CHAPTER 6

REligious grants by the women
(1750 A.D. TO 1850 A.D.)

The example of the rulers alienating land revenue in favour of the religious institutions and individuals of all faiths was followed by the women of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. More than, sixty women, mainly the mothers and wives of the rulers and jagirdars gave grants. They not only persuaded their sons or husbands to make grants but also gave grants from their own jagirs. Sada Kaur od Batala, in fact, was the only rulers to have given grants from her own territory. The earliest grant, on record, was given in 1766 whereas the last was given in 1849.

I

The largest number of grants was given to institutions and individuals belonging to the Sikh faith, the individuals attached to the most prominent institutions, the Golden Temple received maximum number of grants. For example, Sham Singh, a granthi of Harmandar Sahib was given a village worth 600 rupees by Mai Sada Kaur for administering pahul to her grandsons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh, in 1818.\(^1\) The same individual received a well worth 100 rupees in pargana Saurian from Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Ranjit Singh and daughter of Tara Singh Chainpuria, in bhet ardās in 1827. He was asked to pray for the donor.\(^2\) Khem Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, also gave a well along with land worth 70 rupees in Sialkot to Dilbagh Singh, Hari Singh and Sewa Singh, the pujaris of the Golden Temple in 1836.\(^3\) Gurdwāras at Thanesar and

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\(^1\) Foreign/Political Proceedings, 10 June 1853, No. 218.
\(^2\) Loc.cit.
\(^3\) Loc.cit.
Chiloundi were given revenue-free land grants by Mai Sukha of Ladwa and Mai Ram Kaur of Chilundi, respectively. A single instance of grant to a bunga is also available. Bunga Sarkarwala, built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was given a well worth forty rupees by Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, in 1833 in pargana Batala.

The udāsī individuals and institutions received twenty-three grants worth 3,000 rupees. Mai Ram Kaur, wife of Baghel Singh of Chiloundi gave a plot of land in pargana Chilundi to Nischal Das and his heirs. The udāsī individuals: Barham Gopal and Sangat Das received patronage in form of food and grain in Shaikhupura from Rani Nakain. Among the cis-Satlej states, Nur-ul-Nisa, wife of Rai Ahmad of Rai Kot, gave a well worth thirty-five rupees to Sukh Ram, an udāsī faqir, in tahsil Pakhowal in zilla Ludhiana in 1803. Mai Chand Kaur, wife of Fateh Singh of Thanesar, gave grant worth 500 rupees on occasion of eclipse of sun to Sangat, an udāsī faqir, in punarth. Another woman named Mai Badi, wife of Basawa Singh of Arnauli, also alienated twenty bighas of land to an udāsī faqir, Mehar Das, in pargana Gungrana in Ludhiana.

The Udasi Akharas at Amritsar and Batala received grants from the women during the late eighteenth century. Mai Malkhan, wife of Nar Singh Chamiariwala and Mai Man, wife of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia gave grants worth 140 rupees to various udāsīs akhāras in Amritsar. Mai Sada Kaur made lavish endowments to Akhāra of Baba Sant Das at Batala to the tune of 970 rupees in bhēt. In an interesting case, Mai Dasi, a slave of Mai Sada Kaur, gave land worth ten rupees in Batala to

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4 Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 1858; 27 March 1857, No. 237.
5 Ibid., 10 June 1853, No. 219.
6 Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 1858.
7 Ibid., 14 November 1851, Nos. 51-57.
8 Ibid., 9 January 1857, No. 253.
9 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
10 Ibid., 2 January 1857, Nos. 181-83.
11 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 219; 14 January 1853, No. 229.
12 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
Baba Saran Das of Akhārā Sant Das at Batala. Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, is also known to have endowed to an udāsiī akhārā. Akhārā of Baba Santokh Das in Amritsar received a village worth 300 rupees in Dinanagar in religious gift from her. A wife of a jāgīrdār is also known to have been a grantor to this set of institution. Mai Sobhi, wife of Desa Singh Majithia, granted a well worth fourteen rupees in Amritsar to Akhārā of Baba Gangaram Kashiwala at Amritsar. The udāsi dera also received grants from the women during period under review. Mai Karmon, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh, granted half a village worth hundred rupees in pargana Fatehpur Gugera to Dera Kulan of Bhai Phcru at Qasur. Same dera received grants from Mai Nakain too.

The only udāsi samādh to receive grant from women was that of Sahib Anup Singh at Batala. Rani Chand Kaur alienated ten ghumaons of land worth fifteen rupees in 1823. The udāsi dharmāsālas were also given endowments by the women during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Mai Darvin, wife of Nar Singh Chamiariwala, gave twenty-five bighas of land worth twenty-five rupees to Sukhanand and Atma Ram for their dharmāsāla at Nunar in Sialkot. Mai Raj Kaur, wife of Sahib Singh Bhangi and aunt of Ranjit Singh, gave grant of a village and three wells worth 450 in Wazirabad for an udāsi dharmāsāla erected by her. It must be mentioned here that these grants were given in 1821 and 1832. Her daughter, Mehtab Kaur, too gave a grant of a well worth 100 rupees to the said establishment. In fact, a given by wife of a jāgīrdār is also available. Sobha Devi, wife of Dal Singh Kalianwala,

13 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 219; 14 January 1853, No. 229.
14 Loc. cit.
15 Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 229.
17 Loc. cit.
18 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
19 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 202. For more examples see 14 January 1853, No. 241.
20 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
21 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 222.
alienated two *ghumāons* of land in Sialkot for an *udasi dharmsalas* at Qasba Nunar.\(^{22}\)

Around twenty-seven grants were made to the Bedis, the descendants of Guru Nanak Dev, to the tune of 5,000 rupees. Mai Sahib Devi, wife of Hari Singh Bhangi, was the first among the women to give grant to Bedis in 1773.\(^{23}\) Bibi Sewa, another wife of Hari Singh Bhangi, Mai Saiju, wife of Dal Singh Mattu and widow of Nar Singh Chamiariwala were some of the late eighteenth century women to give grants to the Bedis.\(^{24}\) Mai Sada Kaur, wife of Gurbaksh Singh Kanhiya and Mai Chand Kaur, wife of Jodh Singh Kalalwala, were the other late eighteenth century women to do the same.\(^{25}\)

Among the queens of Ranjit Singh, Rani Nakain gave the largest number of endowments to Bedis. At least 2,357 rupees were alienated by her through fourteen different grants.\(^{26}\) The maximum amount of grant was given by her to Bedi Sajjadhari who was assigned a village worth 600 rupees in Shaikhupura in 1818.\(^{27}\) Rani Chand Kaur and Rani Khem Kaur, wives of Kharak Singh, gave *dharmarth* grants to the descendants of Guru Nanak.\(^{28}\) Umed Singh, Nischal Das, Amir Singh, Amir Chand, Sahib Singh, Jiwan Singh, Kahan Singh, Gian Singh, Mohar Singh, Milkha Singh and Bhagwan Singh were some of the Bedis to receive grants from above-mentioned women.

Among the *jāgīrdārs*, Mai Anjani Kaur, wife of Amir Singh Sandhanwala, gave a grant worth hundred rupees to Amir Singh Bedi in 1817.\(^{29}\) A grantee’s wife made a sub-grant to a Bedi out of the village granted to her husband by a ruler, Tara Singh Chainpuria. Musammat

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\(^{22}\) Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 202.
\(^{23}\) *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 4 July 1856, No. 154.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 14 January 1853, Nos. 213, 220 & 223.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 14 January 1853, Nos. 216 & 223.
\(^{26}\) Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 220.
\(^{27}\) *Loc.cit.*
\(^{28}\) *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 January 1853, Nos. 219-20.
\(^{29}\) Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 220.
Har Devi, wife of Tughana Singh Bedi, gave a village worth 300 rupees to Kahn Singh Bedi and Fakir Baksh Bedi in 1823 in Wazirabad. The latest of the grants was made by Sardarni Roop Kaur, wife of Karam Singh Nilowali, in 1845 to Bikram Singh Bedi of a half a village worth 500 rupees in ta'alluqa Narunangal.

The Sodhis too received grants from the women of early nineteenth century. Mai Sada Kaur gave grant of a village in Mukerian to Sodhi Gurbakhsh Singh in sankalp in 1812. Exemption of forced labour was specifically remitted to the grantee in their order. In the cis-Satlej states, Musammat Bhagbari, wife of Karam Singh who was the first cousin of Lal Singh of Kaithal, gave villages worth 700 rupees in Kaithal to the family gurus, Sodhi Surjan Singh and Tilok Singh, in ardās. Rani Nakain gave grants worth 800 rupees to Sodhis Kishen Singh, Narain Singh and Gulab Singh. A Sodhi woman is also known to have received a grant from the said grantor. Khem Kaur Sodhiani received a village worth 400 rupees in Nakodar from Rani Nakain in 1833.

Mai Sada Kaur was the only woman of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to make alienations to the Bhallas. Dilbagh Rai and Dalpat Rai, both from Batala, received grants in district Dinanagar, the former received a village worth 300 rupees, the latter received eight kanāls of land worth four rupees only.

The Sikh faqirs and bhāsīs were also patronized. Mai Raj Kaur, aunt of Ranjit Singh, gave some corn besides cash worth forty rupees in 1808 to Bhai Bhagu. Mai Sukhan, wife of Harmat Singh of Kaithal, alienated

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30 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 14 January 1853, Nos. 219-20.
31 Foreign/Political Consultation, 31 December 1847, Nos. 2213-14.
32 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 31 December 1847, No. 2204.
33 Foreign/Political Consultation, 31 December 1847, Nos. 1808-11.
34 Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 2192; 27 May 1853, No. 211.
36 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 27 May 1853, No. 199.
37 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 222.
one acre of land worth twelve annas to Desu Singh in Ferozepur in 1803.\textsuperscript{38}

The granthis also received grants from the women during the period under review. Sada Kaur gave a village worth 200 rupees in Batala to Granthi Abnasha Singh in 1815.\textsuperscript{39} Mai Sahib Diwan, daughter of Bagh Singh Hallowalia, gave a well worth twenty-five rupees to a granthi, Nihal Singh, out of subsistence jāgīr given to her by Ranjit Singh.\textsuperscript{40} Mai Jian of Thanesar, gave a generous grant of village worth 662 rupees to a granthi for reading Granth Sahib on the death of Sardar Bhanga Singh.\textsuperscript{41} Rani Nakain also gave grants to granthis.\textsuperscript{42} Another royal woman of Lahore to endow granthis was Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, who gave half a share of village in pargana Talwandi to Daya Singh Granthi.\textsuperscript{43}

Grants were also given to nirmala sādhs, sewa panthi faqirs and namdhāris. Mai Sada Kaur gave villages worth 1,200 rupees to establishments of nirmala sādhs at Amritsar and Saharanpur.\textsuperscript{44} The royal families of princely States were also well known for patronizing the nirmalas in the Malwa region. Bibi Pradhan, daughter of Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala, offered the patta of a land grant of thirty villages to Bhai Nikka Singh, Mahant of the Dera Baba Gandha Singh of Barnala, out of which only one village named Khudi was accepted for langar by him.\textsuperscript{45} As already discussed, the nirmala sadhs hardly accepted any grant given by the rulers. Mai Bhag Bari, wife of Karam Singh of Kaithal, gave wells and trees worth twenty rupees to Baba Hira Lal, a namdhari faqir, in pargana

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 9 January 1857, No. 241.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 238.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 238.
\textsuperscript{41} Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 14 November 1851, No. 52; 7 January 1853, No. 222.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 222.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 202.
\textsuperscript{45} Kulwinder Sachdeva, 'The Nirmālas in Medieval Punjab', p. 35.

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Kaithal in 1814. Musammat Kher Khatun of Jhang gave one rupee and four annas to Bjai Jedna, a sewa panthi faqir.

II

Among the Hindus, brahmans got maximum grants in terms of value and number from the women of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Mai Sada Kaur gave twelve grants worth 2,216 rupees to brahmans Agya Ram, Sada Sahai, Misr Bhishen Sahai, Devi Ditta, Mohan Lal, Nanak Chand, Sukhdev and Roop Bhagat. In of these grants, a garden of mango trees worth 20 rupees was given to Devi Ditta, the Purohit of Ranjit Singh. In 1821, she granted a village worth 670 rupees in Dinanagar to ten brahman families. Mai Raj Kauran, wife of Jaimal Singh Kanhiya, gave a well worth sixty rupees in Batala to Dharm Chand, the purohit of the Kanhiyas family. Mai Mala and Ind Kaur, wives of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Mai Gujri, wife of Chet Singh Bhangi also were generous to brahmans. Mai Raj Kaur, wife of Sahib Singh, gave six grants worth 430 rupees to the brahmans.

Mai Ram Kaur, wife of Baghel Singh of Chiloundi, gave as many as six grants to brahmans. Ghunaia, Gurdial and Ram Sahai were some of them. The brahmans of Gaya also received endowments from her. Mai Hardian and Mai Sach Charan, both of Kaithal, also were patrons to this

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46 Foreign/Political Consultation, 18 August 1854, Nos. 155-57.
47 Ibid., 20 August 1852, No. 141.
49 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 205.
50 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 225.
51 Ibid., 15 October 1852, No.117; 27 May 1853, No. 211.
52 Foreign/Political Consultation,11 February 1853, No. 59; 18 March 1853, No. 167; Foreign/Political Proceedings, 27 May 1853, No. 205.
53 Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 1858.
54 Ibid.
religious class. Mai Jian, the mother and Mai Chand Kaur, the wife of Fateh Singh of Thanesar, were very extravagant while giving grants worth 5,000 rupees to the brahmans. Mai Jian gave grants worth 250 rupees to brahmans on Solar eclipse in 1828. When she visited Gaya, she gave a village of 220 rupees in Thanesar to Bihari Lal. Chand Kaur gave villages worth 1,900 rupees to family priests of the Thanesar family on the death of her mother-in-law, Mai Jian.

Among the queens of Ranjit Singh, Rani Nakain gave maximum number of grants to the purohits of Ranjit Singh- Ram Ditta, Ram Kishen, Ram Jas, Ram Rattan and Sain Das. A brahman, Mukandi, was given two rupees cash for ten months in a year in Shaikhpura so that he could attend on his idols and bathe them daily. Maharani Mehtab Kaur, wife of Ranjit Singh and daughter of Sada Kaur, was also benevolent to brahmans. She gave handsome grant of a village worth 500 rupees in Dinanagar to Sain Das, Ram Kishen and Sahiba in bhet. Maharani Hardevi, Maharani Debo, Rani Bhasi, Rani Maidni and Rani Akalgarhia were other queens of Ranjit Singh to patronize brahmans. Rani Bhuri gave a well worth fifty rupees to Raj Kauran, a brahman widow of Gulab Singh- the chief purohit of Ranjit Singh, in 1837. During her regency, Rani Jindan gave a village worth 500 rupees in Wazirabad to Pandit Sadanand in 1846 on occasion of Baisakhi. All the queens of Ranjit Singh, except Mai Nakain, assigned grants worth 1,250 rupees to brahmans. Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, also gave

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56 Foreign/Political Consultation, 2 January 1857, Nos. 198-201; Foreign/Political Proceedings; 27 March 1857, No. 235
57 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
58 Loc.cit.
59 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 225.
60 Ibid., 14 November 1851, No. 52.
61 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 225.
62 Loc.cit.
63 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 211.
well worth hundred rupees to purohits of Jaimal, her father Singh Kanhiya.66

Among the relatives, Bibi Saluble, a relative of Dalip Singh, gave two wells worth 150 rupees in Gujranwala in charity to Dharmgir and Soona for casting horoscope of Dalip Singh in 1845.67 The relatives of jāgīrdārs also gave grants to the brahmans. Musammat Roop Kaur, relative of Khazan Singh Kanhiya, gave sixteen and half bighas of land worth twenty rupees in pargana Shakargarh to Misr Ram Kishen in 1837. She is known to have written the order in her own writing.68 Musammat Sahib Diwan, wife of Gujar Singh, a jāgīrdār and Musammat Nanda, wife of Ladiah Singh, a jāgīrdār, are known to have given plots of lands in Gujrat to brahmans.69 The wife of Lala Rulia Ram Chopra gave well along with land worth 100 rupees in Amritsar to Misar Bhawani Das in mu‘afi in 1847.70

It is interesting to note that the mistresses and slaves of rulers also gave grants to brahmans. Ram Devi, mistress of Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, gave village worth 150 rupees in 1839 to a brahman in pargana Bandar in Thanesar on completion of recitation of Ramayana in 1839.71 Mai Chandu, slave of Sada Kaur, also gave a well worth forty rupees to Jamiat Misar in 1812 in pargana Sohian.72 One Roop Kaur of Hoshiarpur also gave a fourth of village in dharmarth to the brahman women named Misarani Gangi and Gula, and asked them to bless her.73

In total, 61 grants to the tune of 15,765 rupees were given to brahmans during the period under review. Earliest one was made by Mai Hardian of Kaithal in 1787 and the latest was made by wife of Rulia Ram

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66 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 225.
67 Ibid., 18 June 1852, Nos. 182-84.
68 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 225.
69 Ibid., 22 March 1856, No. 133.
71 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
72 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 27 May 1853, No. 205.
73 Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 2211.

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Chopra in 1847. Maximum grants in terms of number was given by Mai Sada Kaur i.e. twelve, followed by Rani Nakain who gave nine grants and Mai Ram Kaur of Ladwa giving six grants. But in terms of value, Mai Jian of Thanesar gave 2,670 rupees in grant. Sada Kaur was he made next to follow, s alienations worth 2216 rupees to brahmans. Minimum grant in terms of value i.e. five rupees was given by Mai Mala, wife of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia in 1812.

The Vaishnava bairāgis were also patronized by women of the period. Mai Sada Kaur gave a cash grant worth fifty rupees to Shrishti Nath in dharmarth.74 Mai Jian of Thanesar gave grants worth 400 rupees to bairāgis. On a visit to Gaya, she promised Sawan Nath, a famous gosain, of grant of a village if he came to stay in Thanesar. The promise was fulfilled on his arrival and a village of the said amount was set aside for support of Lakshmi Narain Temple at Thanesar.75 Rani Nakain gave cash and grain worth seventy-five rupees to bairāgis Sham Sundar, Har Narain and Kinigir in Shaikhupura.76

A total of seventeen grants were given to thākurdwāras to the tune of 2,270 rupees by the women of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Mai Sada Kaur’s patronage to Pindori establishment of a plot of land in 1816 speaks of the establishment’s popularity, which received grants throughout the century.77 Rani Nakain gave cash worth two rupees and eight annas to Mangalpuri in Shekhupura for supplying oil for the thakurdwara in 1810.78 Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, also patronized a thākurdwāra in Fatehgarh by giving village worth 600 rupees and a cash assignment on customs worth forty-eight rupees in Batala to Bairāgi Ramji Das, the mahant of the establishment.79

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74 Foreign/Political Consultation, 16 April 1852, Nos. 52-58.
75 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
76 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 14 November 1851, Nos. 51-57; 27 May 1853, No. 193.
77 Ibid., 28 November 1856, No. 1372 B.
78 Ibid.; 14 November 1851, No. 52.
79 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 193.

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Mai Ram Kaur of Chiloundi is known to have given at least six grants for thākurudwāras. A grant of Lachman Kaur, wife of Gurbaksh Singh of Ferozepur, in favour of a Vaishnava establishment is also available. She granted a well worth twenty rupees in Ferozepur to Hari Har for a thākurudwāra. Musammat Roop Kaur and Musammat Hukma were other women of Thanesar besides Mai Jian to give grants to thākurudwāra. Mai Jian gave a daily assignment of grain, ghee and wood worth seventeen rupees and four annas to Sarang Das, in charge of thākurudwāra of Mai Jian at Thanesar.

Rani Samyal, wife of Raja Hamir Chand of Kangra, and Rani Suketar, wife of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra, also gave grants to the thākurudwāras like Janaki Nath Temple, Murli Manohar Temple and Narbadesar Temple to the tune of 1,520 rupees. Mai Ram Kaur of Ladwa was the earliest of all the women to give grant to thākurudwāras by making an alienation in 1798. She was also the one to give maximum grants in number, i.e. six though the maximum amount in grant was given by Rani Suketar, who gave villages worth 1,100 rupees to thākurudwāra in Sujaanpur.

The shivudwāras were also patronized by the women of those times. First and foremost among them was Mai Sada Kaur who gave a grant to one of such establishments in 1822. Other grantor to the shivālā was Lachman Kaur of Ferozepur who gave a plot of land worth four rupees in Ferozepur for a shivudwāra in 1833. Rani Sukha of Ladwa and Mai Ram Kaur of Chiloundi too were grantors to said set of establishments.

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80 Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 1858; 27 March 1857, No. 236.
81 Foreign/Political Consultation, 9 January 1857, No. 280.
82 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 28 November 1856, No. 124.
83 Foreign/Political Consultation, 23 August 1850, No. 64.
84 Dewan Sarb Dayal (compiled in 1883), Twarikh Rajgan-e-Zila Kangra, (tr. A.N. Walia), Department of Languages & Culture, Himachal Pradesh, pp. 28 & 32.
85 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 11 March 1857, No. 236.
86 Foreign/Political Consultation, 16 April 1852, Nos. 52-58.
87 Ibid., 9 January 1857, No. 280.
88 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 31 December 1847, No. 1858; 27 March 1857, No. 237.
An instance of a Devi Temple getting grant from a woman is also available. Mai Sada Kaur gave cash and grain worth thirty rupees to Rup Bhagat for a devīdwāra in Dinanagar in 1797. This grant was later confirmed by Ranjit Singh.89 In a single instance, worshipper of Lord Hanuman was also given grant during this period. For instance, Rani Nakain gave food allowance worth forty rupees to Kanah, worshipper of Hanuman, in 1819.90

Hindu faqīrs were given endowments by women during the period under review. Baba Sawan Nath was given land by Mai Jian in Thanesar in 1828.91 Mai Ram Kaur of Chiloudi also granted eighty bighas for subsistence of sādhs in years 1827 and 1840.92 The same grantor is known to have given grants of plots of land to Girdhar and Sucharu Bhagat, Hindu faqīrs, in charity, in 1819 and 1830, respectively.93 Mai Sukhan of Kaithal gave a plot of land worth 9 rupees and twelve annas to Dharm Das Faqir in 1814.94 Sardarni Chand Kaur, wife of Fateh Singh of Thanesar, gave a plot of land worth seventy rupees to Sundar Das, Kahan Das and Gurdas, the Hindu faqīrs, in 1845.95 A reference of grant by wife of a religious grantee herself in favour of a Hindu faqīr is available. Bibi Mundkar, wife of Sodhi Charat Singh, gave plot of land worth twenty-four rupees in Sodha Singhwala in Ferozepur to Dharm Das in 1817 in dharmarth.96

89 Foreign/Political Consultation, 16 April 1852, Nos. 52-58.
90 Ibid., 14 November 1851, No. 52.
91 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 28 November 1856, No. 124.
92 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 31 December 1847, No. 1858.
93 Ibid, 27 March 1857, No. 236.
94 Ibid., 9 January 1857, No. 241.
95 Ibid., 28 November 1856, No. 124.
96 Ibid., 9 January 1857, No. 241.
Various Muslim institutions got grants from women of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. An instance of a mosque receiving a grant from a woman is available. Wife of one Bhag Singh of Amritsar was the first one to make alienation of a piece of land worth five rupees, four annas and three paisa in pargana Narowal to Abdul Rasul for a mosque in 1766.\textsuperscript{97} Mai Sada Kaur gave a pension of twelve rupees to Muji Shah, a Muslim faqir, in dharmarth for Khānqāh of Fakir Sheran in the fort of Batala.\textsuperscript{98} Ram Kaur of Chiloundi gave five bighas of land in pargana Topra for a takiya in 1801.\textsuperscript{99} In fact, a grant of wife of a muqaddam in favour of a takiya is also available. Musammat Devi, wife of Dyal Singh Muqaddam, gave six ghumāons of land worth eighteen rupees in Sialkot to Saidah Shah for a takiya in 1797.\textsuperscript{100}

Various tombs were also patronized. For instance, Mai Sada Kaur gave a grant worth fifteen rupees to Alif Shah, the attendant at tomb of Badruddin at Dinanagar.\textsuperscript{101} Mai Lachman of Ferozepur gave land and well worth thirty rupees to Madad Ali for the shrine of Pir Bilawal in 1828.\textsuperscript{102} Among the queens of Ranjit Singh, Rani Nakain gave away grants in kind worth eighty rupees to at least three tombs in Shaikhupura. These grants were given to individuals for maintenance of the said institutions, the tombs to be given grants by the said grantor were Tomb of Rangal Shah, Tomb of Bura Hazari and Tomb of Pir Shah Jamal.\textsuperscript{103} Hayat Bibi was given grain worth twenty rupees for sweeping the Tomb of Pir Shah Jamal.\textsuperscript{104} Similarly, food allowance worth twenty

\textsuperscript{97} Foreign/Political Proceedings, 4 July 1856, No. 154.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 21 February 1851, No. 87-B.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 1858.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 9 January 1857, No. 221.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 21 February 1851, No. 87-B.
\textsuperscript{102} Foreign/Political Consultation, 9 January 1857, No. 280.
\textsuperscript{103} Foreign/Political Proceedings, 14 November 1851, No. 52. The tombs existed since the reign of Mughal Emperor, Akbar.
\textsuperscript{104} Loc.cit.
rupees was allowed for Tomb of Rangal Shah. Another Islamic institution to be patronized was Sarwar Sultan’s establishment. Mai Sukhan, wife of Harmat Singh of Kaithal, gave a plot of land to Kandu in *pargana* Chika for the above-mentioned place.

**IV**

The occasion of giving grants by women were several. Endowments were made on particular days like Baisakhi, Solar eclipse and Lunar eclipse. For instance, Rani Nakain gave a village on occasion of Baisakhi to Sodhi Gulab Singh in 1822. Even Rani Jindan chose the same day to be generous to a *brahman* in 1846. Mai Jian of Thanesar gave grants worth 250 rupees to *brahmans* on occasion of eclipse of sun in 1828. Mai Chand Kaur of Thanesar also followed the example of her mother-in-law and gave grants worth 500 rupees on this occasion. Mai Raj Kaur, wife of Sahib Singh Bhangi, gave profits of a well worth 100 rupees to Radha Kishen, son of family priest on eclipse of moon in 1841.

Birth and death also marked an occasion for endowment. Birth of a child was celebrated by alienating a grant. Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, gave a well worth hundred rupees to Prabhat Gir on birthday of Dalip Singh in 1843. Mai Jian of Thanesar gave village worth 662 rupees to a *granthi* for reading *Granth Sahib* on death of Sirdar Bhanga Singh in 1814. Similarly, Mai Chand Kaur of Thanesar gave villages worth 1,900 rupees to family priests on death of Mai Jian in

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105 *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 November 1851, No. 52.
106 Ibid., 27 March 1857, No. 235.
107 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 196.
108 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 211.
109 *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
110 Loc.cit.
111 *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 27 May 1853, No. 205.
112 Ibid., 21 February 1851, No. 218.
113 *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
A number of grants were given by queens of Ranjit Singh while performing *sati* on his death. Maharani Mehtab Kaur, Maharani Har Devi and Maharani Debo gave villages worth 3,300 rupees, 2,000 rupees and 565 rupees, respectively, in Lahore before committing *sati* in 1839. Endowments were made on occasion of pilgrimage. Mai Jian of Thanesar, gave village worth 220 rupees to Bihari Lal, a *brahman*, on visit to Gaya. The women grantors also sponsored the pilgrimage of others. For instance, Mai Sahib Kaur, wife of Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, gave land worth four rupees and eight annas in *pargana* Kaithal to Dewa Singh for going to *tirath*. Administering *pahul* was also an occasion for giving grant. As already discussed, Mai Sada Kaur gave a village worth 600 rupees to Bhāi Sham Singh for administrating *pahul* to her grandsons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh, in 1818. Completion of recitation of a holy book also marked an occasion for endowment. Ram Devi, mistress of Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, gave a village worth 150 rupees to a *brahman* on completion of *katha* of *Rama*yan of Balmiki.

Grants were made during illness of the grantor herself, a family member or a servant. Mai Ram Kaur gave land to Brahman Ram Sahai and his heirs in 1844 in *pargana* Chiloundi during the last days of her life when she was sick. Rani Nakain gave twenty rupees in cash to Kanah *brahman* in 1836 when her slave girl Har Kaur was ill with small pox. A number of references are available where women grantors asked the grantees to pray for them. Mai Sada Kaur asked few *nirmala sādhs* to pray for her while giving a village worth 500 rupees to them in

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114 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
115 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 March 1854, Nos. 195-97; Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 225.
116 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
118 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 10 June 1853, No. 218.
119 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
120 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 31 December 1847, No. 1858.
Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Ranjit Singh, also asked Sham Singh *granthi* to pray for her while granting him a well worth hundred rupees. A woman named Roop Kaur also asked women *brahmans* to bless her while giving one fourth share of village to them. In another case, woman grantor, Rani Khem Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh, asked the grantee to pray for Khalsaji in 1836.

Sometimes alienations were made in order to get the deserted villages cultivated and populated. Rani Nakain gave villages worth 1,177 rupees to Bedi Milkha Singh, Sodhis Kishen Singh, Narain Singh and Gulab Singh in Shakhupura to get the bechirag villages populated. Maintenance of *langar* for the poor was also a reason for grant. Mai Malkhan, wife of Nar Singh Chamiariwala, gave village worth 105 rupees for *langar* at Asthan of Mai Sarup Dasi in 1816. Rani Nakain gave three deserted villages worth 140 rupees to Sodhis Kishen Singh and Narain Singh for the same purpose in 1819. She gave another village and a well in Shaikhupura worth 250 rupees for *langar* to Sarbangji, an *udāsī sādh*, in 1837.

There is an interesting reference of grant for a very unusual reason. Rani Nakain gave cash and food to Ram Das, a *brahman*, in 1826 for writing name of the grantor on small slips of paper and throwing them in river.

The *sanads* and *parwanas* of women bore seals of their husbands, though it did not matter if the latter were alive or dead. For instance, *parwanās* of Mai Darwin and Rani Khem Kaur bore seals of Nar Singh
Chamiariwala and Kharak Singh when they were alive. But there are many instances where the seal of dead husband was affixed on the documents mentioning the grants. For example, the parwāna granting well to a Bedi in 1773 by Mai Sahib Devi bore seal of her husband Hari Singh Bhangi who passed away in 1764. Similarly, most of Sada Kaur’s grants contain seals of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya though he had died long before these grants were given. But there is one reference available where the seal of Mai Sada Kaur is used on the document. Similarly, a number of Mai Raj Kaur’s grants bore seal of her dead husband Sahib Singh Bhangi. For instance, while giving a grant of three wells to udāsi sādhs, Baba Sukhram Das in 1821 she affixed her husband’s seal on the document. The deed of gift given by Mai Jian was also sealed with stamp of Bhanga Singh, her dead husband, and also of her son, Fateh Singh, the then ruler.

Seal of the new ruler was used for confirming the grant given by queen of the previous ruler. For instance, seal of Maharaja Kharak Singh was used on the grant given by Rani Har Devi to brahmans on the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839. In some cases, seals of sons were affixed on documents mentioning the grants. In a grant given by Mai Malkhan, wife of Nar Singh Chamiariwala, in 1808 to an udāsi akhāra, seal of Sarup Singh, son of latter is used. In another example, seal of Prince Kharak Singh was used for a grant given by his mother, Rani Nakain. Kunwar Nao Nihal Singh’s seal was used on grant of Rani Chand Kaur, his

132 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 27 August 1852, No. 102.
133 Ibid., 7 January 1853, Nos. 219 & 225; 27 May 1853, Nos. 202 & 205; 10 June 1853, No. 218.
135 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
136 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
137 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 225.
138 Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 229.
139 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
mother. It was not only the seal of husband or son that was used on such documents, even father’s seal was stamped on grants by women. For instance, seal of Sahib Singh Bhangi was used on parwana of his daughter, Mehtab Kaur. Although the former had died three decades before the actual date of grant by the said lady.

Even the grants by mistress bear the seal of the son of the master. Ram Devi, mistress of Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, gave a grant which bore the seal of Bhanga Singh’s son Fateh Singh. The reason for fixing the seal of son instead of the master was because Bhanga Singh had died in 1815 whereas the grant was given in 1839. The grants given by slaves also bore the seal of master. For instance, grants given by Mai Chandu and Mai Dasi, both slaves of Mai Sada Kaur, bear seal of Gurbaksh Singh Kanhiya.

There are many references, where women used their own seals. Mai Malkhan, wife of Nar Singh Chamiariwala used her own seal while giving a grant to a dadapanthi faqir in 1816. Mai Man, wife of Mahan Singh, also used her own seal in 1810. Even Rani Nakain’s document contains her seal and signature in Gurumukhi while making alienation to a Sodhi in 1819. Another of the wives of Ranjit Singh to affix her own seal on such documents was Rani Chand Kaur. As above, Mai Sada Kaur had used her seal but on one occasion only. But in certain cases seals of religious institutions were also used. For example, seal of Darbar of Dera Baba Nanak was used on a deed of gift of a village to a Bedi by Musammat Har Devi. As stated earlier, latter’s husband had

140 Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 219.
141 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 222.
142 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-08.
143 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 219.
145 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
146 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 196.
147 Ibid., 10 June 1853, No. 218.

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received the said village in dharmarth from Tara Singh Chainpuria.\textsuperscript{149} In a single case, signature of Musammat Sobha Devi, widow of Dal Singh Kalianwala, have been found on her sanad.\textsuperscript{150}

At times, women grantors wrote the parwānas in their own writing. For instance, Bibi Sewa, wife of Hari Singh Bhangi, gave a handwritten deed to Bedi Nischal Das in 1783.\textsuperscript{151} Another example is of Mai Roop Kaur, relative of Khazan Singh Kanhiya, a jāgīrdar, who gave a grant of land to a brahman in 1837 in her own writing.\textsuperscript{152} There is also a reference, where one Roop Kaur wrote a letter in her own hand mentioning the grant given to women brahmans.\textsuperscript{153} There is a case where a ruler woman charged money for putting stamp on deeds of gift. Rani Suraj Kaur, wife of Bhai Uday Singh of Kaithal, kept the seal with her self and charged twenty-five rupees per impression on grants made by the Bhai.\textsuperscript{154}

Though most of the documents were written in Persian, but Gurumukhi had also been used either in complete document or just for signature. Rani Nakain’s document regarding grant to a Sodhi worth 140 rupees in 1819 contains her signature in Gurumukhi.\textsuperscript{155} Whereas the deed mentioning the sub-grant by Musammat Har Devi to a Bedi is completely written in Gurumukhi.\textsuperscript{156} There is also a sanad that was written in Hindi. Sanad of Mai Hardian of Kaithal granting land to brahmans in 1787 was written in Hindi.\textsuperscript{157}

Besides making the grants independently, these women gave grants along with their sons. For instance, widow of Nar Singh Chamiariwala gave a grant of fifty bighas of land to Sahib Singh Bedi in

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 220.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 202.
\textsuperscript{151} Foreign/Political Proceedings, 14 January 1853, No. 213.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 219.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 31 December 1847, No. 2211.
\textsuperscript{154} Foreign/Political Consultation, 31 December 1847, No. 1808.
\textsuperscript{155} Foreign/Political Proceedings, 27 May 1853, No. 196.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 14 January 1853, No. 220.
\textsuperscript{157} Foreign/Political Consultation, 2 January 1857, Nos. 198-201.
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1806 along with her two sons Hari Singh and Jai Singh. In another example, Rani Nakain and her son Prince Kharak Singh gave a village worth 250 rupees to an udāsi dharmāla in 1837.

There are many references to prove that women in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century gave grants out of their own jāgīrs. Rani Nakain, Mai Raj Kaur, wife of Sahib Singh Bhangi; Mai Sahib Diwan, wife of Bagh Singh Halowalia, Ind Kaur, wife of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia; wife of Lala Rulia Ram Chopra and Roop Kaur, wife of Karam Singh Nilowali gave grants out of their own estates. Ram Devi, mistress of Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, also gave grants out of jāgīr granted by her master.

Titles have been used for various women of the period under review at the time of confirmation of the grants given by them. For instance, Rani Nakain has been addressed as ‘mother of Prince Kharak Singh’ in the parwana of Ranjit Singh confirming former’s grant. Maharani Mehtab Kaur was also addressed as ‘Bibi Sahib’ by Mai Sada Kaur while confirming her grant. Even Rani Jindan was addressed as ‘Her Highness-the Mai Sahib’ in one of the confirmatory grants of Dalip Singh in 1846. Mai Raj Kaur, aunt of Ranjit Singh, was addressed as ‘Bua Raj Kaur’ in the confirmatory parwana of Dalip Singh in 1845 confirming the grant given in 1833. The title ‘Bibi Sahiba’ has been used for Mai Sada Kaur in her own documents.

158 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 14 January 1853, No. 223.
159 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 7 January 1853, No. 219.
160 Khalsa Darbar Record, Bundle No. 5, Vol. VII, Part I, p. 93; Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-108; Foreign/Political Proceedings, 31 December 1847, No. 2214; 7 January 1853, No. 222 & 225; 14 January 1853, Nos. 220 & 238; 27 May 1853, No. 221.
161 Foreign/Political Consultation, 17 October 1851, Nos. 106-108.
162 Foreign/Political Proceedings, 27 May 1853, No. 196.
163 Ibid., 7 January 1853, No. 225.
164 Ibid., 27 May 1853, No. 211.
165 Foreign/Political Consultation, 18 March 1853, No. 167.
A total of 216 grants were given by sixty women during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The total value to be alienated was 40,520 rupees. Maximum grants were given in Rachna Doab, followed by Bari Doab, Cis-Satlej, Bist-Jalandhar and Chaj Doab i.e seventy-three, sixty-eight, sixty-five, four and two. Wife of Bhag Singh of Amritsar; Mai Sahib Devi and Bibi Sewa, wives of Hari Singh Bhangi; Mai Saiju, wife of Dal Singh Mattu, Mai Darvin and Mai Malkhan, wives of Nar Singh Chamiariwala, Mai Raj Kaur, aunt of Ranjit Singh and wife of Sahib Singh Bhangi; Mehtab Kaur, cousin of Ranjit Singh and daughter of Sahib Singh Bhangi and Mai Man, wife of Mahan Singh were the women of late eighteenth century to make grants. Mai Mala and Ind Kaur, wives of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Mai Gujri, wife of Chet Singh Bhangi, Mai Raj Kauran, wife of Jaimal Singh Kanhiya, as Sada Kaur were other women to give such grants. From the cis-Satlej area, women like Nur-il-Nisa, wife of Rai Ahmad of Raikot; Bibi Pardhan, daughter of Baba Ala Singh of Patiala; Dya Kaur of Khanna; Mai Ram Kaur, wife of Baghel Singh of Chiloundi, Mai Sukha of Ladwa; Mai Hardian of Kaithal; Musammat Bhag Bari, wife of Karam Singh of Kaithal; Mai Sukhan, wife of Harmat Singh of Kaithal, Mai Sach Charan, wife of Himmat Singh of Kaithal, Mai Sahib Kaur, wife of Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, wife of Basawa Singh of Anoli, Mai Jian of Thanesar, Musammat Hukma of Thanesar, Rani Chand Kaur of Thanesar and Rani Lachman Kaur, wife of Dhanna Singh of Ferozepur made endowments. Rani Samyal, wife of Raja Hamir Chand, and Rani Suketar, wife of Sansar Chand, from the hill states are known to have made grants.

Among the queens of Ranjit Singh, Rani Nakain, Maharani Mehtab Kaur, Rani Maidni, Rani Jindan, Rani Ekalgarhia, Maharani Hardevi and Maharani Debno gave grants. Rani Chand Kaur and Rani Khem Kaur, wives of Kharak Singh also played patrons to various classes.
Among the relatives of rulers, Bibi Salube, a relative of Maharaja Dalip Singh gave grants. Even relatives of jagirdars like Mai Roop Kaur, relative of Khazan Singh Kanhiya; Mai Sobhi, wife of Desa Singh Majithia; Musammat Sahib Diwan, daughter of Gujar Singh, a jagirdar; Musammat Nanda, wife of Ladiah Singh Jagirdar and Mai Badi, wife of Lala Rulia Ram Chopra, made alienations. Musammat Devi, wife of Dyal Singh Lambadar, also gave grants. At times mistresses also made grants. For instance, Ram Devi, mistress of Bhanga Singh of Thanesar gave grant. Women slaves like Mai Dasi and Mai Chandu, of Sada Kaur, also made endowments. Grantees like Musammat Har Devi gave grants out of the grants received by them.

In terms of number of grants maximum grants were given by Rani Nakain i.e. thirty seven, followed by Mai Sada Kaur who gave thirty one grants. Ram Kaur of Ladwa gave twenty-four grants. But in terms of money, maximum grants were given by Mai Sada Kaur amounting to 5,789 rupees, followed by Mai Jian of Thanesar giving grants worth 3,260 rupees. Rani Nakain gave grants worth 2,618 rupees.

Various individuals among Sikhs to be patronized were Bedis, Sodhis, Bhallas, udāsīs, nirmala sādhs, granthīs, namdhrs, dadupanthī faqīrs and sewapanthī fakirs besides the institutions like gurdvāras, bungās and samādhhs. A total of eighty grants worth 20,000 rupees were given to Sikhs by women during the period under review. Among them almost twenty-seven grants worth 4,890 rupees were given to Bedis, followed by udāsīs who got twenty-three grants worth 3,010 rupees and Sodhis who received six grants worth 1,500 rupees grants from women. Rani Nakain was the most generous patron of Bedis giving as much as fourteen grants worth 2,400 rupees. Mai Sada Kaur spent 1,000 rupees on udāsīs.

Nearly hundred grants were given by the women grantors to individuals and institutions of Hindu faith amounting to 19,020 rupees.
The brahmans received maximum number of grants i.e. sixty worth 15,545 rupees. Major contributors to brahmans were Maharani Mehtab Kaur, Mai Jian of Thanesar and Mai Sada Kaur giving 3300 rupees, 2770 rupees and 2200 rupees, respectively. The brahmans were followed by thakurdwāras which got seventeen grants to the value of 2,270 rupees. Rani Suketar, wife of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra, gave as much as 1,100 rupees to the former category. Tombs, takiyas, mosques, khāngāhs were among the Muslim establishments to be given grants. Eleven grants were given to Muslims amounting to 160 rupees only. Rani Nakain spent the maximum on them. Out of all the women grantors of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Mai Sada Kaur, Rani Nakain and Mai Ram Kaur of Ladwa were the most secular women in their outlook while making endowments as they gave grants to all religious sections of society along with physically challenged persons and other professional classes. Earliest grant by a woman during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was made by Rani of Bhag Singh of Amritsar in 1766. The latest was made by Rani Chand Kaur of Thanesar in 1849. The least amount of grant given was of 11 annas and 3 paisa by Rani Sukha of Ladwa to a shivala and the maximum amount of a single grant was given by Maharani Mehtab Kaur amounting to 3,300 rupees.