pre-British elites.' Ibid.p.216.
  38. Suarth kumari belonged to the royal family of Khairi in the United Provinces. The co-editor Maharani Shiva Kumari Devi was from Narsingharh, whereas the Parishad was established at Kashi.
  39. The later issue of 1924, 1926, edited by Smt. Narayani Devi carried articles on child marriage, Purdah, impact of westernization on Hindu women and so on.
  40. Ibid.
  41. Ibid.p.161.
  42. Per thousand females.
  43. Ibid p.162.
  44. E.A.H. Blunt *The Caste System of Northern India with special reference to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh Lucknow*, 19314, p.64.
  45. Pradip Kumar Datta *Carving Block: Communal Ideology in Early Twentieth Century Bengal* OUP, Delhi, 1999, p.51.
  46. Ibid.p.59.
  47. Ibid. p.60.
  48. J.T.F. Jordens, Dayanand Saraswati, OUP, Delhi, 1978, p.93.
  49. Kenneth Jones, op.cit.
  50. Ibid p.62.
  51. K.W.Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th century Punjab*, Manohar, Delhi, 1976.
  52. Temporary union between a widow and a man for purpose of procreating a son.
  53. A collection of letters was separately published in this book. Gangaprasad Upadhyay op.cit.pp234-235.'Vidhwa Vivah Mimamsa' pp.234-235.
  54. Ibidp.254.
  55. Sanatani Kashmiri 'A Strange Favour' *Stree Darpan* April 1919, p.183.
  56. Smt Vidhyawati Khanna 'Bal vivah aur use jati ko haniyan'. *Stree Darpan*, May 1920, p. 274 (all translations are mine unless otherwise specified)
  57. This perhaps had something to do with the feeling of being emasculated in the British presence.
  58. Smt. Jayadevi Misra (Moradabad) 'Stree Siksha:' *Stree Darpan*, June 1920.
  59. Chand, April 1923,p.465.
  60. A Sanatani Kashmiri, *Ek Ajeeb Uddar'*, *Stree Darpan*, April 1919, p.181.
  61. Ibid p.180.
  62. Chand, May 1926.
  63. Tanika Sarkar has pointed out in case of colonial Bengal that the male body through the grind of western education, offices routine and urbanization; with the loss of traditional sports and martial activities, was supposedly marked, mimed and completely remade by colonialism. The female body on the other hand was still pure and unmarked, loyal and subservient to the rule of the shastras



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64. Geraldine Forbes .op.cit.p.154.
65. Ibid.p.152.
66. Ibid.
67. Smt Kailash Rani Battal 'Kanya Adarsh', *Stree Darpan*, May 1917,pp. 124-25.
68. Smt. Heerdevi Tiwari 'Vidhva Kaapman' *Stree Darpan*, June 1920, p.311.
69. Kumari Surklata 'Bhartiya Vidhwaonka Jeewan' *Chand* April 1923, p.436.
70. Smt. PragyaSundari 'Vidwa Vivah', *Stree Darpan*, November 1919,p.253.
71. Ibid p.258.
72. Mahatma Gandhi 'An Ideal Satihood' *Young India*, May 2, 1931. Cited in A.T. Hingorani (ed.) *To the women: Gandhi Series Vol II* Karachi, 1941.
73. Mahatma Gandhi 'Helpless Widows', *Harijan*, June 22, 1935, *ibid* p.132.