



# CONTRIBUTION OF *BIBI VIRO* TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIKH HISTORY

**PARNEET KAUR**

Researcher Department of History,

Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab).

**Abstract :** *The prominent women who occupied place in Sikhism largely connected with Sikh Gurus as mother, sister, wife, daughter. These women played very important role directly or indirectly in the progress of Sikhism. Among these women the name of Bibi Viro also included. Bibi Viro was the daughter of sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind. Bibi Viro made significant contribution to the development of Sikhism in various forms. Bibi Viro was witness of the Guru period of the five Gurus (Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh). Bibi Viro's husband, Bhai Sadhu continued to preach Sikh religion in the Malwa region during the time period of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan. Bibi Viro's name is high and famous in history for her sons' outstanding role in the battle of Bhangani. It would be meaningful to proudly call Bibi Viro the mother of martyrs. She taught her five sons – Sangho Shah, Gulab Chand, Jit Mall, Ganga Ram and Mohri Chand about principles of Sikh religion. Bibi Viro's two sons – Sangho Shah and Jeet Mall were martyred in the battle of Bhangani. Guru Gobind Singh praises the bravery of Bibi Viro's five sons in 'Bachitar Natak'.*

**Keywords :** *Bibi Viro, Guru Hargobind, Sikh Women, Sikh History.* **Introduction :**

Bhagat Singh in '*Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*' states that *Bibi Viro's* father, Guru Hargobind had asked for blessing from his mother, Mata Ganga for the birth of a daughter.[1] Harbans Singh states about the birth of *Bibi Viro* that She was born at Amritsar on 11 July, 1615. Her father's name was Guru Hargobind and mother was Mata Damodari.[2] Kahan Singh Nabha writes that *Bibi Viro* was born on 1672 *Bikrami Sammat*. [3] Lal Singh '*Twarikh Guru Khalsa Panth*' states that *Bibi Viro* was born to Mata Damodari in Amritsar in *Sammat* 1672.[4] Satbir Singh writes that *Bibi Viro* was born from Mata Damodari in 1615 AD. This girl was named *Bibi Viro* which was a sign of being a warrior.[5] Bhagat Singh in '*Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*' writes that on the birth of *Bibi Viro*, her parents, Mata Damodari and father, Guru Hargobind were very happy. Many generous donations were made to the poor and needy people. The baby was named Viro.[6] *Bibi Viro* was the only one sister of five brothers - Gurditta, Suraj Mal, Ani Rai, Atal Rai and Guru Tegh Bahadur.[7] *Baba Gurditta* was two years older than *Bibi Viro* and other four brothers were younger than her. [8]

It is worth mentioning here that some writers said that *Bibi Viro* was born from Mata Damodari and some from Mata Nanaki. This is also an important question of research that who was the real mother of *Bibi Viro* – Mata Damodari or Mata

Nanaki. Santokh Singh in '*Suraj Prakash*' writes *Bibi Viro* was born from Mata Damodari.[9] Macauliffe writes that Guru Hargobind's wife Mata Damodari presented the Guru Hargobind with another child, that was a daughter named Viro.[10] Satbir Singh states that *Bibi Viro* was born from the womb of Mata Damodari.[11] Harbans Singh in '*The Encyclopedia of Sikhism, Vol. IV*' mentions that *Bibi Viro* was daughter of Mata Damodari.[12] Bhagat Singh in '*Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*' also writes Mata Damodari as mother of *Bibi Viro*. [13] Only Kesar Singh Chibbar writes that *Bibi Viro* was born in 1674 to Mata Nanaki.[14] Based on the views given by Santokh Singh, Macauliffe and Satbir Singh, Harbans Singh and Bhagat Singh, it seems correct that Mata Damodari was the real mother of *Bibi Viro*.

Mohinder Kaur Gill in '*Guru Naari Jiwan Vihar*' states that *Bibi Viro* also received education. In those days, there was no separate school for girls and they were given education at home. *Bibi Viro* got most of her education under the supervision of her grandmother, Mata Ganga and mother, Mata Damodari. *Baba Buddha* and *Bhai Gurdas*'s (great Sikhs of Guru period) visits to the house gave the child, *Bibi Viro* the opportunity to learn a lot from these great men as well. Due to the Guru Hargobind's house to the *Akal Takht*, *Bibi Viro* had seen Sikh warriors performing military duties and playing physical games at an early age. Many times, she saw her father, Guru Hargobind at the court (*darbar*) and listened to his discourses. *Bibi Viro* also learned a lot from her surroundings. In this way, she grew up to be a very wise and courageous girl.[15]

M. A. Macauliffe writes that in process of time, as *Bibi Viro* was growing up, the Guru Hargobind's mother, Mata Ganga suggested to him that he ought to search for a spouse for her daughter. At that time, the Guru replied that God would settle all things.[16] Bhagat Singh in '*Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*' writes about how *Bibi Viro*'s father, Guru Hargobind found a groom for her daughter. He writes that one day when Guru Hargobind was sitting at the *darbar* on the site of *Akal Takht (Amritsar)*, when he saw a young man. His clothes were dirty but his face was such that no one could live without being affected by it. Guru Hargobind called him. The young man's father was also with him. When asked by the Guru Hargobind, he said that his name is Dharma and his son's name is Sadhu. They are resident of village Malla, district Bathinda and they are financially poor. After talking for a while, Guru Hargobind said that he wanted to marry his daughter (*Bibi*) Viro to his son, Sadhu.[17]

'*Mehma Parkash*' mentions about marriage of *Bibi Viro* that she get married to *Bhai Sadhu* who was son of *Bhai Dharma Khosla* of village Malla on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1634 AD at Jhabal (Amritsar).[18] Santokh Singh writes that *Bibi Viro*'s marriage was fixed on 26<sup>th</sup> *Jeth*, 1685 *Sammatt* for which jewellery and clothes were made a long time ago. Sweets were also made a long time ago and many rooms were filled with sweets. One day a lot of *sangat* came from the west and they offered a lot of gifts. The Guru Hargobind knew that the *sangat* (congregation) had come from a long journey so they did not eat the morning *langar* and now it is not time for *langar* (community kitchen). Guru Hargobind ordered the Sikhs to bring the sweets that prepared for the wedding procession and distribute to the *sangat*. When these Sikhs went to the Guru's house and asked for sweets, Mata Damodari replied that this sweet is of wedding omen so that it will be fed to the wedding

guests first and then given to someone else. Guru Hargobind who considered the *sangat* more than his own sons and daughter, said that the sweets which were not given to the Sikhs would now be eaten by the *Turks*. Because of Guru Hargobind knew what would happen in the future. Mata Damodari was very sorry to hear this.[19] Hari Ram Gupta describes the circumstances that existed at the time of *Bibi Viro*'s marriage. He writes that with the death of Mughal Emperor Jahangir and the accession of Shah Jahan in 1627 AD, Guru Hargobind's troubles began.[20] Taran Singh writes that in 1628, the first battle took place at Amritsar due to a hawk of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and Guru Hargobind. It was then that preparations were made for *Bibi Viro*'s marriage and then this war broke out. Guru Hargobind sent his wives and children to village Jhabal (Amritsar).[21] According to Gyani Lal Singh at this time some persons were sent at *Bibi Viro*'s in-laws village Malla to inform *Bhai Dharma* that now he should take the procession and reach at Jhabal and not at Amritsar.[22] Taran Singh writes that when the war ended, Guru Hargobind came to Jhabal and married *Bibi Viro* from here. The marriage took place with *Bhai Sadhu*, who was son of *Bhai Dharma Khosla Khatri*, a resident of Malla.[23]

Santokh Singh writes when Guru Hargobind reached Jhabal, the people there made *prasad* (religious offering) and fed the army. For the wedding of *Bibi Viro*, which was to take place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of *Jeth*, a wedding dessert was made by local moneylenders after purchasing all the necessary items. At night the procession came and they were given *prasad* and the *Shabad Kirtan* (word chant) was performed. *Bhai Gurdas* read the *lavan* of *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is also written that the place where *Bibi Viro*'s wedding was performed was decorated with diamonds and pearls. This place was named Manak *Chownk* Jhabal. The fare is held here every year on the 26<sup>th</sup> *Jeth*. [24] Lal Singh in '*Twarikh Guru Khalsa Panth*' writes that after the war, Guru Hargobind married his daughter *Bibi Viro* to *Bhai Sadhu* of village Malla on 26<sup>th</sup> *Jeth* and this place is now known as Gurdwara *Bibi Viro*. [25] Harbans Singh states that *Bibi Viro* got married on 24 May, 1629 at Jhabal, 15 km southwest of Amritsar. [26] Mohinder Kaur Gill also mentions 26 *Jeth Sammat* 1685 (1628 AD) as *Bibi Viro*'s marriage date. [27] *Khoji Kafir* in his paper '*Pind Jhubal: Itihasak Perpek*' writes that *Bibi Viro*'s wedding ceremony was completed at *Bhai Langah*'s fort at Jhabal on 26 *Jeth*, *Sammat* 1686 (24 May, 1629 AD). [28] The year of marriage (26 *Jeth Sammat*, 1685 (1628 AD) of *Bibi Viro* which is mentions by Harbans Singh and Mohinder Kaur Gill seems correct. Trilochan Singh writes that *Bibi Viro*'s marriage was celebrated at Jhabal. The bridegroom, *Sadhu Ram*, being a poet, read a poem in honour of his father-in-law, Guru Hargobind. After battle of Amritsar, in the evening Guru Hargobind performed the marriage of *Bibi Viro*. [29]

Guru Hargobind gave the sermon while bidding farewell to *Bibi Viro* – Respecting the elders who come home and serving the mother-in-law wholeheartedly. Husband service is great service for woman. Mata Damodari also sat next to her daughter, *Bibi Viro* and said that if you remember that you are the daughter of Guru Hargobind and granddaughter of Guru Arjan, you will never sit in bad company getting up early in the morning to take a bath and reciting the *bani* from the mouth and doing all the household chores without giving any scope to anybody to make a complain. *Bibi Viro* cried a lot as she was leaving her home and Mata Damodari told her that they would call her for a visit soon. At this time *Baba Gurditta* was sent with *Bibi Viro*. '*Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*' mentions that

when *Bibi Viro* arrived at her in-laws' village

Malle with her husband *Bhai Sadhu*, she was welcomed there and at this time omen songs were sung and the newly married couple was brought into the house and all were impressed by the beauty of *Bibi Viro*. [30] Satbir Singh in his book '*Katha Puratan Eyun Suni, Part-I*' writes that *Bibi Viro's* in-laws were *Khosla Khatris*. The lines composed by her husband, *Bhai Sadhu* shows that he was a shopkeeper (*Banyia*).[31] After the marriage, *Bibi Viro* became involved in her in-laws' family and she used to visit her *Peka* (maternal home) family on happy and sad occasions. When *Bibi Viro's* younger brother (*Baba*) Atal Rai passed away, then she came to Amritsar to mourn.[32] *Bhai Jodh Singh* in '*Sri Kharghdari Hulas*', narrates about the mourn of *Bibi Viro*. [33] *Bhai Gurdas* consoled *Bibi Viro* and entire family to obey God's will at this time. *Bibi Viro's* father-in-law, *Bhai Dharma* and husband *Bhai Sadhu* also came to Amritsar on this occasion.[34] Harbans Singh states that this incident is dated 13 September, 1628 AD.[35]

Mohinder Kaur Gill writes that on the demise of Mata Damodari in 1631 and *Baba Gurditta* in 1638, it is known that *Bibi Viro* came to the village of Daroli and Kiratpur. In 1632 AD when *Bibi Viro's* younger brother married Mata Gujri, *Bibi Viro* celebrated all the omens of happiness and blessed the couple. She suffered the most when Guru Hargobind died at Kiratpur in 1644 AD. After this *Bibi Viro* stooped coming here as Guru Tegh Bahadur also went to *Baba Bakala* with Mata Nanaki.[36] Lal Singh states in '*Twarikh Guru Khalsa Panth*' that *Bibi Viro* was a very pious and brave woman. According to Lal Singh *Bibi Viro* gave birth to five brave children whose names were : Gulab Chand, Jeet Mall,, Ganga Ram, Sangho Shah and Mahri Chand. They are famous in history because during the battle of Bhangani (1688), they showed great bravery under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh. Jeet Mall and Sangho Shah were martyred in the battle of Bhangani.[37] Harbans Singh in '*The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*' also states that *Bibi Viro* was the mother of five sons, Sangho Shah, Jit Mall, Gulab Chand, Mahri Chand and Ganga Ram. All the five participated in the battle of Bhangani that was fought on 18 September, 1688, between Guru Gobind Singh and Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar (Garhwal). Jeet Mall and Sangho Shah dying in this battle.[38] Taran Singh also writes that from the womb of *Bibi Viro* five sons (Sangho Shah, Gulab Chand, Jeet Mal, Ganga Ram and Mehra Chand) were born, who showed great bravery in the battle of Bhangani. Sangho Shah and Jit Mal were martyred in the same battle.[39] *Bibi Viro's* children also received military education. *Bibi Viro's* husband *Bhai Sadhu* also took part in many battles that were against the Mughals during the time of Guru Hargobind. After Guru Hargobind, *Bhai Sadhu* continued to preach Sikhism in the *Malwa* region during Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan. In history , there is no clear indication as to when *Bibi Viro* passed away.

## CONTRIBUTION OF BIBI VIRO

As a Guru's daughter, *Bibi Veero's* contribution to the Sikh history of Guru period is described as follows :

1.Mohinder Kaur Gill writes that *Bibi Viro* was witness of the Guru period of the five Gurus (Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh) and her whole family was attached to thehouse of Sikh Gurus.

2. *Bibi Viro* taught her five sons – Sangho Shah, Gulab Chand, Jit Mall, Ganga Ram and Mohri Chand about principles of Sikh religion. It was *Bibi Viro*, who gave them the qualities of bravery, because *Bibi Viro* saw her father, Guru Hargobind and brothers – *Baba Gurditta* and (Guru) *Tegh Bahadur* fighting with the Mughals and the Turks. *Bibi Viro* taught her sons about devotion and strength and said that if they have to be martyred while walking on the path of religion, they should not hesitate.[40] Mohinder Kaur Gill writes that at the battle of Bhangani on 16 April, 1689, the hill chiefs and the Mughals were defeated. *Bibi Viro's* five sons were also involved in this battle. In this battle, *Bibi Viro's* two sons – Sangho Shah and Jeet Mall were martyred.[41] Guru Gobind Singh praises the bravery of *Bibi Viro's* five sons in '*Bachitar Natak*'. *Giani Narain Singh* states that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed the title of '*Shah Sangram*' to *Bhai Sangho Shah*. [42] Mohinder Kaur mentions about that praise lines in her book '*Guru Naari Jeevan Vihar : Guru Wives (Mahals, Guru Betiyan ate Nuhh)*', Sangho Shah is the greatest warrior, Hathi Mall is stubborn, Gulab Chand is warrior of war, There is no shooter like Ganga Ram and Mohri Chand is the epitome of courage.[43] In this battle Sangho Shah showed many virtues of bravery and tramped the bloody *Pathana* underfoot. Eventually Sangram killed *Pathan* General Najabat Khan and he himself was martyred.[44] *Bibi Viro's* second son, Jeet Mall was also martyred fighting against Raja Hari Chand. In '*Bhat Vahis*' *Bhai Sangho Shah* and Jeet Mall are also mentioned as they were sons of Guru Gobind Singh's aunt, *Bibi Viro*, who took part in the battle of Bhangani. *Bibi Viro's* other three sons were also killed in other battles fought by Guru Gobind Singh.[45]

3. *Bibi Viro* also had to face difficult days, for example, at the time of *Bibi Viro's* marriage, Guru Hargobind had to fight the first battle against the Mughals.

4. *Bibi Viro's* husband *Bhai Sadhu* continued to preach Sikh religion in the *Malwa* region during Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan. When ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur returned to Punjab from his previous journey. *Bhai Sadhu* and *Bibi Viro* kept him in their village Malla for a month. They took care of the *sangat* (congregation) that coming here.[46]

5. *Bibi Viro's* husband, *Bhai Sadhu* was a good scholar. *Bhai Sadhu* translated the *Mahabharata* and composed it from *Sanskrit* into *Punjabi*. He explained *Japji Sahib* and *Sukhmani Sahib* in a very simple way.[47] *Bibi Viro's* full support behind these compositions must have been to *Bhai Sadhu*.

6. Guru Tegh Bahadur entrusted the responsibility of imparting military education to his son, Gobind Rai to *Bibi Viro's* son Sangho Shah. Sangho Shah was a fearless warrior and skilled in archery and sword fighting. After adopting *Gur-Gaddi*, Guru Gobind Singh made Sangho Shah the commander-in-chief of his army.[48]

7. *Bibi Viro* was involved in every joy and sorrow of her *Peke* family. It was a happy occasion for her when his younger brother, (Guru) Tegh Bhadur was born. Even at the wedding of her brother Gurditta, *Bibi Viro* celebrated all the omens. The biggest grief for her was when her younger brother *Baba Gurditta*, mother, Mata Damodari and father Guru Hargobind passed away.[49]

**Conclusion :**

In the end it can be concluded that *Bibi Viro* have made significant contribution in the development of Sikhism. *Bibi Viro* played important roles as daughter, wife and mother. She was witness of the Guru period of the five Gurus (Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh). *Bibi Viro* and her husband, *Bhai Sadhu* preached Sikh religion in the *Malwa* region. Obviously, it was the support of *Bibi Veero* that her husband explained *Japji Sahib* and *Sukhmani Sahib* in simple language. *Bibi Viro*'s name is high and famous in history for her sons' outstanding role in the battle of Bhangani. It would be meaningful to proudly call *Bibi Viro* the mother of martyrs. The works that did by *Bibi Viro* proved to be instrumental in the development and spread of Sikh religion.

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