CHAPTER VI

POSITION OF WOMEN

The position of women in a society reflects the standard of its civilization. The position of Indian women through the ages has been for the most part, one of honourable subordination to and protection by men. Ever since the days of the Indian law giver, Manu, Hindu law has assigned to women a dependent, though not a dishonourable status in society. The code of Manu prescribes thus, 'By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one nothing must be done independently even in her own house. In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons, a woman must never be independent. She must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband or sons, by leaving them she should make both (her own and her husband's) families contemptible'.

The women in India, in the pre-Muslim period, although dependent upon and protected by men, enjoyed in theory as well as to a considerable extent in practice, an honourable status in society. Apart from their being the unquestioned mistresses of the household, they were free to partake in other outdoor social activities.
Then, a change in the status of women came as a sequel to the advent of the Muslims in India. The position which the women enjoyed before the advent of the Muslim rule in India underwent a complete change during the Turkish supremacy in our country. Due to the growing sense of insecurity and social upheavals which followed the Muslim expeditions and loot, plunder and massacre, the Hindu women in northern India lost their high social status. They were secluded for fear of dishonour. Their spiritual, intellectual and physical developments were obstructed and social status was curtailed. The social laws and customs which came to be evolved in the changed set-up, stamped women with the stigma of mental deficiency and created in them a profound sense of inferiority complex. Gradually, they came to be almost wholly confined to domestic activities. Though women were still treated with respect, yet, the birth of a female child was looked upon as an unfortunate event in a family.

In the following pages, the author has tried to give a critical appraisal of what Guru Nanak has said on the position of women, in his Bani. His Bani is full of references to child marriage, parda and conditions of widows. He has also referred to the life of a householder and the family as a social unit. He also dwells on the relationship between the husband and the wife. By far, the largest number of metaphors in the compositions of
Guru Nanak refer to conjugal relationship of the married couples.\textsuperscript{5}

Let us begin our discussion with the institution of parda (veil) in the society, which had become in some form or the other, almost a common feature of Indian-womanhood in those days. Almost from the beginning of the Muslim rule in India, the parda system had become an indispensable part of the social life of women. The parda system in all probability was unknown in ancient India.\textsuperscript{6} The women moved freely in Hindu society. The exclusion of women from male society was not followed. They participated in social activities and functions.\textsuperscript{7} The general adoption of parda, according to Altekar, is subsequent to the advent of Muslim rule in India.\textsuperscript{8} Hindus adopted parda as a protective measure to save the honour of their women folk and to maintain the purity of their social order.\textsuperscript{9}

Muslim rulers and nobles who believed in polygamy and could maintain a huge harem were always in the look out for beautiful ladies, fought wars for them and after bloodshed brought ladies to their harems.\textsuperscript{10} The reference to women being forcibly taken away by the raiders while breaking the forewalls of their houses can be seen from the following couplets of Guru Nanak:

The raider (death), demolished the house (body), and robbed it of the women (life, the lone soul) which had taken shelter in it.
Her neck chained, the raider (yama) whipped her with his rod, and carried her away.11

Such circumstances made the life of a young and beautiful woman insecure. Women were often taken away by the powerful rulers and nobles. The example of Firoz Shah Tughlaq's mother (a Bhati Rajput girl) is before us who agreed to marry Rajab to save the kingdom of her father Ran-Mal (Chief of Abohar) from destruction at the hands of Muslim invaders.12

Parda system as prevalent at the time did not permit woman to mix freely with other members of her clan. She suffered from lack of association with men. As a daughter the only associates of a girl were her girl playmates and her brothers from among boys and when she was married and became a wife, she lived in the company of her husband.13 It was a custom of the age that woman confined to home or in parda was very much appreciated by the society. It was a common saying of those days 'Andar baithi lakh di, Te bahar gayi kakh di' (means one who stays at home is worth a lakh, but the one who wanders out is worth a straw). To quote Amir Khusrau, "The good woman is one who habitually observes parda and wears Burqa (mantle) on her face. A woman who used to wander about in streets is not a woman, rather she is a bitch. The woman should maintain Purda (privacy) in their houses even being as
narrow and as constricted as eye of a needle .... The unmarried girls were perhaps not expected to observe purda. The poor women, especially in the rural areas, who had to work outdoors for their maintenance, could not have afforded to observe the rules of purda or to remain in seclusion with the same rigidity as their sisters belonging to the upper classes of society. The vast mass of peasant women did not wear any shroud or veil of a specific kind and they did not confine themselves to their houses. They were expected to help their husbands in all 'external pursuits and internal economy'. It was everywhere a common sight to see women water carriers walking along the streets without any purda. There are some references in Guru Nanak's Bani and in the hymns of other Sikh Gurus and Bhagatas where a woman, carrying a pitcher full of water is mentioned. Such references make us believe that the common women moved much freely than the women of the upper class families of both the communities.

The Muslim women observed purda with greater rigidity than the Hindu ones. A milder and less elaborate form of purda, commonly known as ghoonghat seems to have been observed by the Hindu women. Guru Nanak and saint Kabir have used this word in their Bani. They never approved the system of purda or ghoongat which deprived the women to move freely in the society. Kabir says, it is a false pride that has been attached to it by the people.
"This only is the merit of veiling thy face,
that for a few days the people say,
How noble is the bride'.

These lines clearly indicate that the saint poets of medieval India did not see any merit in the prevailing custom of wearing a ghoongat or purda but to please the members of one's in-law's family or people in general very few married women could take the bold step of casting aside the ghoongat which had become a symbol of respectability in the society. Still some women in the society could challenge the custom of wearing a ghoongat and make themselves free, as is clear from the following couplet of Guru Nanak:

'I've cast off my veil:
the values of the world haunt me no more.
My ignorance, the mother-in-law,
hath lost her moorings,
and no more is her sway over my head'.

On the whole, however, purda or ghoongat might have considerably hampered the progress of women, both Hindu and Muslim, during the period under review. Since Guru Nanak and Guru Amar Dass had preached against purda, the women of their disciples generally discarded it and moved freely without a veil.
Sense of insecurity and continuous raids by the Muslim invaders from the north-west compelled the parents to marry their daughters at an early age, even before the age of puberty. The custom in those days did not allow the girls to remain in their parents’ home for more than six to eight years after their birth. They were usually married when six or seven years old. Guru Nanak has used the word *Iani Bali* (poor ignorant girl) for such brides who were married long before they could understand the meaning, rights and duties of a married woman. A marriage at or after the age of puberty was considered a bad marriage and a sinful deed for her parents. Alberuni who was in India in the beginning of the eleventh century does not mention child marriage among the Hindus.

The accounts of the foreign travellers, the Persian Chronicles, the *Bani* of *Adi Granth* and the contemporary literary works abound in numerous instances of child marriages in our period. Both the Hindus and the Muslims had fallen prey to it. Emperor Akbar seems to have disliked early marriages and he tried to check this practice as far as possible. Abul Fazal writes, 'He abhors marriages which take place between men and women before the age of puberty. They bring forth no fruit and His Majesty thinks them hurtful; for afterwards, when such a couple ripens into manhood they dislike having connexion and their home is desolate'.
Marriages usually took place at the house of the bride's father. There are numerous references of marriage-party and the bridegroom being received by bride's father and their relatives, in Guru Nanak Bani. It could be an easy affair if both the bride and the bridegroom lived in the same town or in the neighbouring villages. But if the girl happened to be engaged to a man residing far away, it was a cause of great concern to the girl's parents. In those days of meagre communications and transport the girls who were married to a distant place considered their marriage as an event of permanent separation from their parents home. In the following couplet, Guru Nanak portrays the feelings of such a girl who has been married to a man who lives far away from her parental home:

The father hath wedded me in a Land far removed, and so I go not back to my parents' world.

Life long celibacy for girls was discouraged and every girl had to be given away in marriage. On account of political and socio-religious circumstances of the time, parents tried to marry off their daughters as early as possible. In Guru Nanak's Bani, we do not come across any reference to the inter-caste marriages even from the references available in other contemporary writings it appears that the marriages generally took place between boys and
girls of the same caste, sub-caste, or profession. Abul Fazal refers to these caste-marriages thus: 'In the present Kaliyuga, no one chooses a wife out of his own caste, nay, each of these (four main castes) being sub-divided into various branches, each sub-division asks in marriage only the daughters of their own equals.'

The dowry formed an important part of the marriage deal. The nature of dowry varied according to the economic standard and the social status of the parties concerned. It was more universal amongst the richer and well to do sections than amongst the commoners. The Sikh Gurus condemned the dowry system as mere show of one's ego and riches:

Blessed is the Lord's worship;  
the true Guru hath blest me with it.  
In all lands, nay, in all Universe  
pervades the glory of the Lord;  
Yea, the gift of the Lord's (name) is matchless.  
All other dowry displayed by the self willed  
is false egoism and a vain show.

After marriage, the girl lived in the joint family of her husband, where the mother-in-law exercised control over her and her commands were to be carried out. If she failed to come up to her expectations her life became miserable. The following couplet of Guru Nanak is very
important in this regard:

My mother-in-law is vicious;
she lets me not stay in peace at home
or seek the joy of my spouse.34

It was this treatment of her mother-in-law and
some time of her 'nanad' (husband's sister) which made the
girl realise that how badly she missed her parents, partic-
ularly brothers.35 Her position was no better than that
of an ordinary maid. She had to please each and every
member of her husband's family by rendering every possible
domestic service. But when grown up and away from the
dominating influence of her mother-in-law, a middle class
lady had large powers in the management of the household.36
The foreign travellers have noticed with great appreciation
the great respect paid to pregnant women not only by their
husbands and relations but all the inhabitants of the
place belonging to her caste prayed for her health and
safety.37

One of the main functions of a woman according to
ancient Hindu scriptures was to bring forth a male child.
If she happened to give birth to a son people honoured her
and looked after her carefully.38 Both the Hindus and
the Muslims accorded a preferential treatment to the male
members of the society. A female member was considered
to be inferior in all respects - a son was always preferred
to a daughter. We find even an enlightened and highly accomplished scholar and poet like Amir Khusrau lamenting over the birth of a daughter in his famous Laila Majnu, thus, 'I wish you were not born and if you were, it would have been better if you had been a boy. No one can alter the decrees of fate'. While noticing this kind of preferential longing for a boy and a special treatment given to him in the society, Guru Nanak observes as under:

The father and mother like their son,
the father-in-law the son-in-law.

A son was considered to be the binding link between the parents:

If a piece of bronze or gold or iron breaks into bits,
the smith welds them again in fire;
if the husband breaks off from the wife,
the sons unite the two again.

The birth of a daughter was considered inauspicious. The very silence with which a female child was received was indicative of the disappointment. Even in the royal families, the difference was clear and well-marked. Only women rejoiced and feasted on the birth of a daughter, while the whole court took part in the celebrations, if a prince was born. We can well understand
the anxiety of Akbar who had resolved within himself that if Almighty God should bestow a son on him he would go on foot from Agra to Muin-ud-din Chishti's mausoleum, a distance of about 140 kos. A wife who unfortunately happened to give birth to girls in succession was despised and in some cases divorced. The deplorable custom of infanticide was luckily confined only to a very minor section of the mainly Rajput families.

The foreign travellers have noticed some strange customs connected with the birth of a child. A woman was considered impure for certain number of days after delivery and even during the menstrual period. When in child-bed she had an enforced rest and retired to a separate room. She was not considered fit to be touched by any one except the midwife who attended to her needs. Her food, according to Manucci, would be left at a distance and none would approach her, lest he or she might be defiled. The Sikh Gurus who were great religious and social reformers of the period, never approved the idea of impurity of a woman during the child-birth or her menstrual period. Guru Nanak very emphatically states:

If impurity attaches (to life's birth),
then all, all over, are impure.
In the cow-dung and the wood too is the life of worms.
As many are the grains of food, not one is without life, And is not water life, that bringeth all to life? How can then we believe in life's impurity, when impurity is in our very bed. Nanak: impurity goes no otherwise save by being wise.

Guru Nanak further says:

As the woman hath her periods month after month, so doth impurity abide in the mouth of the impure, and continually he is scorched. Pure are not they who bathe their bodies, pure, Nanak, are they in whose mind is He, the Lord.46

The domestic sphere was the most important field of a woman's activities. The higher education was denied to middle class and ordinary ladies and learning was restricted to primary subjects. Their training was confined to home and domestic affairs, such as needle work, embroidery, dressing the victuals, cooking pots and utensils. She had to look after the cows and other domestic animals, besides supervising the other works entrusted to her. In the early morning and before the sun-set, she would fetch water from the village well and during the day time after
she was free from the kitchen, she would spin for making the family garments. Thus the whole day was occupied with the domestic commitments which formed the usual routine. Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus have also made reference to some of these activities which earned love and affection for her in the family.

Guru Nanak in Rag Basant, writes:

If thou embroiderest the skirt (of God's Love) for thyself, then alone thou art a true bride; Yea, if thou arrangest well thy household and tasteth not vice, thou art then beloved of thy spouse.

A large number of metaphors relating to women in the compositions of Guru Nanak refer to conjugal relationship. Possibly, Guru Nanak's conception of a good or bad wife can be inferred from these verses. To bad wife, Guru Nanak calls as Kuchai, Dohagan and Kulakhni by which he means a bride without merit and on the other hand, Suchaji, Suhagan and Sulakhni is a bride with merit.

The image of the ideal wife, which emerges from Guru Nanak Bani is not unconventional. Even if she is beautiful, accomplished and well-mannered, she is humble and modest before her husband. She never feels proud of
her beauty, rather in a very humble and submissive way says that she does not possess any charm or merit to please her husband:

I am shorn of all merit, O' Lord
then, how shall I attain to Thee?
Neither I have beauty, nor lustrous eyes,
Neither family, nor culture, nor sweet speech.
I have neither intuition, nor intellect:
Yea, I am ignorant and unwise,
bless me Thou, O my Lord
that I repair to Thy Feet. 57

Whatever might have been the respective positions of wife and husband, it is a fact beyond dispute that most of the people managed to lead a happy life. The woman adorned her husband with passionate reverence and in return her husband rendered her all tenderness and protection. The wife pined for him in separation. The entire Baramaha 58 is marked by the exuberance of love. The change of seasons would not make a lady happy, rather she would remain gloomy. Guru Nanak portrays her feelings in the following lines:

I cherish my Lord body and soul,
but the Lord hath gone out
into the distant lands.
The Lord cometh not into the home
and I am sighing to death. 59
As a natural consequence, the true love and affection of the husband to his wife was unfailing. If there was no love between the two, the scents, ornaments and other objects used by the woman to please her husband were of no use at all. In *Sri Rag*, Guru Nanak says:

If a woman uses the fragrant perfumes and with saffron fills, the parting of the hair, and chews the betal-leaf mixed with camphor, and if she is not accepted by her lord, all her flavourings are of no avail.  

Guru Nanak counselled woman to be devoted worshipper of (God) husband, to be seeker of good name, to be virtuous and chaste and a faithful companion of her husband. Guru Nanak says that woman is beautiful who adorns her head with jewel of love:

O' thou bride, bedeck thy hair with truth;
wear thou the wear of Love.
Gather-in the chandan - like (God)
in thy conscious mind
and live thou in the temple of
inner consciousness

...                          ...

...                          ...
Beauteous is the woman who decks her forehead with jewel of love, and this is her glory that she cherishes in her mind the love of the True Lord (Husband).

Other contemporary and near contemporary writers also agree that for a woman her husband was her lord, her master and like God to her. All the efforts of a wife were concentrated on proving herself a devoted wife to her husband. Conjugal devotion of a Hindu woman was proverbial.

In the estimation of Guru Nanak and other saint-poets of medieval India, only a good wife was commendable and deserved love and respect in the family. A bad wife had no physical or moral traits to commend her. She neither knew how to please her husband nor she had qualities to become a good housewife. All her ornaments were of no avail if she failed to please her husband. Guru Nanak writes about such women as under:

Without the spouse, why deck thyself, O' woman, for all thy beauty is vain. All thy decoration is like the (empty) wind, for thou enjoyest not the bed of the spouse. They whose lords are not at home, their days pass in utter sorrow, alone in bed.
A bad wife in the views of Guru Nanak is generally heedless, sour tongued, slothful and unfaithful to her spouse. She is attached to others and her deeds are black. Her mind is unclean, without merit and virtues. She is totally riddled with sin. Here are a few couplets from the Bani of Guru Nanak:

The deserted (bad) woman abides not in the Lord's home (i.e. husband's home),
Yea, she knows not the relish of the Lord.
She is sour-tongued: she bow not to her Lord,
(i.e., her husband),
for she is attached to other.65

But on the other hand:

The true bride is embellished by the Lord (husband) Himself,
awakening His Love within her.
And she walk in the will of the true Guru (i.e., her husband),
and is bedecked spontaneously with the Name.
Such brides enjoy their spouse even on the Lord's couch in the state of poise.66

Polygamy was a practice prevalent both among the Hindus and the Muslims, especially belonging to the richer sections of the society.67 Normally, a man used to have
only one wife. The Hindus by and large restricted themselves to monogamy. They married second time only if their wives were unable to bear a male-child or were barren or had died. Taking a new wife after the death of one's first wife is noted by Guru Nanak in *Asa di Var*:

To the woman are we engaged,
to the woman are we wedded.
The woman, yea, is our friend,
and from woman is the family.
If one woman dies, we seek another:
through the woman are the bonds of the world.68

There was another reason too for taking a second wife. It was adultery. Della Vale who visited India during Jahangir's period writes, 'Hindus take but one wife and never divorce her till death, except for the cause of adultery'. Guru Nanak felt that an essential trait of relationship between a husband and wife was fidelity, but he also suggested that fidelity was essential not only for a wife but for husband also.70

As noted earlier, the chastity of Hindu women was proverbial. Several travellers on different occasions have made a special mention of the high character of Hindu ladies. Thevenot presents it as an example to all the women of the East.71 Akbar too held a high opinion of the chastity of the Hindu women who in spite of being sometimes
neglected 'are flaming torches of love and fellowship'.\textsuperscript{72} In this regard, Guru Nanak writes:

\begin{quote}
'My Lord is the one and one alone,
yea, there is not another.
And it is through His grace
that I unite with Him (my husband).\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

Prostitution was regarded as a disgrace though some of the meaner sort adopted it and lived in separate quarters usually outside the city.\textsuperscript{74} There were also courtesans or the dancing girls whose number, in our period was also considerable. These courtesans and public women might have been largely responsible for the growing moral laxity in the society.\textsuperscript{75} Those who were in the habit of visiting them did not care to realise the feelings of their wedded companions. Guru Nanak has all the sympathies for such women who are deserted by their spouses day after day:

\begin{quote}
Break thy cosy bed
and thy ivory bracelets, O woman,
and thy arms, yea, and the arms of thy bed;
For, even though thou bedeckest thyself so,
the spouse enjoyeth with others.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

Such people did not enjoy any respect in the society as is clear from the following couplet of Guru Nanak:
Thieves, illicit lovers, 
prostitutes and touts, 
keep company together, 
as do men of irreligion 
who eat out of the same bowl. 
They know not the Lord's praise, 
for, within them abideth evil.  

Of polyandry no historical instance has been recorded in the literature or inscriptions of our period, but Alberuni referred to its existence among the people of the Indian hills, 'stretching from the region of Panchir into the neighbourhood of Kashmir', among whom it is still prevalent. But there is no reference to it in the Bani of Guru Nanak.

Some evil practices like sati and jauhar were in full swing during medieval period. Although there are no verses in Guru Nanak's compositions regarding these customs yet the references in Guru Amardas's Bani clearly show that the Sikh Gurus had no appreciation or approval for the widow becoming a sati. Widow re-marriages were not allowed among the Hindus except among the lower social classes. A widow either had to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband or on a separate pyre soon after his death or she had to live a simple and pure life devoid of all earthly charms. Referring to the pitiable lot of Hindu widows and the practice of sati, Alberuni says, 'If
a wife looses her husband by death, she cannot marry another man. She has only to choose between two things – either to remain a widow as long as she lives or to burn herself, and the latter eventually is considered the preferable, because as a widow she is ill-treated as long as she lives'.

In this connection, it may be mentioned that during the Muslim rulers of Delhi and specially by Akbar and Aurangzeb some efforts were being made to ban this practice or at least to check it. But in spite of such royal efforts, the system continued in varying degrees, till it minimised in the 19th century partly on account of the social reforms and partly under the pressure of state legislations.

Widow remarriage was permitted amongst the Muslims but the widows were given the status of a second rate wife. Amongst the Hindus, as stated earlier, widow remarriage was almost non-existent. Although there are no direct references of widow remarriage or remarriage of a separated woman in Guru Nanak's Bani but on the basis of one verse in his Bani, when it is stated that a widow woman can get satisfaction only from her husband and from none else, we can draw an indication that Guru Nanak did favour the idea of widow's remarriage and resettlement to an honourable family life:
The widow offers her body to another,  
Yea, for the sake of lust or money,  
her mind is swayed thus;  
(But) without the spouse,  
she is satiated not.  

In this verse, the characteristic trait of a widowed woman is given as 'submitting her body to a stranger to gratify lust and to obtain money'. Without any implication for the widow's position, the legitimate matrimonial relationship is mentioned as praiseworthy. Thus Guru Nanak was of the view that in order to prevent a widow from falling a victim to temptation, opportunities should be created for widow remarriage, so that the widowed women are able to lead normal and socially respectable lives.

Whatever might have been the position of a woman as a girl, bride and widow, she certainly occupied a most respectable position in society as a mother. In almost all the sections of Hindu and Muslim society the mothers and other elderly women were given utmost respect and their commands were invariably carried out. In the domestic affairs, they were consulted on all matters of importance.  

The following couplet of Guru Arjan is very significant in this regard:
In all the family she is the noblest. She is the counseller of her husband's younger brother and elder brother. Blessed is the house, where-in she has appeared, O' Nanak she passes her time in perfect peace. 

The Rajputs showed maximum regard to their mothers and never dared to go against their wishes, howsoever, unreasonable they might have been. There are instances of Rajput rulers like Rana Sangram Singh II of Mewar taking his meals only after paying respects to his mother. The Mughal emperors too had great regards for their mothers.

They were, however, not respected in the domain of religion, rather they were excluded from the religious deliberations. Kabir regarded woman as a living picture of lust and sexual gratification. He further says that under her shadow a snake becomes blind and that the man who daily keeps her company must fare even worst. Another saint-poet of medieval period - Tulsi Dass, placed women at par with beasts and sudras. He declared that animals, beasts, rustic (vulgar), sudras and women need constant censor. Dadu Dayal another medieval Indian saint poet has similar opinion about the women. He calls woman an enemy of man. A Punjabi poet Peelu says that woman's friendship is a curse because the common sense of a woman lies in her heels.
But, on the other hand, Guru Nanak gave women back her personal share in the domain of religion. It is evident from a frequently quoted verse in Guru Nanak's Asa di Var, that Guru Nanak was prepared to defend woman against those who insisted on relegating her to an inferior position merely on the basis of her sex. There is no reason to believe that Guru Nanak's path of salvation was not open to women. In this sense, she was certainly placed at par with man, just as the sudra was placed at par with the brahmin. In Asa di Var, he says:

It is from woman, the condemned one that we are conceived and it is from her that we are born.
It is the woman who keeps our race going.
It is woman who is sought when one looses one's previous wife.
It is woman to whom we establish our social ties.
Then why denounce her from whom even kings and great men are born?
There is none save the true one who is not born of woman.

This couplet refers to the indispensability of woman as mother and wife. It refers in fact to her indispensability for procreation and it poses the question 'Why
denounce her who gives birth to the kings, commoners and the great men'?

Guru Nanak was against the life of celibacy and renunciation of women and regarded brahamcharya and sanyasa ashrama as inferior to married life. He praised married life and the life of a householder to be as pure and chaste as the crystal clear water of the Ganges.

He alone is a householder who disciplines his sense desired.
And beggeth from God contemplation, austerity and self control!
And giveth in charity all he can through his body.
Yea, such a householder is pure, (and crystal clear) like Gangas water.

Thus, Guru Nanak's appreciation of a householder and placing woman at par with man is a pleasant and meaningful deviation from medieval ideas. A careful study of the foregoing pages of this chapter would clearly reveal to us that the general lot of women during the period under review, was not very different from what it is today, though changes in general, respects have taken place under the influence of modern social forces.
NOTES

1. Manu, V., pp. 147-149 and p. 195, quoted by Ojha, P.N., in North Indian Social Life During the Mughal Period, Delhi, 1975, p. 118.

2. Luniya, B.N., Life and Culture in Medieval India, p. 159.

3. Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 166. Perhaps Jaisi reflects the impression of the people when he says, 'You are women and deficient in sense. That man is a fool who takes the advise of women folk at home. Quoted by Rashid, A., in Society and Culture in Medieval India, Calcutta, 1969, p. 129.


10. In the Bani of Guru Nanak, the word *harem* appears twice where he says that these are full of beautiful women, slave girls and other domestic servants; see *Adi Granth*, pp. 417 and 472.


For full details of the treatment meted out to the women during attacks on the towns of North India, by foreign invaders, see *Babarvani, Adi Granth*, pp. 417-18.


The kings had lost their heads and revelled in revelries.
But now the writ of Babar prevails, not even the princes get bread to eat.
Where are the stables now, where are the horses, where are the drums, where the flutes?
Where are the sword-belts, where the chariots, where the red dresses (of soldiers), pray?
Where are the looking glasses, where the beauteous faces, no, I see them not before me.
Where are the homes, where the mansions,
where the magnificent serais?
Where are the beauteous brides
lounging on a cosy bed,
seeing whom one would get no sleep.
Where are the betal leaves sellers,
where the harems: Yea all have vanished
like the shadow.

Hearing of the invasion of Babar, millions of
Muslim divines prayed for his halt.
But he burnt all the age-old temples
and the resting places, and the princes,
cut up into pieces,
were thrown to the winds.

12. Parsad, Ishwari, *Medieval India* (from 647 AD to
the Mughal Conquest), Allahabad, 1933, p. 526.

13. Sharma, Brijnarain, *Social Life in Northern India*,
Delhi, 1966, p. 25.

14. Quoted by K.P. Sahu, 'Some Aspects of North Indian

15. Ojha, P.N., *North Indian Social Life*, p. 120.

16. Ovington, p. 320, quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit.,
p. 108.
17. See, *Adi Granth*, pp. 325, 333, 347, 393 and 1331. The Sikh Gurus and the Bhagatas has used the word *Panihari* for women water-carriers - domestic or otherwise.

18. See, Thomas, F.W., *Mutual Influence of Mohammadans and Hindus in India*, Cambridge, 1892, p. 72. The author writes that seclusion of women is confined to the richer classes only. Among the poor, it is quite unknown.


26. Sachau, E.C., Alberuni's India, see p. 107 on different systems of matrimony among the Hindus.


29. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 728. The original text in the Adi Granth, reads as under:

द्वारे दिखला दूरवि
ठार आए धार शेखरी विलक्षिम नहीं II

See, also Sharma Brijnarain, Social Life in Northern India, p. 12.


32. Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 129.

_Adi Granth_, p. 79:


_Adi Granth_, p. 355:


35. See the following lines by Guru Nanak in *Dakhni Onkar*: _Adi Granth_, p. 935:


_Adi Granth_, p. 596:


*Adi Granth*, p. 143:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ਕੇਵਲ ਦੁੱਧ ਦੇਣਾ ਮਗਦ} & \\
\text{ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸੰਤ ਦੇਣਾ ਦੇਲਣਾ} & \\
\text{ਵੇਲੀ ਬੁੱਧ ਦੇਣਾ ਮੋਹਕਾ} & \\
\text{ਪੁਨੀ ਬੁੱਧ ਦੇਣਾ ਮੀਰ ਕਰਾਉ} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

42. A Rajput is often heard to say, 'Accursed to the day when a woman child is born to me'. Tod. II, pp. 739-40 quoted by Chopra, P.N., *op. cit.*, p. 108.


*Adi Granth*, p. 472:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ਕੇਵਲ ਮੁੱਠ ਦੇ ਵੋਂ ਜੋ ਟੰਕੇ ਨਕਿੱਡੇ} & \\
\text{ਕੇਵਲ ਜਾਣ ਕਰੀਂ ਸਰੀਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੋਂ ਨਕਿੱਡੇ} & \\
\text{ਪਿਛਲਾ ਪਰਿਣਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੰਖਤ ਨਕਿੱਡੇ} & \\
\text{ਮੁੱਠ ਨਕਿੱਡੇ ਵਾਂ ਕਦੇ ਮੁੱਠ ਦੇ ਵੋਂ ਨਕਿੱਡੇ} & \\
\text{ਭੁਗਲਵਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਤੌਂ ਟੀਲੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਵੋਂ ਨਕਿੱਡੇ} & \\
\end{align*}
\]
47. See, Mohan Singh (ed), *Kafian Shah Hussain*, Ludhiana. Shah Hussain was a contemporary of Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan.


\begin{verse}
\end{verse}


52. *Adi Granth*, p. 72; see also pp. 363, 426, 428, 430 and 559.


56. *Adi Granth*, p. 89.

Adi Granth, p. 750 :

मंड जत कर मे दुर रहो दैवी *
सिंह तो कृत निश्चित दैवी *
हर मे कुण त कही हैरे *
हर दुर हैरे त मैंहै हैरे *

See also, *Adi Granth*, p. 1171.


Adi Granth, p. 1108 :

से भव सुध मत उठे विश वचनेम किये 
भिन्न श्रद्ध रहो झरे अवत्तृते चर्चे तर भवभोज समर्थ करवे 


Adi Granth, p. 19 :

उन्न प्रेति अपरिमार देव भक्त मुहमिद 
केशर उन्न बुद भक्त भक्ति अनुष्ठान 
ते पाप दीवा हे उष्णो व पिता अश्रुव तुह 

See also, *Adi Granth*, p. 937.

Adi Granth, p. 54:

...

62. Ahmad Yadgar, Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana, pp. 95-107, quoted by Nijjar, B.S., Punjab under the Sultanate, p. 92.

63. See, Keshav, Ramchandrika, Allahabad, Part I, p. 135 and Dadu Dayal, Dadu Dayal ki Banj, p. 95.


Adi Granth, p. 58:

For such wives (Kuchaji and Dohagan), see also Adi Granth, pp. 18-19, 72 and 762.

_Adi Granth_, p. 426:

For such women to whom Guru Nanak calls (suchaji and sohagan), see _Adi Granth_, pp. 18-19, 72, 426, 722, 785, 790 and 1088.


_Adi Granth_, p. 473:

69. Quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 110.

70. _Adi Granth_, p. 933.

71. Thevenot, Pt. III, Chapter XXIV, p. 47, quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 120.


Adi Granth, p. 357:

सुंदृ ने हेम दुना ठपथ्यो इंटो
ठपथ्यो हेम दुना इंटो


75. See Badauni, A.Q., *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, (tr.),


Adi Granth, p. 557:

वृंदा उद्वेद पिंडी निपुंश मदु धवर्त मदु धवर्त
देवै देवु अलेटेट भुंजे मदु उपो अस्त्रवण


Adi Granth, p. 790:

देवै तरम मैंजो दुर्गोस्तेंद्र तामसु
देवै देवा तो देवी देवोत तर धर्म
मिष्टु मध्य ठ नामलो मदर को फैलेत


79. According to the Bani of Guru Amardas, 'a woman was sati or true, if she died of the pains of separation rather of burning herself on the funeral pyre'. The translation of the couplet reads as under:

A sati is not she who burneth herself on the pyre of her spouse. Nanak: a sati is she who dieth with the sheer shock of separation.

At another place, Guru Amardas says:

Yea, the sati is one who liveth contented and embellisheth herself with good conduct. And cheriseth her Lord ever and calleth on Him each morn.

Adi Granth, p. 787:

80. Sahu, K.P., Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life, p. 200, see also, Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 144.


82. See Sahu, K.P., op. cit., p. 205 and Ojha, P.N., op. cit., pp. 149 and 151.

83. Roychoudhary, S.C., Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Medieval Age), Delhi, 1980, p. 59.

Adi Granth, p. 226:

निदो उठे विश्वस रहि लठे तैयरी।

रघि रघि विदु दुरीद्रि मेली।

विदु विदु विश्वसि त चम्मू तैयरी।


Adi Granth, p. 371:

अख बुद्धि व भर्ती न अभुस्र।

अखी तेलो तेल शेलख।

पौड़े गुड़ निदु भूखती ज्ञाती।

सक तत्त्व गुड़े मुख विरंध।

87. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., pp. 61-62 and
Chopra, P.N., op. cit., pp. 119-121.

88. Kabir, Vachan-namrits, pp. 71-73 quoted by Rekha Mishra, Women in Mughal India, p. 129:

ठली डे वा ते तली, विलोकर ठली सिल्म।

नव नव नव नव भगवान ठली वाच लिखा।

At another place, Kabir writes:

see Rekha Mishra, op. cit., p. 129:

ठली डे वा तला तला

तेजु तेज तला बो
89. See, Rekha Mishra, *ibid.*, pp. 129-130:

हरेको लो परिवर्तन कर लो यहाँ वह जीवन!।
श्रीमान निश्चल लो जो भर लिये तो जीवन वे माने॥


लेक राजन दुरशंस पुरम हरेको
ना मंडल उपड़े अपरारणी॥


हरेको छेद युक्ति जी,युक्ति छेदी हरेक॥

92. *ibid.*, p. 130:

उठे जम्मो छोड़ो जम्मी
युक्ति निवृत्ती छोड़॥


मैं लिखे हैं अपने अपने नित लैंगे जनता॥

*Adi Granth*, p. 952:

मे बिन्नी से बिन्न होंगे॥

नये उप मनुष्य सङ्ख्या होंगे॥

पीछे रख दे देने महीन॥

से बिन्नी जीवन चा ठोइ॥