

STATISTICS OF CIVIL CONDITION AMONG THE DECCAN AND KONKAN BRAHMINS.

With the permission of Mr. Vidyadhar Vaman Bhidé B. A., we reproduce here a portion of the lecture he delivered at Ratuagiri on the condition of Hindu widows among the higher castes. We omit the first portion of the lecture which treats of the general arguments in favour of widow-remarriages.

Having thus far considered the arguments in favour of, and against, widow-remarriages, I shall now proceed to consider the latest statistics regarding the civil condition of the 16 principal castes of the Dekkan and Konkan Brahmins. These statistics greatly strengthen the position taken up by me on general grounds of principle in defence of the remarriage movement. The 16 castes that I have selected are the principal castes of Dekkan and Konkan Brahmins, among whom widow-remarriages are not permitted. "Chitpawan" and "Kokanastha" being two names for one and the same caste, I have counted them as one caste, although in the census report they are shown as two. The other castes are Deshastha, Karhadé, Dewruke, Palse, Tirgul, and Kirwant. These 7 castes form one group of the Maharashtra section of the Panch Dravid Brahmins. The next 9 castes are of the Panchgoud section viz. Sheuwi, Kudaldeshkar, Sashtikar, Bardeshkar, Gowd, Saraswat, Gowd Sarasvat, Gowd Sashtikar, and Gowd Shenwi. These 9 castes are, in this part of the country, popularly known by the name of Shenwis; and I have accordingly called them by that name in my statistical Tables. Of these 16 castes the Deshasthas are numerically the strongest, and the Kokanasthas

Referring to Table A, you will see in the 3rd vertical column the number of widows in the various castes. The number of widows in the first 7 Brahmin castes is 43353, while the number of widows in the 9 Shenwi Brahmin castes is 6450. These are certainly large numbers. And in all the 16 castes, the aggregate number of widows is 49803, or nearly 50000. Just imagine what this means, half a lac of women, out of a total of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lacs, are condemned by society to relinquish all marital happiness, and, many of them for the most part live without any object in life. Taking only the first 7 castes in the aggregate, the percentage of widows to females is as high as 20, or in other words, one woman out of every 5 women is a widow. In these 7 castes, the highest percentage is shown by Tirguls (25.7), next come the Kirwants (23), next the Deshasthas (21.8), the Palses (21.6), the Dewrukhas (19.2), the Kokanasthas (16.7) and the lowest percentage is shown by the Karhades (15.6). Even if we omit the Palse, Tirgul and Kirwant castes from consideration as being numerically weak, and therefore liable to show fluctuations of percentages on very slight variations in numbers, we get, roughly speaking, nearly the same percentage. The percentage of widows to females in the Shenwi castes, taken in the aggregate, is 16.4, a little lower than in the first 7 castes. And considering the Shenwi castes individually, this percentage varies from 34.4 (as in the numerically weak caste of the Bardesbkars) to 8.5 (as in the equally small caste of the Sashtikars). Taking only the four numerically strong Shenwi castes, we find the percentage of widows to females ranging from 21.9 (as in the Saraswats) to 12.6 (as in the Gowd caste), the Gowd being, if we omit the numerically insignificant caste of Sashtikars, the most fortunate of all the castes of Dekkan and Konkan Brahmins. When we consider all the sixteen castes together, the percentage is 19.4 or nearly 20, which

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THE NATIONAL DEMAND FOR HOME-RULE

THE 28th of December 1916 is a red-letter day in the history of the Indian National Congress, or the history of the British rule in India-for that matter. For on that day the National Congress for the first time put on its record a formal demand for self-government, coupled with a scheme of self-government, for India. The scheme is sufficiently full though by no means final, as will be seen from its text given at the end of this article. It is, moreover, not a mere statement of a distant ideal, but the object of an immediate demand. It is meant to be presented not in a spirit of mere fanciful speculation or curious dilettantism, but with the greatest earnestness and deliberation, coupled with the fullest sense of responsibility. It is backed not only by the intelligence of the nation but also by its will. The national Congress was conscious that it was doing a great thing i