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The Goddess Circle: Begums Luxurious Lifestyle And Stellar Contribution In The State Of Awadh

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the goddess circle which got created in the state of Awadh in the 18th. It brings out the fact that at the time when inequality and discrimination was reigning everywhere, when women were considered as a plaything in the hands of men, and expected to live within the confines of curtains, how the Begums of Awadh remained active in all the fields from politics to culture enjoyed a luxurious life, even overshadowed men like Nawabs, ministers, courtiers and lived not as a puppet but on their own terms independently.

In the feudal society of Awadh, women did not possess many rights. Life was confined within four walls of the Zenana where strict Purdah was observed, it was the rule of the women, by the women and for the women. It may therefore seem anachronistic that many of the Begums of Awadh played significant and sometimes decisive roles in the political affairs of their times and their contribution to the religious and literary activities was considerable.¹ Not only this, those who were in good books of their men were able to exercise great influence over them and get things done according to their wish.

There was remarkable degree of parity between men and women of the ruling house of Awadh. The Begums of Awadh, right from the time of Sadr-Un-Nisa begum, (the only wife of second Nawab Safdar Jung) to the period of Begum Hazrat Mahal (the mother of Birjis Qadir), had displayed great agency and initiative in the public sphere.²

The Haramsara – the building where the women of the royal or noble families lived among the gentry and sometimes even among the nobility it is called Zenana. Mrs Meer Hasan gives us fairly good idea of Zenana. It consisted of a quadrangle on three sides of which lay habitable apartment and the fourth side was occupied by kitchen.³

POLITICAL AFFLUENCE-

Sadr-Un-Nisa, the imperious daughter of one Nawab Saadat khan, wife of another Nawab Safdar Jung, mother of the third Nawab Shuja- ud- daulah and grandmother of the fourth Asaf- ud- daulah was the first conspicuous lady of the Muslim royal family of Awadh.

1. Amir Hasan, “The palace culture of Lucknow”, p 126.

2. Sabina Kazmi, “Dyarchy, duality of Authority”, p 585.

3. Amir Hasan, “The palace culture of Lucknow”, p 126.

She was talented, wise, illustrious chaste and a virtuous lady. She was the single wife of Safdar Jung, the second Nawab of Awadh. When Safdar Jung was defeated by the Pathans in the battle of Ram Chatauni in 1750, Javed khan and other Turk nobles of the mughal emperor plotted to confiscate his estate and divest him of his wizarat, horror and disorder spread in Awadh. It was Sadr-Un-Nisa, who accompanied her husband and raised a force of 10000 troops and prevailed upon her son, Shuja ud daulah and others to fight for her husband's cause, it was on account of her bold action firmness and tact that Safdar Jung was able to save his wizarat. She with large funds and Jats and Marathas helped Shuja-ud-daulah to strengthen his position. The begum proved great asset for him in later life also.⁴

When Shuja-ud-daulah ascended the masnad of Awadh, Sadr-Un-Nisa Begum assisted him in managing the state with her wise counsels, when Shuja-ud-daulah caused widespread resentment among the khattris by abducting an 18 years old for a night of love and some Mughal plotted to replace him. It was her tactful and sagacious handling of the matter which saved his neck.

Shuja-ud-daulah valued Bahu begum's advice in the matters of state, many nobles looked towards her for support. It was on her intervention that Haider Beg Khan, an official of Shuja -ud-daulah who had embezzled state funds could save his neck. She won her husband's lasting esteem by her generosity in sending him everything, she possessed in his hour of greatest need after the defeat at Buxar including her pearl encrusted nose ring.⁵ It was to a great measure, due to advice of the begum that Shuja-ud-daulah decided to support Mir Qasim against the British during the battle of Buxar.⁶

After Asaf-ud-daulah ascended the throne, he shifted his capital to Lucknow only to escape from her all pervading influence. Tafzihi '1 ghafilin indirectly tells about influence exerted by the Begums at Faizabad compelling Nawab Asaf-ud-daulah to move his capital to Lucknow.

After Asaf-ud-daulah, Bahu Begum played an important role, both in making and marring the career of Wazir Ali as the Nawab of Awadh. He ascended the masnad with her approval but soon she fell out with him and conspired with the English to replace him with Saadat Ali khan unfortunately her relations with Saadat Ali khan also became strained.⁷

Bahu Begum was a good administrator. She was able to realise the strength of the English but failed to win their confidence despite her efforts and a dominating personality throughout her life. The rulers of Awadh and the English both feared her. She loomed large over Hastings in his impeachment According to Faiz Bux "no women in all 32 Subah of India can be held up as her rival in either the grandeur of her surroundings or the respect she could command.

The next important begum was Badshah Begum (first queen of Ghazi-ud-din Haider) who was greatly inspired by Sadr-Un-Nisa and Bahu begum followed their life style and interest in political matters, although it must be stressed that she was much more ambitious and headstrong than any of the two. During her lifetime, she made constant efforts to keep control over Nasir-ud-din Haider the prince and heir apparent.⁸

When she heard the news of dethronement of Nasiruddin Haider, she led the detachment of forces from Alambagh to Lal Baradari, the coronation hall despite warnings from company's side, she was adamant on placing Munna Jan on the throne, so the resident directed his cannon fire on the building and at about 3 am, 63 year old Muhammad Ali was woken up and installed on the throne and given the title of Muhammad Ali Nausher Wane Adil. Badshah begum and Munna Jan were arrested and taken to residency after 5 years she died, and buried in Chunar fort.⁹

4. Surender Mohan, "Awadh under the Nawabs", p.52.

5. Karen Chancey, "Rethinking the reign of Asaf-ud-daulah".p.13.

6. Amir Hasan, "The Palace culture of Lucknow", p 150.

7. ibid, p 152.

8. Surender Mohan, "Awadh under the Nawabs", p.129.

9. Ibid. p.130.

Like Bahu Begum, she also had problem with many of Haider's ministers, so she successfully got rid of minister Agha Mir who incurred her displeasure when he relegated the heir apparent.¹⁰

It is thus clear that she plunged headlong in the politics of her period. Both the British and the king Nasiruddin were afraid of her strong personality and her influence. She was called Naibgar (minister maker) and has certainly left a stronger imprint on the pages of history than the ruler of the period, Nasiruddin Haider.

The author of Tarikh-e-Badshah Begum is not so charitable towards the protagonist of his work Badshah Begum is criticised for her overly ambitious and cunning women for her role in the coup of Munna Jan.¹¹

Malka Zamani was one of the favourite wife of Nasiruddin Haider; she exercised considerable political power during her peak period. Fanny Parks says "she is after all the person of the most political consequence and she has great power over her royal husband whose ears she boxes occasionally."¹²

Qudsia begum, another begum of Nasiruddin Haider exercised great influence over the king who listened to her advice in political matters. She directly addressed letters to the resident she was in charge of the collection of custom dues.¹³

Malka Afaq alias Khetu begum chief consort of Mohammad Ali Shah, her son and next ruler Amjad Ali Shah however consulted her in making important appointments. Amjad Ali religious zeal to run the government according to Shia, shariat can atleast be partly traced to the religiousness of Malka Afaq. It was on her advice that Roshan-Ud-Daulah did not quit his post when Wajid Ali shah ascended the throne.¹⁴

Malka-i-Jahan (secondary wife of Mohammad Ali Shah) occupied important position, she was very well provided by the king. Malika kishwar Taj Ara Begum, the chief consort of Amjad Ali Shah, during the reign of Wajid Ali Shah, however her importance increased according to Sleeman, she arrogantly interfered in the affairs of the state. When Munavar Ali Khan the taluqdar of Nanpara died, the begum interceded on behalf of the younger Rani, although the elder rani and her son had already taken control and had decided a better claim to the estate. She also advised Wajid Ali Shah in appointment of high officials, she used to hold darbar to hear grievances of women from all over the kingdom.¹⁵

Although Sleeman opposed her political interference in political matters, he was nevertheless impressed by her foresight ability and statesmanship, when he suggested regency council for Awadh, her name was first among the proposed members.

She had courage, will and boldness enough to travel to England in 1856 to plead for her son before Queen Victoria, she applied for an independent pension from the court of directors and an advance of rupees three lacs to proceed to Kaaba for pilgrimage her request was however not granted, she died shortly afterwards in Paris in 1858.

10. Amir Hasan, *"The Palace culture of Lucknow"*, p 154.

11. Sabina Kazmi, *"Dyarchy, duality of Authority and perceptions about the court of Awadh: A study of some selected text"*, p 585.

12. Amir Hasan, *"The Palace culture of Lucknow"*, p 155.

13. *ibid*, p.156

14. *ibid*. p.156

15. *ibid*. p.156

IN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT-

Begum Hazrat Mahal was prominent female freedom fighter and wife of the last Nawab of Awadh , Wazid Ali Shah when British annexed Awadh in 1856, she led the group of rebels against the British and with her leadership , Awadh became the centre of rebellion. “She felicitated her troops in person in Alambagh and when Dilkusha was taken and the soldiers of freedom fought with desperate courage for the defence of Lucknow”(woman warriors of 1857 the illustrated weekly of India”(William Dalrymple a Scottish historian and writer in his book “THE LAST MUGHAL” writes about Begum Hazrat Mahal contribution to the 1857 revolt

One of the most remarkable
Women of the Indian Revolt
She was the charismatic figure who
United the desperate groups of rebels
And was to inspire them to fight against the British.

She formed an alliance with other Indian rulers including Nana Sahib and fought against the British organised the defence of city of the Lucknow which became the major centre of rebellion. After the rebellion she went into exile in Nepal, she continued to work for independence and supported Indian revolutionaries. The brave queen never lost her heart and moved among her men with a spirit that deserved better success.

ECONOMY-

Begums had plenty of wealth. Every chief wife was granted jagirs or estates: extensive in size and rich in agricultural yield. They were all in all to manage the affairs of their jagir and to utilize the resources. They were even more financially sound than the Nawabs or kings.¹⁶ They came up with their own money on many occasions to help the Nawabs.

Begum Sadr-Un-Nisa controlled the big jagir and substantial amount of money, which was spent on the state on the basis of need; besides the needs of the begum they tried to fulfil the needs of affiliated band of servants and other dependents.¹⁷ Har Charan, a contemporary of the Begum writes about the general disposition. She aided the needy with discretion.¹⁸

Bahu Begum was made virtual treasurer of Awadh, regularly placing his excess revenues in her hands as well as giving her a number of profitable jagirs and land assignments from which she collected revenue for her personal expenses. Amusingly, he also agreed to pay her a fine of 5000 rupees whenever she caught him visiting other mistresses, considering Shuja's reputation, she must have amassed a considerable fortune in fines alone.¹⁹ When Shuja died, Bahu Begum did not return her estates to the government as was customary nor did she hand over the treasure entrusted to her keeping.²⁰

Bahu begum presided over a large jagir consisting of Mahals like Salons, Simrauta, Mohanganj, Jais khara, Prasiddipur Rukka, Alta, Gonda and Zilas such as Mirganj, Sindh, Ghoriabad, Nawab Ganj, Garahiya khas, Begum bari etc. She also had right to collect taxes for cattle branding and on meat market in the entire territory, she was owner of the large number of horses, houses and gardens besides a treasure of rich jewellery.

16 Naumana Kiran, “*Stratification and the role of Elite Muslim Women in the state of Awadh*”, p 288.

17 ibid. p.289.

18 Surendra Mohan, “*Awadh under Nawabs*”, p. 56-57.

19 Karen Chancey, “*Rethinking the reign of Asaf-ud- daulah*”, p.13-14.

20. ibid. p.14.

Thus she was not only fabulously rich lady but a virtual ruler over a large territory²¹ which she administered with the help of a large number of officials such as Collectors, Sub Collectors, Tahsildars, Police officers, Zamindars attendants letter writers etc under the charge of her loyal eunuchs. As already mentioned, she had 2000 horsemen commanded by Ahmad Ali, for Salon alone there were 25 horsemen and 700 footmen. The total number of regular and irregular soldiers employed by her was estimated to be 10000. The control of finances by Bahu Begum proved to be the major cause of conflict between her and her son Nawab Asaf-ud-daulah.²² Chief wife of Asaf-ud-daulah was owner of the jagirs of Partab Ganj and Nawab Ganj with the annual rupees 6000 annual income. Nawab Saadat Ali Khan gave the Nawab Ganj as jagir to his favourite wife, Taj Mahal; its annual income was 120000. She had the ownership of jewellery of one crore also.

The finances of the chief wives or the other wives were always given priority even while signing treatise with the British. Article 6, of the treaty between Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah and the company said that 2 lac out of 76 would be fixed for the stipend of the Begums and princess of the royal family.

Financial resources of some of the wives, with the name of kings were part and parcel of the loan agreement between the company and the state.²³ Such large estates of lands and jewellery were later extracted by governor general Warren Hastings.²⁴

The Begums were mostly very kind and gave large part of their wealth in alms of the poor. Begum Sadr-Un-Nisa paid with the monthly stipend from her jagir income. Bahu Begum had fixed stipend for many of her relatives and poor families on a monthly basis. Her nephews Nawab Qasim Ali Khan, Asgar Ali Khan and Akbar Ali Khan were paid rupees 1000 each. She was so careful about the livelihood of all of her dependents that she made arrangements with the help of the resident to pay them monthly allowances even after her death.

Abdul Ahad brought out her significant contribution to the religious cultural life of the kingdom. Badshah Begum introduced many innovation in the Shia religious ceremonies connected to Muharram indulged in building activity and got many Imambara and mosque made Her religious activities were accompanied by grandeur, pomp and show. Although she was bigoted Shia, she had considerations for Sunni also.²⁵ During a Muharram feud; she saved one Hasan baksh who was a staunch Sunni.

21. Amir Hasan, *"The Palace culture of Lucknow"*, p. 151.

22. Naumana Kiran, *"Stratification and the role of Elite Muslim Women in the state of Awadh"*, p 289.

23. *ibid.* p.289.

24. *ibid.* p.289.

25. Sabina kazmi, "Dyarchy duality of authority and perceptions about the court of Awadh: A study of some selected text" pg no. 5

RELIGIOUS –

Sadr-Un-Nisa was a devoted Shia and observed Muharram with fervour and fanfare. She constructed a mosque and an Imambara behind Moti bagh at Faizabad. Bahu begum constructed an Imambara where majlis were held. She spent huge sums of money on Muharram celebrations and observances. In fact the pattern of religious activity adopted by her and her mother-in-law Sadr-Un-Nisa begum continued to be followed by their successors in Lucknow.²⁶

The Malka was very devoted to Shia religion on every nauchandi Thursday; she used to visit the dargah of Hazrat Abbas with great pomp and show to pray for a child as she has no issue from the king. In 1837, she constructed grand Imambara and a mosque in Golaganj on her death she was buried in the Imambara. Nawab Malka Afaq alias Khetu begum built the famous karbala now known after her name near Shia College on Sitapur road .

The Karbala is also called ‘askarain’ because it contains the copies of the tombs of Hazrat Imam Hasan Askari and Hazrat Imam Taqui. The main attraction of the Karbala was its floor which was made of yellow, red and green chaukas which looked like a chess board making of the chaukas was a special craft of Lucknow which alas, died along with its last artisan, Gulab Kahar, in 1885. Malika kishwar had good knowledge of both Urdu and Persian language and had studied religious books on Shia religion, in the morning a maulvi who sat on the other side of the curtain and recited the holy quran in her presence.

She did not change her clothes and wear ornaments and did not use mehendi on her hands and feet from first of Muharram till the chehlum. On 9th day of muharram she used to hold a majlis at her residence which lasted for the whole night on the 10th day of muharram, she and the members of her household fasted even the small babies were not given milk till the tazias were buried.

CULTURAL ARENA (LITERATURE AND ARCHITECTURE) –

History of Awadh is unique in the sense of its cultural, literary and creative development. A lot of such works had been produced there which were exemplary. Persian and Urdu both flourished and the contribution of Begum was equally visible in this regard also. ²⁷ Bahu begum patronised the men of literature and historians also. Faiz baksh kakori the author of Tarikh – i- Farah baksh was an employee in the jagir of bahu begum. His book covers the period of Shuja-ud-daulah, Asaf- ud- daulah and Saadat Ali Khan. He had written an eye witness account. His book Shahna-i-faiz was an autobiographical work as well as historical. He had access to such facts and files where common a historian could not reach because he was a trustworthy employee of Bahu Begum.

26. Amir Hasan, “*The Palace culture of Lucknow*”, p. 158

27 Moeen ud din Aqeel, “ *Janubi asia ki Tarikh naweesi , noeeyat , rawaiyat and mayar Lahore : nashriyat*” , 2015, p. 83.

Aqeel Mahal, one of the wives of Wajid Ali Shah was named as Mumtaz Mahal; the last king of Awadh also had a literary taste. She was granddaughter of Shuja-ud-daulah. She did not accompany Wajid Ali Shah to Calcutta and was left behind in Lucknow. Wajid Ali Shah wrote a series of letters to her and wished that all his letters be compiled in the form of a book. Being a faithful wife, she collected all the letters and got it published in the form of a book with the title of Tarikh –i-Mumtaz. The letters are of high literary taste and show a passionate relationship of husband and wife.

Malika Jahan, the wife of Muhammad Ali was a lady of great dedication. She completed the Jama Masjid started by her husband. Begums of Awadh were also fond of constructing buildings, esp. Religious edifices and buildings for the welfare of their dependents. Begum Sadr-Un-Nisa constructed an imambara and a mosque behind Moti bagh.²⁸

Rulers of Awadh were practicing Shia faith with scrupulous care and regularity and adopted pure Shia rituals on the state level. Some innovations had been introduced by the royal ladies esp. Badshah begum including celebration of chhati ceremony of imam Mehdi celebrated every year in the month of Shaban and secondly eleven Syed girls were declared as wives of 11 imams and were kept in the royal palace with high respect and status.²⁹ With her religious innovations and involvement and associates in the religious ceremonies had controlled the cultural life of the court.³⁰

In the Palace of Awadh, Badshah Begum had built twelve tombs for each of the twelve imams, besides a mosque adjacent to every tomb. The buildings constructed by the Begums were symbols of their power, religious inclination and high sense of social welfare besides fine taste.³¹

As Mirza Nasiruddin Hyder was brought up by Badshah begum so he was highly careful of these practices in his life.³² She took her religious rites to an extreme and began to celebrate the chatti the 6th day of the birth of imam Mehdi almost on the pattern of Krishna Janmastami ³³ the jhanki of various imams were decorated.

The Nawab Shamsunnisa begum, the chief begum of Asaf-ud-daulah and a granddaughter of Nawab Gamruddin, a vizier of the Mughal emperor, was poetess in her own right, 4 lines of her ghazal are-

Little pleasure in my heart, i find,
If anything at all, it is sorrow, i find,
Whether you come or not every night,
I wait for you till morn

Bahu begum laid the foundation of Nagariya and Ali Ganj on the other side of river. Qudsia begum, another Begum of Nasiruddin Hyder. She was a generous lady and distributed charity bountifully, she constructed a Karbala near chhattar manzil. Malka- i- jahan completed the construction of the Jama Masjid left incomplete by her husband.

28. Mohd Baqir, "Tarikh-i-Mumtaz", p. 104

29. Naumana Karen, "Stratification and the role of Elite Muslim in the State of Awadh", p.287.

30. Taqi Ahmad, "Badshah Begum", p.9.

31. Manisha Chowdhary, "Domesticity religion and politics exploring life in the royal palace of Awadh" International

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32. Naumana Karen, "Stratification and role of women of Elite Muslim Women in the state of Awadh" p.287

33. Surendra Mohan, "Awadh under Nawabs", p. 11

DAILY LIFE

As the ladies had enough time to spare, they played a number of indoor games. Their favourite pastime was game of chance with dice, they also liked to play pachisi, there appears to be description of the game called ganjifa. Female story tellers were employed to entertain the mistress with the stories and tales.³⁴

Following is a list of women employed in the haramsera to perform specifies jobs and help Begums to lead a luxurious lifestyle.

1. Mahaldar- She was the harbinger and carrier of messages from the deorhi to inside of Mahalsera.
 2. Mehri -She performed routine jobs of various types as directed by mistress.
 3. Pesh khidmat –She was employed mainly for sewing.
 4. Chittinavis – She did the writing work for the ladies and functioned as their friend guide and philosopher.
 5. Daslanga – Her job was to tell stories for the recreation of the inmates of the harem.
 6. Mashshata – She was employed to dress ladies.
 7. Dal- She was the serving maid who came with the bride as her personal attendant.
 8. Asils- Maid servants usually employed for the kitchen service.
- To assist the ladies in religious matters and to recite dirges, hadis khawan (reciter of hadis), Soz
9. Khawan (reciter of Soz), and Nauha Khawan (reciter of Nauha) was kept on the rolls of harem.
 10. Anna- She was employed to feed the baby, as the ladies of royal and noble families did not like to fatigue themselves with the infant by feeding it from their own breasts.
 11. Khaleel- Her job was to play with the baby keep it in a good manner.
 12. Dada – The female slave who brought up a child.

During the days of Nasiruddin Haider, a class of female entertainers called Jalse. Walian became an integral part of the harem. His harem was full of women and there were women everywhere.³⁵ During the reign of Amjad Ali, the harem was best managed, thanks to the principle begum Malika Kishwar.

In addition to various types of women employed in the haramsera, a large number of women visited it every day to perform various menial occupation and jobs to sell merchandise of various types. Some of them even caught the eye of the rulers to become their favourite concubines or even wives.³⁶

Sadr-Un-Nisa Begum, personal life was simple but whenever she went out, she was always escorted by a large retinue of guards and eunuchs. Faiz Bux gives us an inkling of the lifestyle of the Bahu Begum who lived as a reigning queen even after the death of her husband.³⁷

Badshah Begum enjoyed many privileges and mark of royal distinction. Mrs Meer Hasan gives a graphic description of the procession of Badshah Begum when she visited the dargah of Hazrat Abbas. The procession was headed by a guard of cavalry soldier with their colors followed by 2 battalion of infantry with music bands and company of spearmen. Taj Mahal, one of the Begum of Nasiruddin Haider had a dress of gold and scarlet brocade gold rings pearls and emerald.

Fanny Parks write, Mukhandra Alia Europeon wife of Nasiruddin wrote and spoke Persian fluently. Knighton, “left the record of the harem of Malika kishwar, Wife of Amjad Ali Shah Begum, led a virtuous and religious life. Harem was also free from vulgarity and obscenity.”³⁸

34. Amir Hasan, “*The Palace culture of Lucknow*”, p. 12

35. Amir Hasan, “*The Palace culture of Lucknow*”, p. 135

36. *ibid.* p.136.

37. *ibid.* p.136.

38. *ibid.* p.139.

The queen enjoyed to hear the stories which were meant either to entertain her or induce her to sleep. Many female story tellers were employed for this job. She used to take an energetic and vigorous bath keeping the attendants busy for almost the whole day.

Besan was applied on the body repeatedly for almost 20 times then washed with warm water. The queen's food was cooked in her own kitchen, took dinner after sunset. Menu consisted of 20-30 items among them 2 or 3 types of pulao several kinds of korman, kababs, meats, vegetables, dates and sweets. She used spoons to eat her food.³⁹

SEX LIFE-

An unsatisfactory sex life was the main cause of dissatisfaction among the inmates of harem, although because of slack control managed to have clandestine affairs to satisfy their urges. Those begums who have separate house of their own got an opportunity to develop contacts and affairs if they so desired.⁴⁰

Asaf-Ud-Daulah did not bother about enforcing strict morality in harem. Ghazi Ud din hyder Anglo Indian wife, Mubarak Mahal had lover in hakim Banda Mandi Khan. The character of his other white wife sultan Mariam Begum was also not above board as she too had an affair with another hakim.⁴¹

Mukhdra Alia, a white wife of Nasiruddin Haider too conceived 3 years after his death and died in an attempt to terminate her illegitimate pregnancy. We have evidence of Wajid Ali's contention that loyalty of his wives like Mashooqi Khan, Sultanate Mahal, Dildar Mahal, Sikandar Mahal, Amir Mahal towards him was of average degree.⁴²

Captain Egerton who visited Lucknow in 1851, observed that stories of loose moral of ladies in the royal palace were enough to make one's hair stand.⁴³

In short, the women of Lucknow did not enjoy many rights in the society, they were merely sex objects. That is why many Begums raised too high post and exercised considerable influence over the king and darbar because of their feminine charm and capacity to keep the king under their spell. But as soon as the king lost their interest in them, their influence too was over.⁴⁴

Lucknow in those days was a man's world in which woman constituted the main attraction and was treated as the most favoured expensive and valued commodity.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

Awadh, a Shia state was comparatively more liberal than many of Sunni states of India in the period of resistance against foreign powers. Royal women esp. the Begums of Awadh had enjoyed high status since the beginning which further increased with the passage of time. One of the reasons could be that the state was inherited to the son-in-law of its founding fathers. Begum of Awadh thus enjoyed a very luxurious life and very actively participated in political social and economic life.

39. *ibid* .p.139.

40. Amir Hasan, "*The Palace culture of Lucknow*", p. 141

41. *ibid*, p.141.

42 *ibid*, p.141.

43. *ibid*, p.141.

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