2

SOCIAL SITUATION OF WIDOWS

The social situation of widows in the Punjab attempts to focus on demographic information related to widows and the social norms that governed their life after the death of their husbands. Society had created several ceremonies and regulations that ensured control over widows. Colonial rule had an impact not only on the political and economic framework of the province but considerable influence on the social sphere as well. The present chapter is divided into four sections, the first looking at the proportion and distributions of widows in the region; section two takes into account the link of caste, location and religion on widowhood; the third section surveys ceremonies and rituals related to widowhood and the fourth section, the impact of the colonial period on the attitudes to widowhood in the Punjab region.

I

In 1881, the total number of widows in the Punjab was about 15 million, out of which near about 12 million were in the British territory and the rest were in the ‘Native’ or ‘Feudatory’ states. The number indicated that in 1881, 14.5 percent of the female population was of widows, a number that decreased to 11.7 percent by 1931. In 1941, there were 10.6 percent widows in the region and in 1951, only 8.5 percent. The Census data therefore, suggests that the proportion of widows decreased with time. In the Punjab, the highest figure for widows was 145 per 1,000 as recorded in the first reliable Census of 1881. However, after that the number of the widows started to decrease. The

1 Report On The Census Of British India, 1881, Statistic Of Population, General From VI A, Calcutta, 1883, 43. The exact number of widows was 15, 03, 233 in the Punjab and 12, 32, 453 were in British territories, and 2, 70, 780 in the Feudatory States in 1881.

2 Ibid., 43; Census Of India, 1891, Volume, XVII, The Punjab And Its Feudatories, XIV, 254, 256, 218, Census Of India, 1911, Volume, XIV, 261; Census Of India, 1921, Report, 166; Census Of India 1921, Part II, Tables, 34-35; Census Of India 1931, Volume, XVII, Punjab, Part II, Tables, 70-72; Census Of India, 1931, Report, 242; Census Of India, 1961, Volume XIII, Subsidiary Tables, 271-272.

3 Table 2.1 Widowed Per 1,000 Of All Religions In General Population In The Punjab, 1881-1951

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1951</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 The figures for Punjab for 1881 and 1891, included those of N.W.F.P, but excluded the figures of Punjab States. The figures from 1911 to 1931, however, excluded the figures of N.W.F.P, and also of the Punjab States.
number was liable to be effected by many factors, famine, diseases, migration well as by the customs. In the Census of 1891, the number of widows was 137 in 1000 of the female population and once again one of the major causes was the out break of fever due to some local causes. Moreover, the increase of the population was rapid during the decade, 1881-1891; the proportion of the widows was less than the previous decade.

During the ten years ending 1901, the proportion of the widows was 136 per 1000 of females, the region at this time was marred by the Plague. The famine of 1899-1900, the most severe since annexation, also affected the health of the people. The two famines of the decade 1891-1900, specially affected the population in the Hissar and Rohtak districts, in the south-eastern parts only. Practically, no death from actual starvation was recorded in the Punjab in the recent famines. The effected districts were therefore unable to record a fair rate of increase in population. So, the decade was generally prosperous and we find a low proportion of the widowed in Punjab in 1901.

In 1911, there were 143 widows in the Punjab, registering an increase in widowhood since 1901. This was sharp contrast to the all India picture, where the number of widows had declined in 1911. As the state of public health had been ‘deplorable’ except in the western districts. The Plague, which first appeared in the Punjab in 1891, prevailed throughout the next decades. The mortality from it was distributed over a considerable period of time and was local in character explaining the

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5 The famine in the Punjab occurred in 1869 in 1877 and 1878, there was something like famine in the east of the Punjab combined with terrible fever and disease while in 1879 and 1880, and the crops in the west were bad. Moreover, there figures were effected by the extraordinary excess of females married at the earlier ages the equally extraordinary excess of males married at later ages. The greater the difference in age between husband and wife, the higher, in the ordinary course of events, was likely to be the number of widows by these unmatched marriages. (Source-Census Of Punjab, 1881, Appendix L, CLI, CXLX, Lvii.)

6 Census Of India, 1891, 63.

7 Such as that in Amritsar in the Punjab, where the city population fell off by 11 percent, whilst the rural tracts surrounding it continued to increase (Source-Census Of India, 1891, 63; Report On The Census Of Punjab, 1931, 15.)

8 The Plague first occurred in Oct, 1897 in a village Khat Kalan of Jullundur district for 3 years. The disease was almost entirely confined to the adjacent parts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts. But in November 1900, it broke out in Gurdaspur and soon spread to the neighbouring district of Sialkot. In 1901, outbreaks occurred in several districts. But the number of deaths was comparatively small till 1901. (Source-Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Provincial Series, Punjab, Volume I, Calcutta, 1908, 40-43.)

9 Imperial Gazetteer Of India, 1901, Volume I, 1908, 96.


11 Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report, 261.

12 For more details, see the chapter one.
contrary picture of the Punjab, the increased number of the widows was due to this local mortality.\textsuperscript{13} The decade 1901-11, was characterised by the prevalence of wide-spread disease and the number of deaths from fever fluctuated greatly from year to year.\textsuperscript{14} By 1921, the proportion of the widow decreased from 14.3 to 13.4 percent. It is evident that the population kept rising each year and was at the maximum in 1917.\textsuperscript{15} Widowhood in the Punjab further decreased to 11.7 percent in 1931 and to the extent of 10.6 percent in 1941 and around 8.5 percent in the female population of 1951. A simple analysis of the data of the different censuses of the Punjab brings out clearly the declining proportion of widows in the region from 1881 to 1951. The number of widow was highest in 1881. From 1891, the number of widows started to decrease with a minor rise in 1911. This decrease continued in the twentieth century also.

A comparison of figures for the sexes also bring out that the proportion of widows was uniformly larger than that of widowers. From 1881 to 1901, the proportion of widowers was less than half that of widows. After 1901, the proportion of the widowers increased from 6.2 percent to 8.4 and 8.6 percent in 1911 and 1921 respectively. After 1921, the ratio of widowers steadily declined to its earlier proportion. With the decline in the number of widowers by 1951, the number of widowers was roughly 7.5 percent, higher than before. This rise in the number of widowers since 1901 was largely due to the epidemic of plague of great virulence, coupled with fever of a special by fatal type contributed to the death-rate, which exceeded the birth rate in all the years of decade except three 1906, 1909 and 1910. The loss of female lives was appalling.\textsuperscript{16} Colonel Bamber, I.M.S in the Sanitary Administrative Report of the Punjab for 1905, afforded an explanation of the high mortality of females from plague. He assumed that the cause of pestilence was present in the floors of infected houses. Since, the cooking when done in-doors, within badly ventilated rooms, it necessitated the inhalation of a good deal of

\textsuperscript{13} Census Of India, 1921, Report, 157.
\textsuperscript{14} Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Volume I, Punjab, 42.
\textsuperscript{15} Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1931, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{16} Report On the Census Of The Punjab, 1931, 16.
\textsuperscript{17} Then, a large number of women assembled in a sick room. Moreover, the attendance at the mourning assemblages, where woman had to sit on the ground for long hours, expose them to attacks from plague, bascilli and other bacteria very much more than the males, who took out-door exercise and able to throw off the poisons inhaled or imbibed into the system.(Source-Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 229.)
smoke. Moreover, the women seldom wore shoes or stockings and generally went about bare-footed. Besides there were various other processes working simultaneously towards the same result such as the female infanticide and neglect of female infants. Disease however, seems to be the overriding factor in this case.

The proportion of the widowers started to decrease from 1931 as from 8.6% in 1921 to 7.6% and to 6.4% by the mid 20th century. The number of widows declined over times specially after 1921, as in the province, as a whole, more than half the males were unmarried and every other female was married. On the other hand, one twelfth were widowers, and widows were about was one seventh of them. The conditions prevailing in the native states were more unfavourable as widows were about 40 percent higher in proportion than widowers.

The disparity of the sexes, where widowhood concerned, was ascribed to causes which accelerated the loss of one group in larger proportion. As influenza increased mortality, especially to woman, more widowers were seen. The population kept rising each year and was at the maximum in 1917, but was brought down violently in the following year by the influenza epidemic. In Punjab, the highest death-rate was recorded in 1918, the year of the influenza epidemic. However, famine created a situation that was adverse to males. So, we can say that the proportion of widowed and especially of widowers had increased, due to 'selective' mortality.

The year 1922 was an exceptionally healthy year in the Punjab. The total death-rate (22.07) from all the causes was lower that it had been since 1878. The only epidemic diseases prevalent during the year of 1923 were the Plague and fevers, which were localized fevers, prevalent in an epidemic form mainly in the western Punjab. In 1928, there was a widespread epidemic of small-pox, which caused about 17,600 deaths.

18 Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 234.
19 If female infanticide did not prevail to any noticeable extent, the neglect of female infants had been the general rule, except in tracts and communities, where a bride-price was charged. (Source- Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 229-231.)
20 Unmarried Males 528 per 1000 and Married Females 477 per 1000.
21 Census Of Punjab, 1911, 201.
25 Census Of India, 1921, Report, 163.
Malaria also prevailed in an epidemic form during the autumn of several years more particular in the year 1929. Canal irrigation had been extended by over 19 percent. The decrease of the widowed must be largely attributed to healthy decades, from 1920’s and 1930’s.

The number of widows among different religions presents a new perspective on their demography, since it is not quite uniform, when viewed from the angle of religion. The Census figures indicate the number of widows by religion and state that in 1881, the largest population of widows was among the Jains and Hindus, the next highest, Sikhs and Muslims were nearly on the same footing except that in case of Sikhs proportion for all ages was slightly higher. The least number of widows were among Christians. These proportions had declined by 1931.

The Jain widows, who were 20.4 percent in 1881 i.e one widow after every five Jain women, started to decrease, in number, but were never less than 15.8 percent. Moreover, in 1911, the highest percent of widows to 21.1 percent was in this group. The reasons for this high proportion enumerated by the census lists their urban location, well to do status, humane nature by which they took care of their female children as of the male and the ascetic life like of Jain widows free from worries and cares helped them to live longer than the females of other religions. There was also an aversion to widow’s remarriage. So, the proportion of the widows in the Jain community was the highest.

After the Jains, Hindus had the next highest proportion of widows. The proportions of Hindu widows decreased in all censuses except 1911. The percentage remained between 14.3 to 16.8 percent from 1881-1931. The state of affairs was similar among the Hindus and Jains.

Amongst the Muslims, the proportion of the widows ranged from 10.4 to 12.9 in the same decades. The proportion of widows had steadily decreased in all decades except 1911, if we compare the data of Muslims and Sikhs, then we find the proportion of

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27 The decade 1921-30 may be described as an the whole a healthy one with the exception of great epidemics of Plague in 1924 and 1926 and a severe outbreak of Cholera in Lahore and Ferozpur districts in 1926 and in Kulu Valley in 1928. While in 1926 and 1928, there were localized epidemics of Cholera. The birth rate had remained consistently high (+ 13.5 percent) but agriculturally, the decade had been prosperous. (Source- Census Of The Punjab, 1931, 25-26.)

28 Ibid., 22.

29 Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 220.
Table 2.2 Proportion Of Widowed Per 1000 Of Each Sex And Religion 
At Each Of The Last Six censuses in Punjab\textsuperscript{30}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religions</th>
<th>1881 Male</th>
<th>1881 Female</th>
<th>1891 Male</th>
<th>1891 Female</th>
<th>1901 Male</th>
<th>1901 Female</th>
<th>1911 Male</th>
<th>1911 Female</th>
<th>1921 Male</th>
<th>1921 Female</th>
<th>1931 Male</th>
<th>1931 Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HINDUS</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSLIMS</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIKHS</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAINS</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTIANS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Calculated on the basis of Census data 1881-1931)

\textsuperscript{30} Report On The Census Of The British India, 1881, Supplemental Form VI A, 59, 65, 74, 77, 71; Census Of India, 1891, Volume xx, Punjab And Its Feudatories, Part II, Imperial Tables, 60-79; Census Of India, 1891, Report, 60; Census Of India, 1901, Volume XVII. The Punjab And Its Feudatories, 254; Census Of India 1911, Part II, Tables, 55; Census Of India 1911, Statistics Of Population, 229-279; Census Of India 1921, Part II, Tables, 34-35; Census Of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part II, Tables, 70-72; Census Of India, 1931, Report, 242.

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widows was slightly higher in the case of Sikhs. If the proportion of widows was a clue to the restrictions on their re-marriage, the Sikhs clearly did not prohibit it much more than the Muslim and the number of widows ranged from 15.2 to 11.4 percent. 31 Though among Muslims, the proportion of females was somewhat higher than the Hindus. Indeed, they did not neglect their female children. The custom of charging a bride-price being more common amongst the Muslims, the chances of the neglect of female infants were smaller. 32 Amongst Muslims, as might be expected, polygamy was relatively more common. The sanctioned system of polygamy retained a large number of widows within the group. 33 Polygamy was fostered by widow-remarriage. The prejudice against the remarriage of widows was also existed, though not as an absolute prohibition, however, among certain Muslims castes, such as the Sayads and Pathans. 34 So, the number of the widows was low amongst Muslims and ranged from 12.9 to 10.4 percent form 1881 to 1931.

The proportion of widows among Christians was lowest and ranged from 7.7 to 8.9 percent. This proportion started to increase from 1911, but decreased in 1931. This abnormal rise of widows might be due to the Indian converts, immigration of a large number of British soliders and of other European bachelors. Since the European wives of officials, who might not happen to be at home, when the Census was taken. In any case, they could have hardly had any appreciable impact on the figures. 35 There is no doubt that the general Brahmanic disapproval of the remarriage of widows had some effect on the number of widows of the other religions as well. 36 On the whole, religion in the Punjab appears to be a somewhat significan factor, in the context of widows and their numbers as it brought out a varying proportion of widows among each community.

Location within the region is also a reflection of the same pattern. From an adminstrative point of view, the Punjab in 1881 had 5 divisions, 25 districts and 15 native startes, each of which contained more than 50,000 souls. 37 By 1931, Punjab had 7

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31 Census Of India 1901, Volume XVII, Punjab I, And Its Feudatories And The North-West Frontier Province, 219.
32 Report On the Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 220-221.
33 Ibid., 223.
34 Report on The Census Of The Punjab,1901, 219-220.
36 Census Of India, 1891, 266.
divisions, 29 districts and 17 Punjab states. The Census also divides the Punjab into four main territorial divisions. The Eastern Punjab, which included the Ambala Division with the exception of the Shimla District (and the States of Loharu, Dujana, Pataudi, Kalsi and Sirmoor); The Central Punjab Hills, included the Simla and Kangra District, The Simla Hill States, and the States of Bilaspur, Mandi, Suket and Chamba; The Central Punjab Plains, i.e. the Jullundur Division (except the Kangra District), Lahore Division, the Gujarat, Lyallpur, and the Jhang Districts, the Phulkian states and the states of Kapurthala, Faridkot and Malerkotla; The Western Punjab, included the remaining districts in the Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions and the state of Bhawalpur. Geographically, the region could be divided into the hill areas, the eastern Punjab, central Punjab and western Punjab.

If we look the proportion of widows district wise in Punjab, we find that in 1881, the highest proportion of widows was found in the Kangra District in the hills, 20.4%, which was much above the average for the region. Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala and Hissar in eastern Punjab, also had a higher proportion of widows at about 17%, where Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur in central Punjab plain had about 16% widows. Several other districts had an above average number of widows at 15%, such as Jullundur and Rohtak districts. The districts of Jullundur and Multan were almost at par with the province at 14.7%. In Ludhiana, Simla, Lahore, and most of the western parts, the proportion of widow was lower than the average. On the whole, about 10 districts had a higher proportion of widows than the average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastern Punjab</th>
<th>Central Punjab Hills</th>
<th>Central Punjab Plains</th>
<th>Western Punjab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Rohtak District</td>
<td>2. Simla District</td>
<td>2. Sialkot District</td>
<td>12. Lyallpur District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jullundur Division</td>
<td>7. Montgomery District</td>
<td>8. Muzaffargarh District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Ferozapore District</td>
<td>10. Ludhiana District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Ludhiana District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39 Census Of India, 1931, Volume I, Part II. Imperial Tables, Table VIII, 145.
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proportion, while others had a lower number of widows compared to the region. The western areas had a lower proportion of widows, a number which rose in the central plain and became higher in the hilly and some areas of the Punjab. There was, thus, a decline in the number of widows from east to west.

Several reasons can be assigned for the variation of the percentage of widows in different areas. The foremost of these, was that there is a great difference in the customs between the frontier and western plain and the more settled tracts of the centre and the east.\textsuperscript{41} Tribal organization was to be found nowhere in India in such primitive integrity as in the western frontier of the latter province. While, in the eastern plain of the Punjab, the village communities were typically perfect in this development between the two extremes. On the contrary, in the hills of Kangra and Simla, community of rights, whether based on the tribe or on the village was unknown.\textsuperscript{42} The Kangra district had the highest proportion of widows in the Punjab because of the place, in which the proudest and most ancient Rajputs blood was to be found.\textsuperscript{43} The Muslim Rajputs were small in Kangra and Simla districts.\textsuperscript{44} Moreover, Kangra was more agricultural and more essentially Hindu, than any other equal tract of the country. Thus, caste prejudices were stronger here than elsewhere.\textsuperscript{45} There was a widely prevalent custom, particularly among the Brahmins and Rajputs, according to which a man must always take a wife from a lower and give his daughter to a higher caste.\textsuperscript{46} Their customs, which took one back to primitive conditions and which Kangra partook more of the characteristics of Hindustan than of the rest of the Punjab.\textsuperscript{47} It was no surprise that the highest proportion of widows was found in this district.

Numerically, after the Kangra, the highest proportion of the widows in the eastern Punjab was in Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala, and Hissar districts. This was largely due to the dominantly Brahmanic population in the eastern parts.\textsuperscript{48} In the eastern districts.

\textsuperscript{41} Census Of India, 1891, Report, 266.
\textsuperscript{42} H.A. Rose, Glossary Of Tribes And The Castes Of The Punjab And The North West Frontier Province, Volume I, 3.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibbetson, Punjab Castes, 1883, 7.
\textsuperscript{44} Report On The Census Of Punjab, 1931, 353.
\textsuperscript{46} Report On The Census Of British India, 1881, Volume III, XXXIX.
\textsuperscript{47} Punjab District Gazetteer, Volume VII, Part A, Kangra District, 8.
\textsuperscript{48} Report On The Census Of The British India, 1881, Lvi.
Brahmanism was stronger than in any other part of the Punjab.⁴⁹ Even the Jats of these parts, differed from the Jats of the Sikh tract. They had come from the north and west from Rajputana.⁵⁰ These Hindu Jats were predominant in the south-eastern part of the province, especially in Rohtak, Hissar and Karnal districts, accounting for stronger tendency against widows’ remarriage.⁵¹ In 1881, in the eastern Punjab, 85 percent of the population was rural. The great agricultural tribes were Jats and Rajputs.⁵² Numerically, the eastern Jats were almost without exception Hindu, the few among them were Muslims.⁵³ The Hindus or Muslims, both were socially one people due to stronger ancient tribal custom and ties of blood with less importance on the religion.⁵⁴ So, the Brahmanic influence prevailed here. Moreover, this area experienced famines. The great famine of 1869, 4 districts in the south-east of the province lost over 40 percent of their stock or a total of over 600,000 head.⁵⁵ Famine had dominated in the tract, stamping itself on the life of the people.⁵⁶ In 1877 and 1878, the distress was severe in the eastern districts than upon that of the western portion of the province.⁵⁷ Yet another reason was the fact that Rohtak occupied third place, among the districts of the Punjab in supplying recruits to the British Indian army. By 30 November, 1918, 23.9 percent of its total male population of military age had enlisted itself in the army and served as an additional factor which added to the total proportion of the widows in these districts.⁵⁸

Interestingly, the Census figures of the central Punjab plain indicated that the proportion of the widows in the Hoshiarpur district was extremely high. This district was followed by the Ludhiana, Jullundur, Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts. Many causes were assigned to the high proportion of the widow in this particular area-Hoshiarpur and other districts. Hoshiarpur was mostly inhabited by the Jat and Rajput. The smallness of the holdings compelled many to seek their fortunes abroad. The Rajputs joined the

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⁴⁹ Census Of Punjab, 1901, Ethnographics Appendices, 75.
⁵⁰ Ibid, 79
⁵¹ In 1931, there were 262, 538, 185, 940 and 99, 560 Hindu Jats in Rohtak, Hissar and Karnal districts respectively. (Source-Ibbetson, Punjab, 126.)
⁵³ Census Of India, 1901, Ethnographics, 75.
⁵⁴ S.S. Thorburn, Muslaman And Moneylenders In The Punjab, 1885, 13.
⁵⁶ Malcolm Darling, The Punjab, 85

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army.\textsuperscript{59} In Hoshiarpur, to take but a single example, 50 percent of the Hindu Rajputs of military age enlisted during the war.\textsuperscript{60} Both in Hoshiarpur and in Jullundur, there were the same necessity and enterprise urging men into the army and out into the world beyond.\textsuperscript{61} The Sikh, also did the same or emigrated, and as many as possible—more probably than from any other district, entered government service.\textsuperscript{62} Village community life was still so strong that in matter of social custom, the individuals were powerless.\textsuperscript{63} Moreover, in Punjab, there were only two, Hoshiarpur and Jullundur Districts, in which the net mortgage debt in more than 60 percent of the whole against only 37 percent in the Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Attock and less than 30 percent in the Rohtak, Karnal and Hissar districts. This tendency was more evident in the advanced districts like Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, and Jullundur than in the more above backward districts.\textsuperscript{64} Marriage was the root cause of debt.\textsuperscript{65} There areas were also densely populated. There was migration from the congested districts of the Jullundur, Amritsar and Hoshiarpur to western areas.\textsuperscript{66} The lower classes were equally drawn to centres like Lahore, Amritsar and Ferozepore as the high rates of wages were prevailing there. There was no other remarkable emigration or immigration.\textsuperscript{67}

Turning to religion, we find that polygamy was far more common among Musalmans than among Hindus except in the Jalandhar and Amritsar division.\textsuperscript{68} It was also prevalent among rich people. Actually, in the central Punjab, religion and economics was in open conflict. The population was so congested and the desire for a higher standard of living so strong that economic considerations were likely to prevail over religion.\textsuperscript{69} However, Sikhism did much to weaken the Brahmanical traditions in the

\textsuperscript{59} Darling, Rusticus, 2.
\textsuperscript{60} Darling, The Punjab Peasant, 35.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{62} Darling, Rusticus, 2.
\textsuperscript{63} Darling, Rusticus, 5.
\textsuperscript{64} Darling, The Punjab Peasant, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{65} Darling, Rusticus, 5.
\textsuperscript{66} Census Of The Punjab, 1911, Report, 73-74.
\textsuperscript{67} Punjab Districts Gazetteer, Gurdaspur District, 1914, Volume XXIA, Lahore, 1915, 36.
\textsuperscript{68} The Census Of India, 1881, Appendix L, cliv.
\textsuperscript{69} M.L. Darling, Rusticus, 183.
widows in the central plain, comparatively with the eastern parts of the Punjab.\textsuperscript{70}

It is apparent from the figures of the western districts of the Punjab; the proportion of widows was rather less. This area, which was mainly inhabited by Muslims. The western Punjab was therefore, distinct from the rest of the Punjab. In the 3 districts of Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Attock however, the number was high as these areas contributed a greater number to the army, as Rawalpindi and Jhelum each of which had more than 25,000 persons serving in the army.\textsuperscript{71} For a generation, the Rawalpindi district had stood first in India for the number of its recruits, a preeminence that was gloriously maintained during the war, when 40 percent of those of military age were under arms. It is said that there was no district in the province, perhaps even in India, where necessity and enterprise were more closely allied than in Rawalpindi.\textsuperscript{72} In the war, Rawalpindi and Jhelum surpassed all other districts in India and with Attock provided 87,000 men, or a fifth of the total number furnished by the whole province.\textsuperscript{73} Rawalpindi and Jhelum that were deplete of almost all their able bodied men in the First World War and consequently had a larger number of widows.\textsuperscript{74}

In 1931, the Kangra district still held the position of having the highest proportion of widows in the Punjab at 17.5%. It was followed by the Jhelum district with 14.3%. All other districts showed a lesser less proportion of widows at below 13.9%, except in the Karnal and Hoshiarpur districts. On the whole, only five districts had a low proportion of widows at below 10% as in Multan, Sheikhupura, Montgomery, Jhang and Lyallpur districts, which ranged from 7.7 to 9.7 percent. We find a lesser proportion of widows in the western areas of the Punjab than other parts. The reason ascribed is that here rules and customs were tribal rather than religious.

The influence of the economic factor was as ascribed to the low proportion of the widows in the Canal Colonies, where the proportions of widow was lower in Lyallpur, Montgomery and Jhang contrary to the previous censuses, when economic conditions had became more favorable. The Lyallpur colony became the richest tract in India, perhaps

\textsuperscript{70} Ibbetson, \textit{Punjab, 1881}, 9.
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Census Of India, 1931}, 17.
\textsuperscript{72} M.L. Darling, \textit{The Punjab Peasant}, 79.
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, 78.
even in Asia.\textsuperscript{75} These canal colonies became most comfortable after the war.\textsuperscript{76} So, the greatest attraction to the emigrations was the canal colonies.\textsuperscript{77} In the canal colonies, the Sikh Jats predominated.\textsuperscript{78} The people of colony areas took into wedlock all women of marriageable age, whether widows or virgins. The heterogeneous character of the population made it easy for the people to marry widows in the absence of prejudices peculiar to their home districts. So, all the colony districts (except Shahpur) stood out predominantly, as having the smallest proportion of widows.\textsuperscript{79} By 1931, a smaller proportion of widow were found in the eastern Punjab, followed by the districts of the central plain as Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar and Ludhiana in comparison to 1881, in Gujrat, Rawalpindi and Jhelum however, this proportion had increased.

Census information on the proportion of widows per mille of total females in each district from 1881 to 1931 brings out the distribution of the widow population in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion Of Widows Per 1000 Of Female Population</th>
<th>Districts (Punjab Province)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Below 100</td>
<td>Lyallpur District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Below 130</td>
<td>Muzaffargarh, Gujranwala, Montgomery, Dera Ghazi Khan, Shahpur Jhang, Mianwali and Sheikhupura District,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Below 160</td>
<td>Jhelum, Hissar, Rohtak, Jullundur, Rawalpindi, Multan, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Gujrat, Attock, Ferozepore, Sialkot and Lahore Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Above 160</td>
<td>Ambala, Gurgaon, Karnal, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur and Simla Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Above 200</td>
<td>Kangra District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Calculated on the basis of Census data, 1881-1931)

The figure for widowers naturally followed those for widows in reverse order. But the number of widowers was more in Punjab comparatively to the other parts.

\textsuperscript{75} Darling, \textit{The Census}, 138.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 137.
\textsuperscript{78} M.L. Darling, \textit{Rusticus}, 324.
### TABLE 2.3 PROPORTION OF WIDOWED PER 1,000 IN CERTAIN DISTRICTS/STATES OF THE PUNJAB (1881-1931)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>District or State</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>64</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>62</td>
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<td>84</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>British Territory</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>143</td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>136</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Native States</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A. Ambala Division</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>140</td>
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<td>152</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
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<td>144</td>
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<td>118</td>
<td>141</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>1921</td>
<td>4. Karnal District</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>117</td>
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<td>119</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>5. Ambala District</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>143</td>
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<td>161</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>B. Jullundur Division</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7. Kangra District</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8. Hoshiarpur District</td>
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<td>132</td>
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<td>134</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>9. Jullundur District</td>
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<td>143</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>122</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>126</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>11. Ferozapore District</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td>168</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<td>129</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>127</td>
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<td>D. Rawalpindi Division</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1901, the 27 districts of the Punjab are now grouped into five administrative divisions, each district administered by a Deputy Commissioner and Division by a Commissioner. As in 1891, Punjab had 31 districts. In 1901, the Punjab was divided into 2 administrations, the Punjab and The North-West Frontier Province. The North-West Frontier Province comprises all the territories, which lie to the west of the Indus, excepting the trans-Indus portion of the Is Khel Tahsil in the District of Mianwali, District of Dera Ghazi Khan and Biloch Trans-Frontiner (The Territory occupied by the protected tribes on its Western border). The areas in the North-West Frontier Province were included Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. (Source- Census Of India, 1901, Volume XVII, The Punjab And Its Feudatories, Part I, 1-2)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
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<td>122</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>Attock District</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Mianwali District</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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E. Multan Division

<table>
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<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>124</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyallpur District</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhang District</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>111</td>
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<td>114</td>
</tr>
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<td>145</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>133</td>
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<td>123</td>
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<td>Muzaffargarh District</td>
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<td>Dera Ghazi Khan District</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


61
of the India. Since the earlier a man married, the more numerous must be the widowers.\textsuperscript{82} The result was due, in the main to the excessive mortality among the females of the province, at the childbearing age.\textsuperscript{83} However, the proportion of females to males during these years was not favourable. Consequently, there was an increase in the number of widowers in most districts between 1881 and 1931 except in Jhang and Multan districts.\textsuperscript{84} Similarly, the considerable proportion of widowers was found in the central plains particularly Hoshiarpur and Jullundur, the worst affected areas of the plague. The losses from plague were heavier among females than among males. There had been a considerable number of deaths in the proportion of the former sex.\textsuperscript{85} While widowers had a low proportion in Lyallpur, Jhang, Mianwali, Montgomery, Multan, Attock, Shahpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan districts. These were strongholds of the Muslims, where Hindu influences were weak and Hinduism was being confined to the trading, landless caste. The same general features were to be noticed, in proportion of the widowed, when we advance from east to west.\textsuperscript{86} 

\begin{center}
\textbf{692297} \hspace{1cm} II
\end{center}

Caste played a far less important part in the social life of the people than in other parts of India. Its bonds were stronger in the east than in the west, and generally in the towns than in the villages, so that in rural areas of the western Punjab, society was organized on a tribal basis, and caste hardly existed.\textsuperscript{87} Caste was little more than a tradition, and the social unit was the tribe.\textsuperscript{88} The table gives the number of widows per mille of total females of each of the main castes. The pattern was the same from 1911 to 1931 among the castes. The proportion of the widows was varied in the same community. It depends on the religion, they professed. As among Hindu Rajput, the proportion of widows was highest at 23.7% among the referred caste in the table, whereas, Muslim Rajputs had quite less proportion at 14.8%. This characteristic featured in the next censuses also. Even in lower castes like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} Report On The Census Of British India, 1881, Appendix L, CXLVII.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Ibid, Appendix D, XXVIII.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Volume I, Punjab, 50.
\item \textsuperscript{85} The Census Of Punjab, 1911, Report, 227.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Census Of British India, 1881, Appendix L, CXLVII.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Provincial Series, Punjab, 1901, Volume I, Calcutta, 1908, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Provincial Series, Punjab, 1901, Volume II, Calcutta, 1908, 61.
\end{itemize}
Hindu Nai, Kumhar, Lohar, the proportion of widows was 17.0, 15.3% and 15.2%, but among Muslim Nai, Kumhar and Lohar, it was lower at 12.3, 12.2 and 11.5 percent in 1881. If we look at the number of widows by castes, Brahmans and the Hindu Rajputs with high ‘feudal’ and military traditions appeared to be in the worst position having the largest proportion of widows. The Hindu Rajputs abound in Kangra and Hoshiarpur.\textsuperscript{89} This was followed by the trading Aggarwals, a sub-caste of the Bania, Hindu, Khatri, a trading caste and Aroras. The Aggarwal abound in the eastern Punjab and the proportion of females amongst them was augmented by the marriage relations with the United Provinces.\textsuperscript{90} The Khatris were probably numerous in Jhelum and Rawalpini districts because the Rajput element in the north-west had always been weak. The Aroras hold the south-west as Bania did the south-east.\textsuperscript{91} They were particularly in the Dera Jat and in the neighbourhood of Multan.\textsuperscript{92} It is observable that among the high caste Hindus, the worst position was of Brahman, Rajput, Aggarwal, Khatri, and Arora. However, the lower castes of the Hindus did not keep themselves far behind the higher castes; their widows had a sizeable number among Nai, Kumhar, Lohar and Chamar. They also have a considerable number among Ahirs only in Delhi division. Moreover, the lower castes of Hindus, like Kumhar, Lohar had a higher proportion than the high caste Muslims, such as Sheikhs, Sayyids and Pathans.

It is pointed out that the Hindus generally showed a higher percentage of females than the Sikhs or Muslims, and where a caste was common to the Hindus and Muslim religions, the Hindus appeared to show a higher number of widows in certain castes and lower in others. Among the Hindus, the Rajput, Aggarwal, Khatri and Arora had the highest number of widows because of early marriages. So, we find a high proportion of widows than the others. This suggests that patriarchal norms were reinforced in the highest social order.

Among the lower castes of the Hindus, the highest proportion was found among Nais. They had a complex system of social groups, which vary in different parts of the province. Thus, in the south-eastern districts of the Punjab, Nai’s organization reflected

\textsuperscript{89} Report On The Census Of Punjab, 1911, 438.
\textsuperscript{90} Report On Punjab Census, 1911, 224.
\textsuperscript{92} Thorburn, The Moneylenders, 35.
that of the Brahmans, elsewhere they followed those of the Khatri.\textsuperscript{93} That is why; we found a larger number of the proportion of the widowed. They were followed by the Kumhar and Lohar. The Ahirs stood as husbandmen and somewhat superior to the Jat.\textsuperscript{94} Kumhar and Lohar were village menials. Moreover, a considerable number of woman belonged to Kahar or other menial village servant classes came from the United Province to the Punjab province in search of livelihood and added to the proportion of widows in the menial classes in the Punjab.\textsuperscript{95}

The fact is that the people were bound by the social and tribal custom far more than by any rules of religion.\textsuperscript{96} It was noted that there was variation in the number of widows in the same caste, because all castes were common to more religions than one. The tendency was an apparent in a pronounced manner. In western Punjab, the social rank was not measured by a caste as in further east, where the people began to use the caste terms.\textsuperscript{97} That was why we find variation in the number of widows of the same caste, professing different faiths. The Census data showed this marked features of Punjab society.

A brief analysis of the proportion of the widowers by castes in the Punjab, also points towards a higher proportion of Aggarwals, in this context. The major reason behind this was that the higher castes generally did not take wives from lower castes. It was to be noted that the proportion of Aggarwal widows were slightly high from Hindu Nais by 1% on 1911. In 1921 both were at par, at 12% in 1921. In 1931, when the proportion of Aggarwal had decreased to 2.5%, but Hindu Nai, showed this decrease only of 1.5% from 1921. The other high castes like Hindu Khatri, Arora, Rajput, as well as lower castes Kumhar, Lohar had a proportion of widowers at less than 10%. The lowest proportion was among the Biloch, 4.8% in 1911. In 1921, the proportion of widowers had increased among Hindu Lohar and Kumhar by more than 10%. Moreover, the Ahir had an increased proportion of 12% at par with Aggarwal and Nai Pathan. The Biloch again had a lesser proportion than other areas, but with increased proportion of widowers in 1931. In 1931 only Nai had a higher proportion of more than 10%. The castes, which

\textsuperscript{93} H.A Rose, \textit{A Glossary, Volume II}, 142.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Report on the Punjab Census, 1911}, 219.
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Report On The Census Of The British India 1881, Volume III, Appendix B}, XXXVI.
\textsuperscript{97} H.A. Rose, \textit{A Glosary, Volume}, 361.
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<th>Castes</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2. Aggarwal (H)</td>
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<td>205</td>
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<td>163</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Awan (M)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Biloch</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Chamar (H)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jat (M)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Khatri (H)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Kumhar (H)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Kumhar (M)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Lohar (H)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lohar (M)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Machhi (M)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Mirasi (M)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Mochi (M)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Nai (H)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Nai (M)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Pathan</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Rajput (H)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Rajput (M)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Saiyid</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Sheikh</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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98 Census of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, Part I, Report, 511-314; Census Of India, 1911, Volume I, Report, 282, 284-287; Census Of India, 1921, Report, 172-173; Census Of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, 187, 192; Census Of India, 1931, Volume I, India, Part II, Imperial table, 146,149.

Machhis are intermingled with Muslims, Jhinwars and Kahars (Source – Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1931, 343.)
professed the Muslim religion had a lesser proportion of widows as the Muslims did marry women from the lower castes.\textsuperscript{99}

The bonds of caste were generally stronger in the town than in the village.\textsuperscript{100} The definition of a town, defined in the Census of 1881, continued to be applicable up to 1941. In 1881, a large number of the towns were concentrated in the eastern plains, which had about 46 percent of the towns of the region.\textsuperscript{101} It is noticeable that there was a variation in the proportion of the widowed in towns and villages of the Punjab. It was uniformly larger in towns than in the villages, as in 1881. This was almost certainly due in great part to the fact that migration from villages to towns was more common than from towns to villages. The adult’s immigrants raised the percentage in the higher age’s groups, at which widowhood was most common. In the Punjab, like the other states, there was a marked tendency for the educated to move to the towns.\textsuperscript{102} Moreover, the Jains were confined mainly to towns and more that half their population was urban. The rest of them resided in the larger villages, which had not been classified as towns. The proportion of the widowed in Jains was very large. The reason was therefore, not only the unknown widow-marriage, but also the Bhbra Jain were not allowed to marry a second wife under any circumstances whatever.

The Hindus, who took up a very large share in commerce and had consequently more need for living in towns.\textsuperscript{103} The trading castes in the village occupied a lower position than the landowning classes, but in the towns, they ranked higher. The most important were the Banias in the south-east, the Khattris in the centre and north-west and the Arora in the south-west. All these were Hindus or, rarely Sikhs. The principal trading classes were the Sheikhs and Khojas.\textsuperscript{104} The Christian also lived mostly in towns, as mission work had not developed very largely in villages. The Sikhs were mainly

\textsuperscript{99} Census Of India, 1911, 223.
\textsuperscript{100} In the Punjab plains, the village was as a rule a compact group of willing; but in the south-west and the hill tracts, It comprises a number of scattered settlements of hamlets grouped together under a charge of a single head man for fiscal and administrative convenience (Source- Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Provinces, Volume I, 40, 49.)
\textsuperscript{102} Report On The Census Of British India, 1881, Volume III, Appendix, ClI.
\textsuperscript{103} Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 14
\textsuperscript{104} Imperial Gazetteer Of India, Provincial Series, Volume I, 1908, 48.
Table 2.5 Proportion Of Widowed Per 1000 In Towns And Villages In Punjab In 1881.\textsuperscript{105}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Widowers</th>
<th>Widows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Towns</td>
<td>Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Delhi</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hissar</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ambala</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jalandhar</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Amritsar</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lahore</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rawalpindi</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Multan</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Derajat</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Peshawar</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. British Territory</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Native States</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Total Provinces</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{105} Census Of British India, 1881, Appendix L, Abstract No. 117, CLIII.
agricultural by pursuit and consequently their proportion in towns was the smallest. In rural areas, the agricultural castes such as Jats and others followed Karewa. By this, the result was the lesser proportion of widows in villages. So, the disproportion between figures of the towns and villages was greater among the widowed as the status widowed in villages was transferred to the married status by Karewa. It was the practice among the peasantry rather than among the strict Hindus, who were found in the towns. This disproportion was almost identical in each division for the two sexes, as we can notice in the Census of 1881. The figures clearly indicate that there were more widowers in Delhi, Hissar, Ambala, and Jalandhar villages, but in towns, the highest proportion was in Delhi, Jalandhar, Ambala, and Amritsar. In villages, the highest proportion of widows was found in Jalandhar, Delhi, Ambala, and Hissar districts, where as in towns, this proportion was in Jalandhar, Delhi, Derajat, Amritsar, and Hissar. It is also observed that the proportion was higher in native states than the British territory. If we take about the whole province, the proportion was greater in towns in both the sexes.

A brief analysis of the age structure of widows reveals that between 1881 and 1931, the number of widows in the age groups 15-20 as well as 20-40 decreased, with 2 exceptions that of Jain widows in 20-40 age group and Christian widows of 15-20 years, which increased. In contrast, the number of widowers in all the 15-20 age group increased in all communities except the Jains. The Census information indicates the rise and fall of the proportion of the widowed of the age of 15 to 40 years. From 20 to 40 years, the proportion of the widowed was highest in 1891 and 1911, which was the real child bearing age. In this age-group, very few women remained unmarried. So, the number of widows was high especially among Jains and Hindus. The next highest were the Sikhs, Muslims, and Christians.

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107 At the Census of 1881, all places possessing more than 5 thousand inhabitants, all municipalities and all headquaters of districts and military posts were classed as town. A definition of ‘village’ prescribed for Census purposes, and are given in section 3 (1) of the Punjab Land Revenue Act XVII of 1887 was (2) A village (Delhi) means any area, for which a separate recode of rights has been made or (ii) which has been separately assessed to Land Revenue or would have been so assessed, if the land revenue had not been released, compounded for or redeemed, or which the local government may, by general rule or special order, declare to be an estate (Mausa). (Source: District And State Gazetteers Of The Undivided Punjab Volume II, Lahore, 1932, 335; Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 18; Report On The Census Of British India, Appendix L, CLIII.)
108 Report On The Census Of British India, Appendix L, CLIV.
109 Census Of British India, 1881, Appendix L, CXLVII.

68
Table 2.6 Proportion Of Widowed By Age Per 1000 In Punjab, 1881-1931.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Religions</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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110 Census Of Punjab., 1911, Report, Subsidiary Table I, 308; Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV. Punjab 262-263; Census Of India, 1921, Volume I, Part I, Report, 155; Census Of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Report, Subsidiary Table I, 89.
Moreover, since early marriage prevailed amongst the Jains and Hindus. They showed the largest proportion of widows in these very age periods. It seems that the western Punjab, where the population was mostly Muslims, had been comparatively immune from plague than the other parts of the Punjab. So, the losses of married Muslims females in those age-periods were only nominal.\(^{111}\) As a matter of fact, the marriage age of the Muslims was higher.\(^{112}\) So, the number of the widowed was less, comparison to the other religious communities. The proportion of Sikh widows was lower as remarriage among Sikhs was comparatively higher.\(^ {113}\) The statistics also indicate that in the age-periods 15-40, the Christian group was affected due to the addition of converts in overwhelming proportion, which had raised the percentage of married females in every age-period, in spite of the loss of females in the middle ages from plague.\(^ {114}\) The large number of widows among the age of 15 to 40 years, presented a pathetic picture, but they seemed insignificant, when we realize that in the ages above 40, every other woman was a widow.\(^ {115}\) In the Punjab, however, the proportionate number of each sex, widowed at different ages was comparatively lower than other provinces probably due to the acceptance of remarriage or Karewa on a largescale. On the other hand, the number of widowers in this province was enormous.\(^ {116}\)

The proportion of elderly widows was highest among the Jains, who had the highest proportion of widows at all ages, followed by the Hindus as the next highest and above the average of the region.\(^ {117}\) Muslims and Sikhs were nearly on the same footing and lower than the mean of the province. The proportion of widows among Christians was the smallest though not by a large margin in this age group.\(^ {118}\) Among the followers of Islam and Christianity, there was no religious tenet prohibiting widow remarriage, but, they had been long influenced by their association with the Hindus. A rough idea of the

\(^{111}\) Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, 262-263.
\(^{112}\) Census Of India, 1921, Volume I, Part I, Reprot, 155.
\(^{113}\) Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, 263.
\(^{114}\) Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab 262.
\(^{115}\) Census Of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, 183-185.
\(^{116}\) Census Of Punjab, 1911, 308, Census Of India, 1931, Subsidiary Table I, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, 189-190.
\(^{117}\) Census Of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, 183.
\(^{118}\) Census Of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, 187.
TABLE 2.7 Proportion of Elderly Widowed Of Each Sex, Religion Per 1,000 At Each Of The Last Six censuses\textsuperscript{119}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hindu</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikhs</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ains</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uslims</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>christians</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{119} Census Of Punjab, 1911, 308; Census Of India, 1931, Subsidiary Table I, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part I, Report, 189-190.
extent of remarriage among Muslim widowers is evident from these figures. There was a large number of the widowed, particularly in these ages because widow remarriage was deprecated by a considerable section of the public and this fact tended to increase the number of widows. Elderly males, when widowed generally wed young woman, leading thus to a smaller proportion of elderly widowers.

III

The state of widowhood was linked to several ceremonies and rituals, which varied in their observance in the region. In facts, even when a horoscope of a girl showed that the influence of certain star was likely to lead to early widowhood, some rituals were observed to avert widowhood, in the form of mock-marriage. In this ritual, a pitcher, full of water was dressed like a boy and the girl was taken through the ‘ceremonies’ of marriage with this pseudo-bridegroom. The ceremonies were then repeated with the real bridegroom by way of an informal marriage and it was supposed that the effect of the evil star would befall the pitcher, and not the bridegroom, thus averting the disaster of early widowhood. This type of mock marriage was called ‘Kumbh Vivah’ (Pot Marriage) and was confined to the Banias of eastern Punjab, only from Karnal. The ritual relating to this kind of marriage was called the ‘Kumbhi Vivah’Paddhati.

The social consideration, which was given to a widow, was to keep her in that state by ritualizing it. The widow by her acts showed her undying grief for her deceased husband. The mystic tie of marriage was not dissolved on the death of the husband, even if the wife did not join him on the funeral pyre, for whenever she dies, she was burned in a white shroud so that, her husband might receive her as still mourning for him. The misfortune of widows, however, was alleviated by the ideal of the sacredness of the marriage tie, the hope of rejoining the husband and being made worthy of his regard in proportion to her, led generally to self-inflicted privations, such as sleeping on

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120 Census Of India, 1931 Volume XVII, Punjab Part I, Report, 188.
122 Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, 283.
123 Ibid., 284
124 G.W. Leitner, History Of Indigenous Education, 100.
125 Ibid., 99
the floor instead of on a charpoy. It was not only strengthened by religion but also intended to raise the character of a noble-minded Hindu widow.\textsuperscript{126}

On the death of the husband, a Randapa ceremony was observed the same afternoon at the conclusion of the Kirya Karm. The deceased’s widow after performing ablutions, decorated her body, put on her richest garments and all her jewels. Married woman surrounded her, clasped her in their arms and wept by beating their heads and breasts in measured times crying and sobbing as loud as they could. It was customary for the deceased’s relatives to give the widow valuable clothes and ornaments in token of their sympathy with her, but she then divested herself of all her jewels and rich garments, which were never to be donned again in her life again, thus showing her fidelity and devotion to her departed husband.\textsuperscript{127}

In Dera Ghazi Khan, after the ‘Tija’, the parents in-law of a deceased husband gave his widow same cash, clothes and ornaments, which were called Jora Randsala or garb of widowhood.\textsuperscript{128} If the husband of a young girl died, his ashes were wrapped in a cloth which was put round the widow’s neck in the belief that she would pass the remainder of her in patience and resignation. In Montgomery, if a young girl became a widow, 2 pieces of red clothes and two of white were put on her on the 11\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} days. The red cloth was given her by her own parents and the white by her husband’s parents.\textsuperscript{129} In Mianwali, a widow did not wear glass bangles or coloured clothes. On a man’s death, his widow’s parents gave their daughter bangles, called the bangles of widowhood.\textsuperscript{130}

The settlement officer of Karnal made the following observation in 1893 that when a woman’s husband died, she broke the wristlets (chura) of her arm and threw the pieces on the corpse, and they were wrapped with it in the shroud. After that, she might wear silver wristlets again. Occasionally, if a widow had many grown-up sons, she would continue to wear the Suhag.\textsuperscript{131} In Ambala, 2 copper coins wrapped in red clothes were thrown over her husband’s head to indicate that her married life was now over.

\textsuperscript{126} G.W. Leitner, History Of Indigenous Education, 100.
\textsuperscript{127} H.A. Rose, A Glossary, Volume I, 859.
\textsuperscript{128} Third day, after the death of the husband (Source-H.A. Rose, A Glossary, Volume I, 887.)
\textsuperscript{129} H.A. Rose, A Glossary, Volume I, 868.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 887.
\textsuperscript{131} H.A. Rose, A Glossary, Volume I, 894.
In Gurgaon, the deceased wife broke her bangles in token that she had lost her Suhag on her husband’s death. This was called Suhag Utarna. On the 13th day after the death of “dear departed, all the relatives gather and pour out rupees before her, with the view of making a provision for the widow for life which so often spent foolishly, unless it was entrusted to an elder male relative, especially after the year of sorrowing was over and she resumed most of her jewels and with them, perhaps, some of the gaiety of her blasted life.

It was credit to the members of the Biradari that when a daughter, or a sister or a father’s sister become a widow. She was given something as burra in the Hoshiarpur district. When the father-in-law of a daughter or a sister or a father’s sister died, the son of the deceased was furnished with a turban costing about Rs. 5. The occasional gifts made to the relatives need not be estimated; they depended on the will, the desire and the financial conditions of the giver. All these observances pointed out the attitude of society towards widows.

However, according to the Shastras and the old custom, a widow duly observing the vows of widowhood was to be respected even by her elders, was usually given the management of the household and every effort was made to mitigate her unfortunate position. The present day’s thought had led to a widow now looked upon as an unproductive encumbrance and even as a scourge to the family. Her presence at certain occasions of rejoicing and at the celebration of certain ceremonies had come to be looked upon as ominous and her lot was altogether a hard one. They were harshly treated by their mother-in-law or female relations. They were supposed to be practically dead to the world and were expected not only eschew all luxuries, but to lead a life of absolute self denial in respect of dress, ornaments and even food.

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135 The giving of burra money was one of the best social institutions. All the friends and relatives contributed something towards the maintenance of the widows. It was not a social loan like the Neunda (A kind of social loan without interest, made at one time and returned at another) The burra money was a gift which might never be returned. A neunda, when offered by another might or might not be accepted. Burra money, when offered could not be refused. (Source-Leitner, *Indigenous*, 99.)
136 *Census Of Punjab, 1911*, 234.
M.L. Darling in his book ‘Rusticus Loquitur’ (1929) analysed that the popular view of this country that women should have little or no leisure to think for fear of what entered her mind. The story was told of a young widow, which on the death of her husband, went to see a holy man called Jallan and begged a blessing of him that she might pass her widowhood as a widow. This was the advice of Jallan that let there be a wall behind you and a spinning wheel in front, busy yourself with grinding and spinning, and you would pass your days well. If you weared silk and ate sugar and ghi, what could the prayers of Jallan do for you? It means that amongst the old-fashioned, the grinding of flour was looked upon as a virtuous act, and even the drawing of water and the cleansing of the family vessels were regarded as services of social value. The decline of grinding was regretted, not so much on account of its economic bearing as because it weakened a wholesome check upon the strange feelings.

Fatigue, it was said, was a woman’s best guardian. According to it, ‘when you have not enough work at home to give to a woman, mix rice with pulse and let her separate the one from the other’ was an old men’s advice to a member of my staff; for, said he, ‘a vacuum in a woman’s mind is sure to create a hurricane of evil passion.” Females were, as a rule, responsible for all household work, and those who could not afford to keep servants have to do all the sweeping and cleaning work. The cooking when done in-doors, within badly ventilated rooms, necessitates the inhalation of a good deal of smoke. This might be partly to the anxiety in safeguarding the morals of young widow.

As usual, the proverbial wisdom of the villages described the widows, too severely. As “A Jat, a Bhat, a Caterpillar, and a widow woman, these four are best hungry. If they eat their fill, they do harm”. The ill treatment of widows by the mother-in-law had become proverbial, and every now and then one heared of attempts to quietly put a young widow out of the way. As, a case, had brought to notice in the Punjab Census, 1911 that a woman, who had long been ill treating her widowed daughter-in-law took advantage of an occasion, when the latter was invited by a female friend at the neighbour’s house. On her return, the mother-

137 Darling, Rusticus, 103.
138 Ibid., 352.
139 Darling, Rusticus, 104.
140 Census Of India, 1901, Volume I, India, Ethnographies, Calcutta, 1903, 76.
141 Census Of Punjab, 1911, 234.
in-law gave her some poisonous substance. The mother-in-law gave out that it was an attack of cholera resulting from the bad food eaten at the neighbour’s house. A doctor saved her by treating her for poisoning instead of cholera. Widows among Rajputs too grasping at their only chance of remarriage ‘sold’ themselves through agents (Dalal) to ‘God knows who in the plains’.  

It is possible that a widow might here and there be driven to desperation by the ill-treatment and might commit suicide by poison. Such cases were seldom heard of. Perhaps, when they occurred, the causes were carefully concealed and no one took notice of it owing to the general feeling that a widow was well rid of her life of misery. So, whether from deliberate neglect of themselves or from ill-treatment, the life of the younger was usually shortened, and this was not a negligible factor in the low proportion of females amongst the Hindus.  

The widows, who had grown up sons or whose age entitled them to have a voice in the management of the household, practically, and, in numerous cases admittedly ruled it.

As widowhood, were generally considered as a curse. One custom was followed by married women according to this practice; married women were also cursed to become widows, in order to prolong one’s own wedlock. The idea was probably to curse to other evidently to strengthen the vitality of husband of the speaker. The abuses poured were of the following type—“Swah Pao, Jura Laho” (Throw ashes on your head unfasten your hair) or “Heva Randi.” (May you become a widow). It was clearly recognized all through the area that such ritial could be used to keep widowhood in abeyance.

As a matter of principle, a widow was expected by all religions and castes to be perfectly chaste and to her husband’s memory. It was an open secret that laxity of morals prevailed amongst all grades of society to a large or small extent. Abortions were common among widows of loose morals in all religions. The menial classes did not as a rule take serious notice of the looseness of their widow’s character as in the case of certain castes like the Pernas, Mirasis etc, but even among some castes who did not

142 Darling, Rusticus, 7.
143 Census Of Punjab, 1911, 237.
144 G.W. Leitner, History Of Indigenous Education, 100.
145 Mace of becoming a widow. (Source—Census Of Punjab, 1911, 237.)
146 Census Of Punjab, 1911, 293.
147 Ibid., 234.
connive at such liberty, for instance, the Pathans and Jats in the western Punjab, where abduction was more seriously dealt with and the penalty for eloping with a virgin or a widow was high.\(^{148}\)

The matters of adultery, of which the Panchayats usually took cognizance and a few instances of enforcement of the action taken by them in regard to offences of varying degrees reported from some of the districts. As in Rohtak district, a sweeper widow had illegal intimacy with her father-in-law. Her mother-in-law called the Panchayat and he was excommunicated. The Panchayat took charge of the woman and gave her in marriage to a man of their choice.\(^{149}\) Among the Chamars of the Gurgaon district, the marriage of a widow contrary to the custom in vogue was void at the instance of the Panchayat and besides the restoration of the woman to her lawful guardians. The seducer had to pay a fine of Rs. 15 to 20 and a Nazrana Rs. 1 to the Chaudhari. The Nais had similar rules.\(^{150}\)

The cases of immorality, elopement and illegal intimacy were taken by the Panchayats of certain castes. The jurisdiction of the tribal type of Panchayat extended over the caste throughout a large area, with local establishments for places, where the caste is found in abundance.\(^{151}\) In the eastern Punjab, specific punishments were described for various offences in almost all castes having Panchayat.\(^{152}\) There were some of the types of punishment awarded by the low caste Panchayats. The higher castes were seldom subject to governing bodies and where they were, the control was not very effective.\(^{153}\) As we have one instance of Rajput sabha of Punjab, in this Sabha, many of the ancient customs of the Rajputs discussed. The Rajput Sabha, held annual meetings, usually in Jammu, which was home of most of the best classes, and the introduction of changes in custom was discussed. The authority of the Sabha to sanction changes in custom, however, was not universally admitted and in any case, it is difficult to enforce a new custom in place of one which had continued form ancient times.\(^{154}\)

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\(^{148}\) Census Of Punjab, 1911, 293.
\(^{149}\) Report On The Census Of The Punjab, 1911, 421.
\(^{150}\) Census Of Punjab, 1911, 423.
\(^{151}\) Census Of Punjab, 1911, 420.
\(^{152}\) Ibid., 423.
\(^{153}\) Ibid., 424.
\(^{154}\) Punjab District Gazetteers, Gurdaspur District, 1914, 52.
In fact, village community life was still so strong that, in matters of social custom, the individual was powerless. A Jat of Hoshiarpur carried a liaison with a Chamar woman in village Ramgarh. The head man of the village collected Jats of 5 villages and the assembly forced the offender to give up his relation with the woman and to atone for his sin by such methods of purification as might be prescribed by the Brahmans. The punishment awarded for offences against religions and for breach of caste rules varied with the locality, the status of the caste, the seriousness of the offence, and the position of the offender. All these determining features were considered by the Panchayat in passing the sentence. In the cities and larger towns, there were communities of artisans, with the members of the different castes. These associations had no connection, whatever with the caste Panchayat.

It is interesting to note that the economic dimensions brought change in the status of widows. It was obvious that a woman was the right hand of the cultivator, except in the case of the castes (Rajputs and others), which observed Pardah. The Jats got large amount of help from his wife and families, as they brought the food to the fields, feed the cattle, helped in sowing and weeding picking cotton and numerous other agricultural activities. Her work was of certainly economic gain. The social and economic position of woman and low economic position of woman had influenced their social position. The woman worked hardest and in Rohtak, the wife of a Jat did all that a man did except plough and sow the woman of the Arains, worked almost as hard. So, economic pressure was forcing the castes to pocket their pride. It was clear that the force of caste was less strong than it was and widows were getting freedom than the precious times due to economic considerations. At the same time, there could be no doubt that the middle class of the towns and castes had no reason particularly pride of their caste, which the superior education and the more varied constitution of the urban population

155 Darling, Rusticus, 51.
156 Report The Census Of Punjab, 1911, 425.
157 Ibid, 423.
158 Census Of Punjab, 1911, 426.
159 Ram Bhalla. Report On An Economics Survey Of Bairampur, 156.
160 Census Of Punjab, 1911, 1
162 M.... Darling, Rusticus Loquitur. 51.
163 Ibid, 56
weakened the power of tribal custom. This was the opinion, given by Denzil Ibbetson in 1881.164

IV

The fact is that the people were bound by social and tribal custom far more than by any rules of religion. The social and tribal customs of the eastern peasant, whether Hindu or Muslim, were those of the Indian subcontinent. While in the west, the people, whether Hindu or Muslim, had adopted in great measure, though by no means all together, the social and tribal customs of Afghanistan and Baluchistan. In both cases, ‘those rules and customs are tribal or national, rather than religious’.165 However, the Brahmanic influence was probable never so strong in the Punjab as in many other parts of India.166 As in the Punjab and frontier province combined 88.6 percent of the population lived in villages.167

Moreover, if famine had exercised a prejudicial effect on the growth of population, another factor had operated in the opposite direction. The nineteenth century witnessed a very great development of state irrigation by means of canals. The great utility of the Punjab canals was the resultant economic prosperity in the Punjab.168 The artificial means of irrigation provided by the British rulers resulted in the development of canal colonies, once the poorest province in India, after the war, became the richest.169

The colonial period brought about a transformation not only in political and economic sphere but a major change in and society and culture as well. The policies of the colonial state brought deep impact on society and its members including ideas and behaviour towards widows and widowhood. In the canal colonies, polygamy was rarely accepted amongst the large landowners of the western Punjab.170 In the Lyallpur colony,
it was more common among Arains, and Muslims, Jats than among Sikh Jats. Very broadly, it may be said that in an Arian village, there would be three persons with more than one wife, in a Muslim Jat village two, and in a Sikh Jat village only one. In the south-western Punjab, most big landlords indulge in this ‘doubtful luxury’. However, in the colony, and still more in the central Punjab, the great shortage of women made it difficult to get a second wife. In Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, holdings were mostly too small to allow a second wife. In the eastern areas also, polygamy was rare, and it was commonly said: ‘If you want to give a man trouble, give him a second wife’.172

In several cases, polygamy followed the natural process of devolution by which the widow descended to the younger brother which constituted the primary form of Karewa, was almost universal amongst all except the highest castes throughout the east and centre of the Punjab.173 So, the agricultural and menial castes allowed the marriage of widows, preferably to the brother of the deceased husband and it was among them that polygamy was commonest.174 The institution was not a matter of caste or status, for it was very common among the lower castes, such as the Chamars, Chuhras, Nais and several other menial and artisan castes. Among the lower agricultural tribes, especially those of the hills, it was also common for the Kanets, Ghirths, Gujars and Jats practiced it somewhat extensively. In all the above classes, the probability was that polygamy was really a result of the institution of widow-remarriage, man talking his brother’s widow as he took the rest of his chattels. Among the Kulu Kanets, at least polygamy was a form of investment. As most of the field-work was done by the woman, and a man’s, health depended on the number of his wives. Probably the short lives of the woman in Kangra were in a great measure due to the hard field-labour done by them.175 The existence and acceptance of limited polygamy contributed to the extension of widow remarriage through Karewa, which often meant a man had more than one wife.

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171 M.L. Darling, Rusticus Loquiture, Oxford University, 1929, 209.
172 Ibid., 210.
173 Census Of British India, 1881, Appendix L, CLIV.
174 Imperial Gazetteer Of India, 1901, Volume I, 46.
175 Census Of India, 1901, Volume XVII, The Punjab, Its Feudatories And The North-West Frontier Province, Part I, 220.
The practice of Sati, had long ceased to exist, in this region and the cases in which a widow destroyed herself immediately on hearing of or witnessing the death of her husband, owing to her unbearable grief, whether by poison or in some the way, though not unknown, were extremely rare, but a large number of widows were seriously affected by shock and shorten their span of life by deliberate exposure to privations of all kinds. This usually happened in the piously inclined childless widows.176 “When I go, hence will he go too” is the wail of those, who wish to be joined in death to those whom they love, but to whom this desire, which led to Sati and which explained the incurable grief of widowhood, had only a one-sided application.177

The fear of widowhood was often linked to the practice of female infanticide. However, the most surprising thing of all is that, in spite of the deplorable shortage of woman, female infanticide persisted. This would be difficult to prove, but those who were in a position to know agreed that it existed here and specially there, where castes was high and suitable husbands few.178 Female infanticide prevailed in the Punjab to a large extent, at the annexation of this province, not only among the Darbari Jats in the Jullundur district, but generally throughout the central and eastern Punjab.179 By the twentieth century. the proportion of actual infanticide was lowered, but the neglect of female infants was the general rule.180 Some change in perception towards widowhood was thus discernable.

Among the other factors, which influenced the statistics of the widowed was the practice of hypergamy. A Sayad could, for instance, take a wife from any other caste or tribe, but no other caste might marry a Sayad girl. The Qureshi came next, similarly, the Pathans, were in a power, they would take a Biloch or Jat wife but not to give their daughters outside their own tribe. In South-West Punjab, the Biloch treated all other tribes in a similar manner.181 Many Rajputs almost prided themselves their inefficiency as cultivators, claiming that their real business was fighting and sport. Owing, to the obligations of caste, many considered themselves debarred from giving their daughters

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176 Census Of Punjab, 1911, Report, 234.
178 M.L. Darling, The Punjab, 52.
179 Census of Punjab, 1911, 258.
181 Census Of India, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, 290-291.
in marriage to anyone but a social superior, often therefore, a son-in-law could only be obtained at a price. Many remained unmarried in sequence. This might be said to be the only restriction observed by the Musalmans of the Western Punjab. Unfortunately, many of the Hindus of the central and sub-montane districts, and especially the higher classes of Khatris and of hill Rajputs, and Brahmans, had superimposed these social restrictions upon tribunal restrictions. The above castes, which believed in hypergamy, also had more proportion of widows.

Another custom, which one would wish changed modified, was the four walled Pardah. Among Rajputs, the pardah-nishin probably did too little unless she grinded or was an ardent spinner, but the wife of the Arain and the Rohtak Jatt worked too hard. The Rajputs kept their women in Pardah, it means less economic utility of women among Rajputs. This increased the proportion of widows among this caste, where as, among Jats, had the less proportion of widows due to economic utility of Jat women, who worked in fields without ghunghat. The Arain women worked much harder than the Rajputs due to the non observance of Pardah. The Meos, who did not keep pardah, but the mullah, was constantly telling them they were wrong. But they were helpless as the women had to work as the Jat women do.

Religion and economics was in open conflict, a fact that was peculiarly characteristic of the central Punjab at present. In the Central Punjab, religions was so mixed, population so congested, and the desire for a higher standard of living so strong that economic considerations were likely to prevail over religious. Fortunately, Punjab village life was to a large extent free from this curse. Exceptionally free from these restraints were the Hindus Jats of the South-east. Here women, worked without ghunghat. Due to this value of women, they were forced to follow Karewa, especially in the rural areas of the Punjab.

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182 M.L. Darling, The Punjab Peasant, 35.
183 Census Of British India, 1881, Appendix L, CXLV.
184 Darling, Rusticus, 349.
185 Darling, Rusticus, 51.
186 Ibid., 103.
187 Ibid., 163.
188 Darling, Rusticus, 140.
189 Darling, Rusticus, 183.
In the Punjab, which was mainly an agricultural province, many tribes allowed their women folk to work in fields. Due to the importance of the productivity of the women, they did not leave their women as widows, but followed Karewa. The result was the lower proportion of widows in Punjab than other areas of India. Like the ‘Law of Celibacy’ among Roman catholic priests, that of widowhood, including the extra vagance of Sati was based on a conception of self sacrifice to duty or affection, of which only the highest human nature was capable. Compulsory widowhood was a custom, peculiar to Hindus. The lower classes allowed the remarriage of widow, but even amongst them a widows did not always remarry. Owing obviously to the influence of Hindu associations, some of the highest castes among the Muslims, whether converts from Hinduism or claiming of foreign descent, looked down upon widow marriage with disfavour and the absence of custom was considered, in some tracts as a sign of high breeding. A Muslim Jat or Rajput, a Sheikh of Arabian descent or a Moghul, in the eastern Punjab, would, for instance, not think of marrying a widow. The popular Persan poet Sadi had said-'Tread the Straight Path safe, although it more distant be, so take not to wife a widow, even if she a Houri be. This was not in accordance with the Shariat and the general custom amongst the Muslims, which did not enjoin enforced widowhood. Among the Sikhs too, the higher castes alone followed the Hindu custom. The evils of the procedure if any were therefore confined to the Hindu society alone. Therefore, a comparatively small number of widow’s in the higher and middle Hindu castes was only remained.

Moreover, in the twentieth century, a changing perspective can be noticed towards widows, when caste Panchayats started to lose their hold on the various social groups, on the other hand, education and the influence of western civilization were awakening people to modify their rules to suit the requirements of the times. It means that the attitudes of the patriarchy were changing towards Punjabi widows due to the educated elite, under the colonial rule. The greater freedom of woman in the west at the province, at this point, led to the feeling that the ‘Progressive’ east had something to

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192 Rahe rast birao agarche dur ast, Zane bewah makun agarche hur ast.(Source-Census Of Punjab, 1911, 233.)  
193 Censs Of Punjab, 1911, 426.  
194 Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, Punjab Today, 74.
learn from the ‘Backward’ west. As in Attock district, there was a remarkable institution with 317 members, including 25 widows and six or seven Hindu shopkeepers. This was one of the thirteen arbitrator societies that one Sirdar had started among his tenants. In two years, 96 cases had been decided. Most of them were the trivial but absorbing dispute as of near neighbours. The difficult cases were those relating to girls, betrothed or even abducted. This account highlighted changed perspective to the colonial Punjabi widows.

Moreover, customs altered to keep pace with the changing conditions of society. As in the matter of marriage, too, it was certain that the liberty of a grown up woman, or, at all events of a widow, to contract herself would be in time established. Now the court would not hold that the marriage of a widow celebrated with the usual ceremonies would be valid or the offspring of such a union illegitimate because the consent of the deceased husband’s heirs had not obtained. T Gordon, Walker, a settlement officer in the Ludhiana district claimed that but before our rules begin such independence on the part of woman could not have been imagined.

Moreover, formerly the decision of Panchayats of the tribe was more readily obeyed, because there was the fear of exclusion from the brotherhood, appeared to be a sufficient deterrent. Now the new custom had grown up that the case went to the civil court after refusing the decision of the Panchayats. It is a fact that under the British rule, the general character of some custom had been changed. As among the Sikh Jats, formerly the death of the boy did not annul the contract of betrothal. The death of boy now left the girl’s family at liberty to consider the contract void or to betroth and marry the girl into another family. J. Wilson, the settlement officer of the Sirsa district, said that it had been introduced because our courts showed some reluctance in holding the betrothal so binding as the tribesmen considered it. Similarly the Bodlas said that their widows were not allowed to remarry, but there had recently been a few cases in which Bodlas widows had married again.

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All tribes agree that since the introduction of British Courts of justice, the custom of holding clan-meetings to decide disputed parts had almost entirely died out as no one now agreed to be bound by a decision of such a body. Now they had no power to give a decision and no means and enforcing it. All these factors effected the social situation of widows. Social compulsion of pressures seemed to have lightened with time. Comparing to the plight of widow with the other provinces of India, Punjab had the favourable position of widows. The Punjab was thus, different from the rest of India in this context.

The general truth of these remarks would appear from the observation of Campbell, who reviewed that he never experienced Hindu Law in Punjab, where as in India, these laws determined the characteristics of the number of widows. Brahmanism had always been weaker in the Punjab than perhaps in other parts of India. In the Punjab, the Punjab Customary law ranked the Brahmans with other men. Moreover, custom was historically earlier than Hindu Law. Customs, were more important than religion, we observed the social reality of widows, quite different from that of other regions. Punjab was less rigid to widow-remarriage, than most other parts of the country, as areas in the customary practices, which allowed levirate marriages. In the Punjab, where the shortage of women was also marked, many could never marry at all as a result of the high price of brides. The purchase of a bride was an economic need as well as a social necessity. So, the agrarian needs sanctified widow remarriage. In the Punjab, due to the importance of land, and the enterprise of the Sikhs, the Britishers also justified remarriages in Punjab, according to the custom. The importance of women in the agrarian economy made marriage an acknowledged “economic necessity”.

202 J. Wilson, Shahpur District, 19.
203 Census Of India, 1891, Report, 266.
204 Census Of India, 1891, Report, 266.
205 C.L. Tupper, Punjab, Volume II, 87.
206 Ibid., 89.
207 Darling, The Punjab Peasant, 51-52.
208 H.A. Rose, The Glossary, Volume, I, Preface, VII.
210 Prem Chowdhary, ‘Custom In A Peasant Economy, Women In Colonial Haryana’ in Recasting Women (ed.) by KumKum Sangari, 310.