

Hindus even now-a-days. Dowry was also prevalent during this period. In wealthier families few maids were given as dowry which subsequently became the personal belonging of the bridegroom.<sup>1</sup> If the bride was too young she was allowed to remain with her parents and final date for *Gauna* was fixed sometime later.<sup>2</sup> If the girl was married into a rich family she was confined to her apartment and was not allowed to have any contact with the outside world.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Sati System*

According to Al-Biruni the *Sati* system was prevalent but the widow was not forced to burn herself. She had the choice of either passing her life in widowhood or burning herself along with the dead body of her husband on the funeral pyre.<sup>4</sup> He remarks that she generally chose the former alternative.<sup>5</sup> According to the *Smritis* it is obligatory on the part of the widow to burn herself along with the dead body of the husband.<sup>6</sup> If the dead body of the husband was available, the wife was burnt along with it. This was known as *Sahamarana* (dying in company with).<sup>7</sup> If the husband had died at a far off distance, the wife was burnt with his bones. If the bones were not available the wife was burnt along with some of the articles of her husband in a symbolic way. This custom was known as *Anumarana* (dying in accordance with).<sup>8</sup> These expressions are also used as *Sakagamana* (going along with) and *Anugamana* (going in accordance with).<sup>9</sup> It has been explained in the religious texts that a woman, sacrificing her life in this way, is rewarded in heaven and that there is no compulsion for observing this custom.<sup>10</sup> Self-immolation is considered to be the duty

relating to marriages from the Hindus, *Kitabur Rahla*, II, Cairo, 1870, pp. 47-49.

Widow marriage became rare in Islamic society which was the result of the impact of Hindu society on it. F.W. Thomas, *Mutual Influence of Muhammadans and Hindus in India*, Cambridge, 1892, p. 77.

<sup>1</sup>Tod, op. cit., II, pp. 730-31; *Journal to Department of Letters*, Calcutta University, 1927, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>K.M. Ashraf, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p. 149.

<sup>4</sup>*Al-biruni's India*, Sachau, II, pp. 151-52.

<sup>5</sup>ibid.

<sup>6</sup>*Madanaparijata*, pp. 196-203; see also *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, II, p. 222.

<sup>7</sup>ibid.

<sup>8</sup>*Madanaparijata*, pp. 196-203; see also *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, I, p. 222.

<sup>9</sup>*The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 591; K.M. Ashraf, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>10</sup>ibid.