SUṢAMĀ : Multidisciplinary Research Journal ISSN: 3107-4529
(International Peer-Reviewed & Refereed Journal)
Vol. 1, Issue-3, (Jul-Sep) 2025

Everyday Lives of Medieval Indian Women: Gender, Labor, and Domesticity

Moyazzem Hossain Mondal
Assistant Professor, Dept. of History
Swarnamoyee Jogendranath Mahavidyalaya
Amdabad, Nandigram, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India
Email: mhmondal1986@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper seeks to investigate the lives of the Indian women in medieval times, their daily life, in terms of gender, work and domesticity. It transcends court-centered and elite-oriented historiography by bringing to the fore the contributions of non-elite women, e.g., peasants, artisans, tribal collectivities and urban labor, whose role in household and economic life has been sidelined in the historical narrative. With the help of such extensive literature resources (including religious sources, court evidence, inscriptions in temples, material culture, and oral practices) the study recreates the experiences of women in their domestic and agricultural lives, as artisans, and as participants in rituals.

Feminist historiography and subaltern studies are applied to interrogate how caste, class, and religion shaped entree to labor and power. It examines the home as an arena of patriarchal control as well as a site of cultural production and how women are implicated in the management of the house, transference of knowledge and maintenance of the spiritual life. The paper explains the work of women in the agricultural and informal economy, their engagement in Bhakti and Sufi worship, and how their bodies were controlled socially through the norms of sexuality, menstruation, and widowhood through thematic analysis.

Finally, the paper has challenged the view that medieval Indian women were only receivers of tradition, but they were co-producers of their social worlds. Their input which is being made invisible in the prevalent narrations is critical to a better understanding of the medieval Indian society. This research rethinks exclusionary models of history by restoring everyday gendered experience to the historical record, and demands a more open feminist history of South Asia.

Keywords: Medieval India, Women, Women History, Gender and Labor, Domesticity, Bhakti Movement, Feminist Historiography, Caste and Gender, Oral Traditions

Introduction:

The medieval Indian history has been recorded as that of kings, wars, dynasties and religious changes, with women being pushed to the periphery except when they were queens, courtesans or saints. Such a historiographical vacuum has led to a serious underrepresentation of the daily lives of the ordinary women-peasants, artisans, laborers, and household workers-whose

everyday life was the backbone of society. Although royal annals, religious writing, and law codes offer a piecemeal vision of the status of women, they are biased in patriarchal ways and do not represent the totality of gendered experience (Chakravarti 15).

In an attempt to overcome this lack, new feminist and subaltern studies have moved on to the lives of ordinary women. As an example, Uma Chakravarti, for instance, emphasizes that caste and gender worked simultaneously to structure women's roles in the domestic and productive economies of medieval India (Chakravarti 18). Similarly, the economic history written by Irfan Habib describes the crucial role of women in agrarian work and craft industries, but does not conceal the fact that this work did not find its reflection in the official documents (Habib 95). These academic interventions demonstrate the necessity to rebuild the history of women as viewed through the bottom with the incorporation of oral traditions, local writing, and archaeology.

This essay is an attempt to discuss the ways that gender, labor, and domesticity influenced the lives of the women in medieval India beyond the walls of the palaces into the village courtyards, artisan shops, and places of worship. It takes into account the way in which women were involved in productive work: spinning, pottery, agriculture etc. and reproductive work: childbearing, cooking, and kinship maintenance. In addition, it examines the role of caste, religion and regional differences in the availability of social, economic and spiritual roles to women.

The study of women voices, particularly, in devotional movements such as Bhakti and Sufism is especially relevant as it led to the rise of female voices such as Mirabai and Akka Mahadevi, who defied these social norms and conveyed their gendered agency in poetry and spirituality (Tharu and Lalita 30). This is similarly true of folklore, like folk songs, proverbs and ballads handed down through the generations that provide rich testimony to the cultural memory, everyday struggles and endurance of women. Such cultural expressions aid researchers in retrieving the voices and opinion that is still lacking in elite records.

This study attempts to develop a more complex and comprehensive picture of medieval Indian society by pursuing an interdisciplinary approach that integrates elements of gender theory, a study of material culture, and the interpretation of history. It also poses some basic questions: How were gender roles organized in the domestic and the public labor organization? How did women bargain these positions along caste and class lines? What was the reflections and resistance of ritual and religious practices against patriarchal norms?

This question does not simply concern an attempt to fill a historiographical gap but to reconsider our ways of producing new conceptualizations of agency, labor, and domesticity during a historical moment defined by intersecting hierarchies and control. In this way, it makes the ordinary woman the subject of history with agency, adaptation, and voice, which is

so easily ignored, but is irreplaceable.

Literature Review:

Women and everyday life in medieval India are one of the emerging subfields in South Asian historiography. Historical writing long favored the lives of the royalties, warriors and saints and tended to exclude the contributions of the ordinary women in labor, culture and the domestic sphere that were considered insignificant or hidden. Nevertheless, there has been a growing body of critical literature that has started to question these exclusions by making women the focus of voice, roles and social status in the medieval world.

The Manusmriti and the Arthashastra are classical texts and were prescriptive sources of norms on how women should behave and how they should be subordinate to male authority, both in household and religious domains. Such writings tended to equate the identity of women with their reproductive functions and to reinforce such systems as patrilineal descent and rigid principles of purity (Chakravarti 24). Although they are helpful in the realization of the gender ideology, these Brahmanical sources are normative ideals as opposed to lived realities.

The medieval Persian chronicles of the time covered women mostly in elite or royal contexts, as political agents or as the subject of moral discourse, such as in the Tabaqat-i Nasiri or the Ain-i-Akbari by Ziauddin Barani and Abul Fazl respectively. However, as Ruby Lal notes, in the context of Mughal court, the concepts of domesticity were not as fixed and definite as the binary of public male and private female area (Lal 8). This work by Lal provides fresh avenues in thinking about how women of the elite, as well as non-elite, used to feel power, isolation and agency in the domesticity.

Feminist historians have played a key role in changing the analytical focus from elites to women to the range of female experience. According to Uma Chakravarti, caste and gender converged in order to influence the work of women, their access to resources and participation in rituals (Chakravarti 31). Analysis by her draws attention to the fact that domesticity was not a passive realm but a realm of production, control and social reproduction. The same can be said of the research conducted by Leslie Orr on temple women in South India which demonstrates how women were able to perform religious work and hold institutional positions, like the devadasi which combined domestic, spiritual, and performance roles (Orr 112).

Economic historians such as Irfan Habib have discussed the importance of female contribution to agrarian and artisanal economies. Habib states that although their names did not appear in official land registries or the tax registers, women were frequently in the fields, livestock rearing and cottage industries like weaving and pottery (Habib 96). But such contributions are mainly not found in administrative archives, which focus on male house-

hold heads.

Another large literature has also developed on the Bhakti and Sufi movements as alternative means through which to appreciate the spiritual and emotional lives of women. Mirabai, Lal Ded, and Akka Mahadevi were poets who wrote verses that challenged caste, matrimonial ideals and masculine dominance (Tharu and Lalita 35). These writings are frequently autobiographical or mystical and can be seen as unusual first-person accounts by women at a time when their voices were otherwise silent. Although these sources cannot be verified historically every time, they provide important clues as to the desires and opposition of women in different parts of the country and with different religious affiliations.

This literature has also been fed by material culture and folklore. Women values, everyday life, and personal relations are summed up in regional ballads, domestic rituals, proverbs and oral traditions. Other researchers like Geraldine Forbes have noted that such cultural sources, on proper examination, reveal the inner worlds of women who have left no written accounts but were full agents of social life (Forbes 21).

Although these developments are taking place, there are still enormous gaps. The study of the place of tribal women, Dalit women and Muslim women beyond courtly settings has remained sparse so far. Tamil Nadu, Bengal or the Mughal heartland are often the subject of regional studies, whereas the life of women in the Deccan, Kashmir or Northeast India is less studied. Further, as the themes of domesticity and labor have been examined separately, there is a concern to develop integrative frameworks that address the issue of their intersectionality how the gendered division of labor affected, and was affected by, the household standards and economic engagement.

This article is part of that emerging debate, and attempts to synthesize textual, material, and oral evidence to build a broader portrait of the everyday lives of medieval Indian women. In this way, it aims to broaden the historical knowledge to the non-elite paradigm and into the confines of home, field, and community.

Methodology:

Medieval India offers an abundant source of potential research on the lives of women in the everyday sense. Because there are very few first-hand sources of non-elite women, the study necessitates an interdisciplinary and interpretive methodology that uses the combination of textual, material culture and oral tradition. This section describes the approaches applied to collection, analysis, and interpretation of sources that help to understand the gender experiences of labor and domesticity in the medieval Indian setting.

1. Historical Texts Analysis:

One of the basic methodological strategies consists of critical reading of historical texts with the aim of recovering embedded gender narratives. Classical literature like the Manusmriti, Arthashastra and Ain-i-Akbari provide information about prescriptive gender ideologies and institutionalized

womanhood in household, economic and ritual spheres. These sources are not viewed as sources of objective account but read as the perspectives of the elite men who were out to control the role of the female in the society (Chakravarti 20). Persian histories such as Tabaqat-i Nasiri are studied to find references to women incidentally, reading between the lines of which one can see the gendered order of the courtly and urban world (Lal 17).

2. Subaltern and Feminist Historiography:

The research is based on the feminist historiography that questions the established power relations and reclaims the power of women in patriarchal society. The work of Uma Chakravarti, who considered caste and gender as co-constitutive, is fundamental in the discussion of the influence of social hierarchies on the acquisition of resources, the participation in labor and the role of ritual status (Chakravarti 33). The subaltern studies also contribute to this study as they promote the transition of elite narratives to voices of the periphery, including the voice of peasant, tribal, and artisan women.

3. Use of Oral Traditions and Folklore:

Since the research does not have written descriptions of first-person experience about ordinary women, oral traditions are used as a historical source. Social memory is stored in folk songs, proverbs, legends and regional ballads that are transmitted across generations. These sources, particularly that of the rural areas in Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are used to recreate the way women saw marriage, work, motherhood and the way they fought back. Critics such as Geraldine Forbes have pointed out that oral genres such as these do not only depict the tribulations but also emotional and spiritual landscape of the women (Forbes 24).

4. Analysis of Material Culture:

The study also uses archaeological and material evidence of domesticity and labor: tools, household tools, terracotta figurines, temple inscriptions and clothing patterns. The design and application of items associated with food preparation, textile production, child-bearing, and ritual practice are analysed to get an insight into daily activities and embodied work by women. South Indian temple inscriptions, e.g., give accounts of land grants, service functions, and religious obligations of women such as devadasis and female donors (Orr 105).

5. Comparative Regional Approach:

In the paper, a comparative perspective is used to investigate gender norms and labor structures by region. The domestic and economic life of the Mughal North Indian women is compared to that of Vijayanagara and Chola era South Indian woman where the service to the temple and the community brought about different gendered relations. Such a regional comparison is necessary to get out of generalized assumptions about Indian womanhood during the medieval times.

6. Thematic Field Analysis:

Finally, the sources are structured and analyzed in light of some major thematic fields: domestic labor, productive labor, ritual and religion, and the

performance of gender roles. Instead of trying to find one story, the study focuses on multiplicity, contradiction, and adaptation of lived experiences of women. The paper seeks to fill in the details and to root out a more concrete image of medieval Indian women lives by juxtaposing textual authority to oral memory and material practice.

Gendered Labor in the Household: Domesticity and Social Organization:

The household in medieval India was not a place of withdrawal or emotional nurture only but a unit of economic and social production that was critical to the economy. The household division of labor was highly gendered with women (particularly non-elite) responsible to maintain food systems, raise children, create cloth, and maintain ritual purity. Not at all passive, these positions required ability, time, and agency in controlling both material and kinship affiliations.

House chores, like cooking, grinding, drawing water and household cleaning were assumed to be the duty of a woman. Such work in the labor roles was hardly recorded in courtly or religious writings, which explains why it was historically invisible. But ethnographic continuities and folklore give hints of these activities. To take a few more examples, the women in most of these regional folk songs are seen to get up very early in the morning, light the hearth, and cook the food not only to nourish the immediate family but also to feed the farm workers and visitors, thus signifying the importance of their role in the rural economy (Tharu and Lalita 58).

Caste hierarchies also came hand in hand with domesticity. The women of the upper castes were required to stay in the domestic sphere where they were supposed to uphold family prestige by ensuring ritual cleanliness and procreation. Such women usually lived under the purdah or ghosha that literally confined their movements but at the same time it enhanced their symbolic position (Chakravarti 44). By contrast, peasant, tribal and artisan women were much more mobile, given that they had to contribute to the household economy. According to Ruby Lal, domesticity amongst Mughal elites was a moral and aesthetic construction: an ordering of space, labor and emotion (Lal 23), but it was not universal in all geographies and classes (Lal 23).

Women were also supposed to give childcare and pass cultural norms. Women were very instrumental in maintaining community memory and value through lullabies, oral storytelling and informal educations. Storytelling itself was also a political act particularly in matrilineal and tribal communities where women were not only cultural custodians but also the historians of their tribe.

Interestingly, there were women in elite households who participated in management of households in cooperation with female servants or slaves which demonstrates internal hierarchies among women themselves. The Ain-i-Akbari also speaks about household inventories and female labour deployed in the royal domestic activities indicating the existence of a com-

plex system of gendered labor even at elite level (Habib 102).

Thus, the domesticity in medieval India should not be a fixed or a closed space but a place of labor, bargaining and cultural creation. It was also gendered space where the power worked subtly-through food, rituals, child-rearing and moral teaching, all of which women largely defined with their hands and voices.

Female Economic Work: Agriculture, Craft, and Informal Marketplace:

Although domestic work played a crucial role in the sustenance of the household, there was more to the economic role of women than just the household role since they also participated in economy directly as the productive economy of medieval India. Although women did not figure largely in the official land records, revenue accounts and imperial chronicles, their efforts in the fields, craft industries, and the streets in the informal markets were critical to village and urban life.

Women in agrarian communities joined men in planting, weeding, reaping, and threshing the food. Their work was especially important in the subsistence farming families, where the family survival was prescribed by the seasons. Although women are seldom to be found as landholders or paying tax in official records (such as the Ain-i-Akbari) women working in the fields was an unwritten yet permanent part of the Mughal agrarian economy (Habib 97). Besides fieldwork, women also dealt with livestock which included feeding cattle, milking cows and making ghee, which commonly served as a means of exchange in village economies.

There was also great female involvement in artisan and craft-based labor. Women took part in cotton spinning, dyeing cloths, weaving of baskets and the manufacture of household items. Spinning was a domestic work especially, as it was a craft that enabled women to make their contributions to the domestic economy without leaving the house. This fruitful but ignored work is symbolic of the prevalence of the charkha (spinning wheel) in the medieval folk art and literature. There exist regional arts of crafts like kantha embroidery in Bengal and bandhani dyeing in Gujarat that depict economic and aesthetic aspects of female artisanal work (Forbes 36).

Women also joined informal trade networks in the city centers particularly during the Sultanate and Mughal regimes. Cities such as Delhi, Agra, and Ahmedabad had markets, which had female vendors selling vegetables, fish, handmade items, and cooked food. Others were moneylenders or worked in certain services such as midwifery and healing. Although these roles were not always recorded, they can be found here and there in court cases, travel narratives and city descriptions, including those of foreign travellers like Francois Bernier and Niccolao Manucci.

Notably, the access of women to economic activities depended on caste and religion. Dalit and tribal women were not subject to Brahmanical ideals of seclusion and ritual purity and so tended to be more available to labor opportunities (though at the same time they were highly vulnerable social-

ly). The artisan Muslims were women and belonged to certain professional families like embroidery (zardozi) or making of perfumes (ittar), and usually worked at home and were guilds of their own families (Lal 42). On the other hand, upper-caste Hindu women were not encouraged to participate in open spaces of the market, which re-enforced ideals of domestic seclusion and respectability (Chakravarti 52).

The economic work was also involved with the ritual life. Women, particularly those associated with devadasi tradition, were able to provide religious services in the temple economy, as well as participating in arts and economic activities like music, dance and land management. According to the study by Leslie Orr, part of these women possessed property, were patronized and even participated in temple management, which may imply a distinctive combination of economic, ritual and social life (Orr 119).

Hence, the economic work of medieval Indian women was neither monotonous nor stagnant. It does not conform to contemporary opposites of domestic and public and formal and informal labour. They played a crucial role in the maintenance of agrarian systems, craft industries, and local economies despite the attempts of the patriarchal society to ensure that their presence in history was kept to a minimum level.

Ritual and Religion: The Women in Bhakti, Sufi and Domestic Tradition:

Religion defined the cloth of daily life in medieval India, and women played an active--though unequal--part in public and domestic worship. At the temple, in the household shrine, in Sufi dargahs or Bhakti poetry assemblies, the part women played in the ritual was strongly embedded in gender, caste and community conventions. But it was not an accident that these positions were not just ritualist and symbolic; they could also be a source of cultural expression, social negotiation and even quiet resistance.

On the domestic level, women were in charge of the religious cycles of the family. It was their duty to light lamps, prepare offerings, recite prayers and fasts on a daily basis. Such practices did not just guarantee the well-being of the family, but also guaranteed cultural continuity in the family generation after generation. Gendering of worship was also expected at home: the women were the guardians of purity and had to observe strict code of conduct, particularly in menstruation, pregnancy and widowhood (Chakravarti 61). But this pious domesticity lent to them as well a central--though limited--power in the spiritual life of the house.

Religious Agency the Bhakti movement that came out in India in the 7th-17th century, achieved new avenues of religious agency among women. Poet-saints like Akka Mahadevi of Karnataka, Andal of Tamil Nadu and Mirabai of Rajasthan expressed strong personal devotions to their gods, frequently defying norms of marriage, caste and gender in the society. The verses of these women exist in oral traditions and in written collections and provide rare autobiographical details. Their poems also subverted Brahmanical patriarchy by stressing direct, emotional and frequently erotic relation-

ships with the divine and avoiding the mediation of the priests (Tharu and Lalita 89). According to Susie Tharu, Bhakti turned out to be a spiritual language, where even the quietest voices could reach some echo (Tharu and Lalita 95).

In the same way, the Sufi tradition gave a little, although not so much, space in the spiritual life of women. Women went to dargahs (shrines of the Sufi saints), gave vows, and conducted ziyarat (pilgrimages). Although the orthodox Islamic system did not give women a dominant position in the religious activities in the society, folk Sufism provided an opportunity to the women to become involved in localized forms of devotional activities either as members, healers, or mystics. Although there were very little female Sufi saints that were canonized, historical sources refer to such spiritual women like Rabia of Basra as an example of devotion, which shaped the imaginations of women concerning religion in South Asia (Lal 57).

The women in temple institutions also played organized religious roles. Devadasis In South India, devadasis performed religious service in dance, music and ritual. Even though their social position became worse with time, the inscriptions of the Chola and Vijayanagara eras speak of devadasis as landowners, patrons of arts and temple administrators (Orr 108). Their functions were a collage of religion, performance, and economy- the latter two having faded the gray zone of sacred and secular. Notably, although this discourse of elite men later moralized or stigmatized these women, their agency in history was enshrined within a legitimate sacred tradition.

It is also important to note that the ritual space is also ambivalent to women. Some rituals were empowering and some marginalizing. Sati (widow immolation) is one example that was ritualized as a final act of feminine devotion in some Rajput and Brahmanical scenarios, but feminist historians have revealed it to be a violent act of appropriating control over female bodies and their wills (Chakravarti 67). In the same way, purity and pollution rituals relegated menstruating women or widows into social ostracism in the pretext of religious practice.

Therefore, in medieval India religion was not a backdrop of the lives of women- it was a framework that power, identity and agency were mediated. Women took part in creating the religious world, whether by means of devotional poetry, domestic puja, or temple service, even when they were not granted any official theological power.

Embodied Gender Roles: Health, Sexuality and Social Control:

The female body in the medieval Indian society was more than a biological body as it was both a cultural and political space where ideologies of gender, caste, and morality were engraved on. The religious provisions, societal norms, and state institutions controlled the embodied experiences of people such as menstruation, childbirth, widowhood, and sexual expression. This domination of the female body was an aspect of the wider attempts to maintain lineage, honor and caste boundaries, and women were at the center

of the reproduction of social hierarchies.

Women embodied labor is one of the central elements of health and reproduction. Childbirth was a personal and a collective process that was usually presided over by midwives (known locally as dais), a group that transmitted empirical rather than written knowledge of medicine by word of mouth. They were not included in the Sanskritic and Unani elite medical literature, but these women were richly endowed with information about herbal medicines, postnatal health, and fertility regulation. However, women bodies were also disciplined in such a way that ritual pollution due menstrual periods and childbirth, e.g., translated into temporary social exclusion, which further supported ideas about bodily impurity (Chakravarti 62).

The sexuality and especially female sexuality were constructed as something dangerous that required control. The main form of controlling sexual behavior in particular of the upper-caste women was institutionalized marriage. Child marriage, the existence of dowry and the idealization of pativrata (devoted wife) made the identity of a woman about sex loyalty and husband service. Ritually inauspicious, widows were frequently coerced into vows of celibacy or social seclusion or even into sati. The texts such as Manusmriti justified these practices and promoted widow austerity and even prohibited remarriage (Chakravarti 66).

But not any form of sexuality was repressed. Women also expressed their wants in the spiritual and poetic terms in some contexts. Bhakti saints such as Mirabai freely proclaimed divine desire in erotic metaphors, both against the ideal of celibacy and against patriarchal standards. Temple culture and especially the culture of devadasis provided socially acceptable means of expression, eroticism, and ritualized sexuality. Although subsequent discourses of reformists and colonialists relegated devadasis to the position of prostitutes, the medieval inscriptions and temple records imply that the position of devadasis was more varied, prestigious, and frequently dominant in the economies of temples (Orr 114).

The politics of the body were highly defined by the class and caste. The women of lower caste and the tribal, who were not held by the same rules of segregation and purity, were a little more free to move, but were more easy prey to sexuality, forced labour and social ostracization. The Muslim women especially the elite ones lived under the norms of purdah (female seclusion), but we also find accounts of exceptions, i.e. the queens and wives of wealthy merchants, who were known to exercise property rights, administer estates, or write diplomatic letters (Lal 38).

Such social control over the body of women also related to the legal systems. The Islamic law, which was followed during the Sultanate and the Mughal times, included provisions of inheritance and divorce rights of women; however, these provisions were usually watered down by local customs. Hindu women were virtually deprived of legal property rights and their custodianship passed to father to husband to son. The body was thereby placed in a wider set of patriarchal surveillance, whereby autonomy was

negotiated all the time.

Even though there were these restrictions, this did not mean women had a passive embodied experience. Menstrual and fertility rituals provided a common experience that enhanced women solidarity. Childbirth was life-threatening but women were seen as contributors to the family and community through childbirth as well. Even under the systems of control, women were creating the space of resistance, visibility, and adaptation.

Conclusion:

The daily activities of the women of the medieval India were much more complicated and multidimensional than the conventional history has recognized. It is through this diversion of the interests of the elite and literary to the ordinary and material that the study has attempted to recreate the lives of women based on their class, their caste and religious orientation. The women were not insensible objects of patriarchal control; rather, they were agents who fashioned their worlds in the domestic sphere, the economy, religious life, and with their bodies.

The domesticity that is usually disregarded as a personal or nonpolitical arena becomes a crucial place of work and cultural production. In the world of food preparation, childrearing, informal education or just by way of being the earth of both household economies and the continuation of social structures women were the centerpiece, the cornerstone. On the same note, their input in agricultural and artisanal activities makes the role of female labor in the maintenance of rural and urban livelihoods indispensable, even though it is regularly written out of official accounts.

The religious life also provided women with conflicting opportunities: although they seldom appeared in the official theological discourse, the traditions of Bhakti or rituals performed in temples provided women with the possibility to express devotion, creativity, and the ability to influence the society. Even female bodies, which are often controlled by purity, sexuality and reproduction norms, were used as a place of resistance, resilience and spiritual strength.

This paper has employed a variety of sources such as archival, literary, material, and oral in order to emphasize the ways in which gender and work interacted in the construction of medieval Indian household. Nevertheless, a lot needs to be discovered. More regional studies, particularly marginalized groups, and utilization of vernacular sources would potentially allow us to learn more about women in the Middle Ages and their experiences in day-to-day lives and agency.

By reclaiming these silenced voices, we do not only write gender back into history but we also interrogate the frames that have always placed women on the fringe of South Asian historiography.

References

- Chakravarti, Uma. Everyday Lives, Everyday Histories: Beyond the Kings and Brahmanas of 'Ancient' India. Tulika Books, 2006.
- Chakravarti, Uma. Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens. Stree, 2003.
- Forbes, Geraldine. Women in Modern India. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Lal, Ruby. Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Orr, Leslie C. Donors, Devotees, and Daughters of God: Temple Women in Medieval Tamil Nadu. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Tharu, Susie, and K. Lalita, editors. Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present. Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Roy, Kumkum. The Power of Gender and the Gender of Power: Explorations in Early Indian History. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Sarkar, Tanika, and Urvashi Butalia, editors. Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays. Kali for Women, 1995.
- Habib, Irfan. The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556–1707. Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Ray, Bharati. "Women in Medieval India: The Problem of Perspective." Social Scientist, vol. 23, no. 9/10, 1995, pp. 3–19.

———