



WOMEN OF BAHAWALPUR STATE DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY

Samia Khloid
Department of History
Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur

Abstract

The current study aims to shed light on women of all the social strata of the Bahawalpur State, specifically women of the lower strata, during the nineteenth century. The Bahawalpur State provides a different picture of women's life in a traditional society that lacked hard formal constraints on the personal freedoms of lower-class women. A correlation between women's participation in economic activities made the women of the lower class confident enough to think about themselves and take steps towards personal freedom. In Bahawalpur, as women of the higher class went up the socioeconomic ladder, life became more restricted. Thus by keeping women of the wealthy families isolated, the elite believed that they were preserving their purity. On the other hand, the state and the elite were not particularly concerned with protecting the honour or life style of lower-class women. Drawing upon manuscripts, contemporary records and chronicles, this paper studies an aspect of women's lives which has not previously been systematically explored. The study is an exploration and documentation of the suppressed histories of women in general and of South Asian women in particular.

Keywords

Bahawalpur State, South Asian women, women of Pakistan, the Daudputras, women's history, socio-economic history