



# REDISCOVERING THE MUGHAL HAREM THROUGH THE LIVES OF THE UNSPOKEN WOMEN: TAWAIFs, CONCUBINES AND CONSORTS

**Aanushka Kashyap**

Student,

Department of International Studies, Political Science & History

CHRIST (deemed to be) University, Bengaluru, India

**Abstract:** The ladies in the Mughal Harem except the royal queens remain highly misunderstood, as the chronicles which have been the main source of information and recreation of history for the Mughal dynasty contained very rare and vague descriptions about its Tawaifs, courtesans and concubines. The main aim of this paper is to overcome this lack of research and shed light on the lives of these women that remain “unspoken”.

**Keywords:** *Tawaifs, Consorts, Concubines, Wives, Women, Mughal, Harem, Family, Emperor, Royal*

## **Introduction**

The Mughal Harems and the Royal ladies of the dynasty have always been an important topic for researchers. There exists a pool of information about the influential Mughal queens and princesses starting from Princesses Jahanara and Roshanara Begum to Akbar’s aunt Gulbadan Begum. However, when it comes to the idea of the Mughal Zenazas or more derogatorily known as the “harems”, the tawaifs, consorts and concubines of the Mughal Emperor played a huge role, but their lives and stories remain unexplored. This lack of research can be attributed to the overall presence of very scanty and blurred pictures of the lives of these women, as the largest source of information about the Mughals remained their chronicles and the Persian Chroniclers refrained from writing about these women, perhaps because they were mostly not allowed to do so or they never dared to collect information and get close to the women of the Harem. Therefore, Mughal ladies are mostly discussed as narratives rather than being discussed as a whole. (Parveen, 2023)

Further, Nobody except the Emperor was allowed to enter the harem, even an allama like Abul Fazl was also not allowed to enter the harem. Hence, the negligible amount of writings available on these royal ladies were through “distant observation and not intimate personal relationships.” (Lal, 1988)

The purpose of this research is to put spotlight on these undiscovered parts of the Mughal Harem, focusing on the lives of the tawaifs, concubines and consorts and understanding their role in the Harem and their overall importance in the familial lives of the Emperors.

## **Literature review :**

For the given research topic, the literature review has been conducted in three stages with the primary idea of the harem in general understood through books and research papers, followed by understanding the particular lives of the tawaifs, concubines and consorts and lastly the current socio political scenario that can be traced back to these women who remained unspoken of for generations on end. To get a basic idea of the harem, the book “The Mughal Harem” by K.S Lal was read. The book however exoticized the harem in a very similar

pattern to European historians deeming the harem as nothing but a place of sexual pleasure by the emperor. But the book didn't fail to give a clear picture of the harem with explanation of instances where the consorts were exchanged as gifts to other rulers and noble men. Further, the book "The women of the Mughal Harem" by Sugandha Rawat was also taken into consideration, however the book focused mostly on the lives of the influential women within the harem including Zeb-un-Nisa and Zinat-un-Nisa, the daughters of Aurangzeb among many others. Both these books allowed the researcher to get a clear picture of the background of The Mughal Harem and how influential women functioned within it and lastly, it became evident to the researcher through these books that the tawaifs, concubines and consorts, along with numerous other nameless women were and still are mostly looked at as "objects" existing within the harem for the pleasure of the emperor.

Further, the lives of tawaifs, concubines and consorts were looked at through research papers and articles with particularly focusing on the lives of particular women who "remain absent in the history textbooks." One of the main articles that allowed to demystify the Mughal Harem is the research article "The Two Shades of Mughal Harem: Chastity and Debauchery" written by Layma Parveen which allowed the researcher to understand the European perception of the Harem and allowed for better understanding of the lives of these women, answering the important question of what roles these women played other than just being present for the sexual pleasures of the emperor. Further, the ghazals written by Bahadur Shah Zafar's English translated versions were also read to understand the perceptions towards the tawaifs, concubines and consorts of the Harem as certain ghazals and poems were written in appreciation of his favourite consorts and concubines and tawaifs. Moreover, the Mughal era paintings of the harem scenes also showcase numerous of these women, helping the researcher understand the social positions and the regards given to these women during the concerned period. These were the three main sources along with various articles on legitimate websites.

Lastly, the heritage of the tawaifs in the present current socio political scenario have been traced through the various news articles and legitimate articles written on the tawaifs, tracing their current social positions along with their heritage in the past. The most helpful of these articles have been "The Decline and Disregard of the Tawaifs of India" written by Vishwa Thakkar, which traces the lives of these women and showcase how these women went from learned, independent women to disregarded and disrespected women. All these sources have been major contributors of this research, while these have their own shortcomings, with somewhat subjective point of views, these works helped in identifying and answering the research questions.

### **Research Problem :**

The idea of the Mughal Harem has been extensively researched and talked upon, however when it comes to discussions about the Royal Mughal women, the topic of discussion has always been the influence of powerful Mughal Begums or Princesses. However, the Harem consisted of numerous other women, that have been conveniently erased from the history, these women are the concubines, tawaifs and consorts. It is hence, important to rediscover the Harem through the understanding and exploration of the lives of these women to understand a very important question – what were their lives like and how did their legacy impact the current socio-cultural dynamic? And what role did they play in the overall functioning of the harem and in the familial life of the Emperor. These women remain absent in the histories and they remained suppressed enough to not even have surviving memoirs and diaries. These memoirs and diaries haven't survived as they remain unimportant just like the lives of these women. Therefore, this research aims at digging at the lives of these women and understand their living conditions, their contributions and trace their socio political positions.

The research would further delve into the lives of these women to understand the various roles they had to play and the overall quality of their lives by aiming to fulfil the following research objectives :

- To investigate the lives and living conditions of the tawaifs, concubines and consorts of the Mughal Harem, addressing aspects such as health, hierarchy, financial independence, patronage relationships, relationship to the Emperor and their overall well-being.
- To examine the role played by the Tawaifs, Concubines and Consorts in the overall functioning of the Harem and their agency within the complex structure.
- To trace the legacies of the tawaifs, concubines and consorts in post-Mughal India, to understand how the experiences and challenges faced by them impacted the current socio-cultural dynamic of India.

## Research Design :

The research will be conducted with a feminist point of view and will be qualitative. The entire research will focus mostly on evaluating the roles played by these women and further understanding their legacies. The entire research will be through literature review and various books, research articles and even popular representation of these women through films and series will also be examined thoroughly to achieve the mentioned research objectives, which will open up new ways for further research in this topic. The qualitative analysis will largely allow the deeper understanding of the reasons behind the various factors that impacted the lives of these unknown royal women. The research further will be conducted through the mix of the Annalles school of ideas along with the idea of feminism. The Annalles school of methodologies focuses on the sub altern history mostly by deviating from the mainstream history and allowing for the unwritten parts of history to come into the limelight.

Further, the research is based strictly on analysis of literary and academic sources available for the given topic and the answers to the research questions have been answered through the analysis of the Mughal era paintings, music and various articles and books that have been used as a source. The said research questions being :

- How did the living conditions, economic independence and relationship to the Emperor of the Tawaifs, Concubines and Consorts of the Mughal Harem vary across different hierarchies and what were the factors contributing to the prevalence of this hierarchy ?
- In what ways did the Tawaifs, Concubines and consorts practice agency within the hierarchical structure of the Mughal Harem and how did their roles contribute to the overall functioning and dynamics of the Harem ?
- □What are the enduring socio-cultural legacies of the Tawaifs, concubines and consorts from the Mughal era, and how have their experiences shaped the contemporary social landscape in post-Mughal India ?

The research is expected to start from 3rd of March 2024 and continue up to the final submission of the research paper on 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. The research mostly consists of literature review and thorough analysis of the historical works of historians that have previously worked on the topic and other topic that would provide greater insights for the subject in hand. The literature analysis is expected to be completed by 12th April, after which the rest of the days are expected to be utilised to prepare the final project with the new data found. The First draft of the research paper shall be completed by 2<sup>nd</sup> May of 2024, with the expected Final draft on 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2024.

## Main Findings :

Mughal Harem In the sixteenth century, the Mughal Empire was founded in India. At the time, it was among the largest, best-run, and most concentrated Empires ever. It was a massive building that housed multiple different institutions. Like Mansabdari and Jagirdari, the Harem was among the most significant establishments. Indeed, it was the safest location within the Mughal complex. Arabic words for sacred or forbidden which is “harem” , are the source of the terms haram and harem. Seraglio is the Turkish name for it, and Zenana is the Persian word for it. A harem is sometimes referred to as a haram sarah, haramgah, zenana, or raniwas in Mughal texts. Women from different countries and ethnic backgrounds lived in the Mughal Harem, giving it a diverse population. It had concubines, dancing and singing girls, servants, slave girls, female authorities, and guards in addition to the esteemed members of the family. Not only did the ladies fortune tellers have access to the Harem, but so did the Eunuch guards. Moreover, the Zenanas or more derogatorily known as the harems housed not just the begums, mother and foster mothers of the emperor but also the other women including the tawaifs, concubines and consorts for the Emperor who according to the popular narrative existed only for the sexual pleasure of the Emperor. (Batchu)

Moreover, historians and research experts have long found Mughal Harem to be an intriguing subject to study. However, the main issue with presenting the true picture of the harem is that researchers don't have enough reliable data. The emperor was the only person permitted entry into the harem due to rigorous regulations. Generally speaking, there is very little information accessible regarding the lives of Mughal ladies in their palaces, and what little is available is portrayed in a hazy manner in various works. Persian chroniclers and official court historians have touched on women's activities just a little bit. There could be two possible explanations: (i) they were forbidden from writing about the women of the royal palace, and (ii) they

themselves were afraid to write about them or were never given any inspiration. Consequently, rather than being analysed as a whole, Mughal ladies are being discussed in relation to specific tales. Mughal women are mentioned in biographies, but in-depth explanations are not provided. (Parveen, 2023)

Moving Forward, "Mina Bazar" was the premier market for the choosing of concubines and the Emperor maintained many of them during the Mughal era. Manucci puts it this way: "Many of them come out of the palace very rich and satisfied, while others continued to dwell there with the dignity of concubines" Apart from their wedded spouses, Mughal emperors and their nobility maintained an unlimited number of concubines in their harem. Despite not being legally married, these concubines led marital lives. Known as Kaniz, Sarkar, and Paristar, the offspring of these consorts later turned concubines received the same treatment as the offspring of the lawful spouses. People who practiced polygamy had multiple consorts and concubines and each of these women made a sincere effort to gain her master's favour. They utilized the finest fragrances and sweet-smelling ointments of the day, in addition to their exquisite self-adornment. They employed a concoction of pearl, gold, opium, amber, and other stimulants in the evening, as these led to a gratifying elevation of the spirits. They also urged them to utilize these intoxicants to arouse the passion of their masters. In addition to keeping away flies, these concubines also gave the master foot and hand massages, danced and played musical instruments. They would occasionally win the particular favour of their masters, who would then make them their lawful wives, therefore becoming consorts by presenting themselves in an alluring and captivating manner. Concubines were kept in their harems by the Mughal Emperors and the nobility, who built elaborate arrangements. Every concubine had a distinct quarter all to themselves. Their master rarely paid these concubines a visit. They were generally very obedient to their owner and made a constant effort to win his favour and companionship.

In reality, because of their ongoing conflict, a number of co-wives never had mental calm when they lived together. Jealousy consumed all of the co-wives, whether they were common slaves or queens. Sometimes a polygamous husband would ignore his senior wife, but via their extramarital affairs with the master, the maidservants would become lawful wives. These slaves "seemed to fly, rather than run, about their duties" and greeted the owner with warmth while wearing appropriate clothing. The author of the paper has attempted to depict women's unfulfilled passion under a polygamous husband by writing, "These women wear indeed the most expensive clothes, eat the daintiest food and enjoy all worldly pleasure except one, and for that one they grieve saying they would willingly give everything in exchange for a beggars poverty." The polygamist's household was ruled by the God of quarrels, therefore a woman's life was unstable and miserable when she was with other co-wives. Nevertheless, there were very rare occasions in which the co-wives' relationship was amicable and accepting. It was difficult for a single husband to please his multiple women, who indulged in the finest cuisine, designer clothing, and other worldly luxuries. Immorality and domestic dissatisfaction were, at least in some cases, inevitable outcomes. (Khatoon, 2015)

Further, mostly these women were taken in or made to marry the emperor on the basis of their beauty and the Emperor's longing for a son. As Gulbadan Begum writes in the Humayun Nama that Maham Begum had a great longing to see Humayun's son and based on her wishes, Humayun married Mawya-jan. (Begum, 1983)

Coming to the economic contributions of the numerous women in the Harem, it is important to understand that each division inside the Harem had its own staff and hierarchies. At the head of the Harem were the emperor's wives and relatives followed by thousands of concubines, and slaves who worked as sculptors. The Mughal Era's culture and economy were significantly influenced by women. They were employed in a range of professions, including as dancing, music, medicine, and poetry. (Usman waheed, 2024)

Several enterprises, including those that thrived in other regions of the nation as well as the imperial Karkhanas, were spurred on by the demands and necessities of the Mughal harem. Mughal women were also actively engaged in domestic trade. The harem girls wear the most expensive garments, whether they are made of wool, silk, or cotton, therefore they began with textiles. Ab-e-Rawan (flowing water), Baft Hawa (woven air), and Shabnam (evening dew) were the three sorts of muslins utilized to make their clothing. A great deal of silk was imported from overseas nations like China and Persia, as well as from various locations inside the nation like Banaras, Bengal and Odisha due to the 167 Mughal ladies' love of silk, particularly when it came to sewing their gowns. Other well-known textiles that the Mughal women wore included satin, Kimkhab, Kattan, Tasser, Tafta, Ambari, Atlas, and so on. Velvet, both plain and brocaded, known as Makhmal, was imported from Europe, Sashan, Yazd, Mashad, Herat, and a few other new locations. The Mughal ladies were drawn to jewellery, furniture, shoes, slippers, carpets, gazing glasses, bed linens, blankets, shawls, and a plethora of other objects in addition to exquisite fabrics and exquisite garments. While many of these were made by expert artisans at the imperial karkhanas, some were imported from other nations. (Khatoon, 2015)

Within the expansive Mughal courts, the Mughal harem served as more than just a place to live; it was an independent universe unto itself. The wives, concubines, female relatives, and servants of the emperor were all under careful watch here. It was organized into several levels and hierarchies rather than existing as a single, cohesive unit. Wives of the emperor occupied the highest position, followed by attendant women and concubines. This complex structure often caused jealousy and internal politics within the Harem. (Kavisht, 2023)

The wives and mothers of the Emperor were the most prominent members of the Harem. Periodically, the Emperor himself lived inside the Harem. All the ladies attempted to get his attention. Gaining the Emperor's favour opened the door to prestige and authority within the Harem. His mother was, in general, the first lady of the Empire. The Emperor also sought her advice on significant matters, such as formulating political strategies. The Emperor's primary wives came next in significance. The Emperor married multiple women of various racial and religious backgrounds. The Mughals made a number of calculated marriage alliances with other polities in an effort to solidify their political power. Furthermore, the rank of the wife in question was determined by her proximity to the Emperor and her part of his adoration. Among these queens were Nur Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, two of the most powerful figures in both politics and the Harem. The princesses of the vanquished clans and minor kingdoms typically made up the group of lesser wives and were given a lower status than the chief queens. They are known as Bais and Mahals. However, they had a chance to move up the Harem hierarchy, particularly if they had a male child.

The concubines also known as Paristar, Sarkar, and Kaniz were positioned next to the wives. Due to the affection they were able to win from the Emperor, they were granted various privileges even though they were legally less valuable than the other members in the Harem. A few of Babur's concubines rose to prominence as members of his Harem, and one of Humayun's concubines served as Akbar's personal attendant. A number of them bore royal offsprings; for example, Bibi Salima and Bibi Daulat both gave birth to Akbar's daughters, while his concubines also produced the princes Murad and Daniyal. Jehangir's two sons, Shahryar and Jahandar, were also born to concubines. In his latter days, Shahjahan's two favourite concubines, Akbarabadi Mahal and Fatehpuri Mahal, catered to him. An Udaipuri mahal held great affection for Aurangzeb. Consequently, it can be concluded that although the natal kingdoms' political standing had a significant influence on women's standing in the hierarchy of the Harem, "lesser" women, here the concubines and consorts referred to as Bais and Mahals might also elevate their own status by winning the Emperor's favour in other ways. (Batchu)

Further during the Mughal era, when art and culture were highly valued and aesthetics thrived like never before, young girls were reportedly taken under the instruction of renowned classical musicians, dancers, and poets, according to courtesan history. The Mughal era saw a rise in aesthetics with a great deal of attention being paid to art and culture. The Mughal courts' increasing support for dance, music, and poetry (Shayeri) made performing arts a feasible choice for individuals with the necessary aptitude, enthusiasm, and ability. For an extended period, the girls received training to reach the pinnacles of this literary and artistic legacy. The tradition flourished in the Mughal courts, particularly in the Doab region. A dazzling brilliance befell Thumri, Khayal, Dadra, Tappa, and Ghazals. In addition to entertaining upper class nobles, the women known as Tawaifs also taught young Nawabs the subtleties of manners, language, and cultural sophistication. Respect was shown to these ladies, and they were not required to provide sexual services to their clients. Naturally, the fact that they could chose to be with any male made them extremely strong. Begum Samru, Ad Begum, Moran Sarkar, Binodini Dasi, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Gauhar Jaan, Akhtari Bai, Rasoolan Bai, and numerous other women dominated the nation's music scene and carried on the Hindustani classical music legacy. Not only were these ladies stalwarts, but they composed melodies to a raga in addition to singing. (Hazra, 2019)

The tawaifs were quite respected women during the Mughal period. They gained the esteem of the nobility and were assigned important positions in the Mughal court. Skilled courtesans taught young princes and princesses from the royal family art forms like dance, music, poetry, ghazals, and thumri. While some of them were married to nobility or aristocracy, others used to reside in the Emperor's palace. On the other hand, regular prostitutes faced severe marginalization concurrently. The neighbourhood to which they were placed was called Shaitanpura, which means "devil's neighbourhood." Their line of work and their profession were extensively examined. These sex workers were shunned by society because they were seen as trash. (Agrawal, n.d.)

Although their stories are not widely known, the tawaifs participated in the fight alongside troops, nawabs, and common people. One such tale from the 1857 Cawnpore Siege that is still told in Kanpur is that of Azeezunbai. Like her peers, Azeenzubai was a well-known Tawaif of her period and had considerable social and political influence. Azeenzubai had a close relationship with the sepoy, especially Shamsuddin Khan, who paid her frequent visits. Her kotha served as a gathering place for the revolt's conspirators, and because of her close relationship to Khan and Nana Sahib, she was actually one of the key conspirators. It is believed that she served as a messenger and informant. According to other sources, Azeezun had organized a group of ladies who bravely walked around urging the men in arms on, tending to their wounds, giving them medication, and giving them weapons and ammo. The Nawab of Audh's wife, Begum Hazrat Mahal, was also a courtesan. Her historical celebration of her role in the uprising obscures the fact that she was a Tawaif. (Dhruva, 2023)

But slowly there came a decline in the art of tawaifs, The East India Company exclusively sent single males to India as per their policy. So, until their wives arrived, the males enjoyed the performances of these tawaifs. The men's involvement in the influence of these "nautch girls," a pejorative phrase derived from the word "naach," which means dance, alarmed the British women. As they were perceived as intruders into the sacred space of the home, they began to denigrate the Tawaif tradition. This fragment of India's cultural history was too much for them to grasp. So it was that British ladies started to suppress the tawaifs. Christian missionaries and Victorian social reformers who debunked the Tawaif system also had an impact on this. Preaching Victorian virtues and traditional Christian principles was the missionaries' goal. The nautch females were beginning to be associated with prostitutes. By classifying courtesans with prostitutes and putting them under severe regulations, laws such as the Contagious illnesses Act of 1864, which was designed to stop the transmission of sexually transmitted illnesses among British troops, allowed the Crown to keep an eye on, manage, and limit the profits made by these individuals. Further, Therefore, by the end of the 19th century, the Tawaif culture was all but destroyed. The Punjab Purity Association's Keshub Chandra Sen, a Hindu scholar and social reformer, called "nautch girls" "hideous women...hell in her eyes. A big ocean of poison lies in her breast. The wrath of hell encircles her attractive waist. Her hands are displaying hidden daggers that are always ready to harm unsuspecting or malicious those who get in her way. India is doomed by her apathy. India's demise lies in her smile". Sadly, this demonstrates the way that views on tawaifs changed dramatically between the Mughal and British eras. (Thakkar, 2022)

Lastly, when traced, it has been found that the current socio-political existence of the tawaifs remain limited to that of the movie screens and Bollywood with no more "Tawaif khanas" in existence. The tawaifs, for their part, tried to adapt to the changing times by reinventing themselves. Notably, they began redefining themselves as "gayika" in the early 1920s, focusing on their musical abilities as vocalists and record producers, replacing their previous identity as "Tawaif." Some of the most well regarded tawaifs moved to Bombay and the emerging film business, while others gravitated towards the phonograph industry and Parsi Zubeida, the actress daughter of Fatma Begum, made several silent film appearances before appearing in Alam Ara (1931), India's first talkie. The mother of actor Nargis, Jaddanbai, founded her own production company and wrote and directed movie soundtracks. Husna Bai, a distinguished Tawaif of Banaras, was the sole female attendee in the renowned literary and philosophical assemblies in Banaras, where men congregated informally to converse about religious scriptures, literature, spirituality, and philosophy. The art of tawaifs hence got lost within the constricts of colonial morality. (Dewan, 2019)

### **Conclusion :**

In conclusion, it can be said that, the concubines and consorts had numerous material luxuries, however their living conditions remained pathetic, with constant fights to win over the emperor and were further treated as sex slaves with women being gifted as commodities (Lal, 1988). Further on, the tawaifs although remained quite respectable women, however at the end ended due to the constricts of colonial morality, reducing them to the level of prostitutes.

Even though, since times immemorial people have talked about influential Mughal Queens and princesses, a large part of the harem remains unexplored. These unexplored parts of the harem include the tawaifs, concubines and consorts of the Mughal Emperor, who had a significant role to play both within and outside the harem. The researcher aimed at delving deeper into this topic and open new ways for further research on the lives of the tawaifs, concubines and consorts of the Mughal Emperor.

**References:**

- Lal, K. (1988). *The Mughal Harem*. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.
- Batchu, D. R. (n.d.). Mughal Harem. *academia*.
- Parveen, L. (2023). The Two Shades of Mughal Harem: Chastity and Debauchery. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 545-553.
- Khatoon, M. (2015). Cultural contribution of the Mughal Harem. *Centre of advanced study, department of history*, 1-217.
- Begum, G. (1983). *Humayun Nama*. New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation.
- Usman waheed, M. N. (2024). From Harems to Thrones: The Ascendancy of Women in Mughal Royalty. *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 107-126.
- Kavisht. (2023, October 5). *Secrets of the Mughal Harem*. Retrieved from LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/secrets-mughal-harem-kavisht>
- Agrawal, S. (n.d.). *Courtesans, Tawaifs, and prostitutes in medieval India*. Retrieved from ThisDay: [https://www.thisday.app/realme/details/courtesans-tawaifs-and-prostitutes-in-medieval-india#google\\_vignette](https://www.thisday.app/realme/details/courtesans-tawaifs-and-prostitutes-in-medieval-india#google_vignette)
- Hazra, S. (2019, September 30). *Courtesan Contribution to Hindustani Classical Music- Lesser told histories*. Retrieved from Feminism In India: <https://feminisminindia.com/2019/09/30/courtesan-contribution-hindustani-classical-music-histories/>
- Dhruva, J. (2023, August 31). *Tawaifs: Their Descent and the first war of independence*. Retrieved from Ashoka University: <https://www.ashoka.edu.in/tawaifs-their-descent-and-the-first-war-of-independence/>
- Thakkar, V. (2022, December 2). *The Decline and Disregard of the Tawaifs of India*. Retrieved from Nickeled and Dimed: <https://nickledanddimed.com/2022/12/02/the-decline-and-disregard-of-the-tawaifs-of-india/>
- Dewan, S. (2019). *Tawaifnama*. Context.
- Rawat, S. (2020). *The Women of Mughal Harem*. Cyscoprime Publishers.
- Rao, S. (2019, may 15). Mughal-era courtesans are the unsung heroes of India's freedom struggle. Retrieved from Quartz: <https://qz.com/india/1619758/how-tawaifs-the-mughal-era-courtesans-fought-for-indian-freedom>
- Das, D. (2020, March 11). the "tawaifs" of Shahjahanabad. Retrieved from Peepul Tree stories.
- Ray, K. (2022, December 13). The Art of Tawaif: A tradition lost to colonial moralities.
- Ray, S. (2022). The Multifaceted women of the Mughal Harem: A historiographical essay.
- Dr. daljit Kaur, A. S. (2022). Mughal Harems: An intricate Affair. *International Journal of Novel research and Development*, 993-1000.
- Anjum, F. (2011). Strangers' Gaze: Mughal Harem and European Travellers of the Seventeenth Century. *Research Gate*, 71-113.