

BEGUM SAMRU: A WOMAN WHO DEFIED HER AGE***Prof. Aijaz Ahmad**

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Doi: <https://doi-org/101555/ijarp.3769>**ABSTRACT**

Begum Samru (c. 1753–1836), born as Farzana, stands as one of the most remarkable and unconventional figures in late Mughal India. Rising from humble and contested origins, often described as a nautch girl (dancing girl) or courtesan in Delhi's *kothas*, she transformed into a formidable military commander, astute political operator, and autonomous ruler of the principality of Sardhana about 58 years. Following the death of her companion, the Austrian mercenary Walter Reinhardt Sombre (Samru), in 1778, she inherited and successfully consolidated control over his jagir, commanding a disciplined mercenary army of approximately 3,000–4,000 troops that included European officers. This paper examines how Begum Samru defied the rigid gender norms, social hierarchies, and political instabilities of 18th- and early 19th-century India. Amid the decline of the Mughal Empire, European colonial incursions, and regional power struggles, she navigated alliances with Mughal emperors such as Shah Alam II, led military campaigns, and expanded her territory and wealth. Her 1781 conversion to Roman Catholicism, adopting the name Joanna Nobilis, further distinguished her as the only Catholic ruler in northern India while she continued to embody Mughal courtly traditions, holding *darbar* in male attire, smoking the *hookah*, and projecting sovereign authority. Drawing on historical records, contemporary accounts, paintings, and architectural legacies (including the Basilica of Our Lady of Graces at Sardhana), this research analyzes Begum Samru's strategies of self-representation, identity negotiation, and power consolidation. It argues that her life challenges conventional narratives of women's roles in pre-colonial and early colonial India, illustrating themes of agency, adaptation, and resilience. By defying expectations of her age- as a woman, a former courtesan, and a non-aristocrat—she carved a unique space as a power broker whose influence extended across Mughal, regional, and emerging British spheres until her death in 1836, leaving behind one of the largest fortunes of her time.

KEYWORDS: Begum Samru, Sardhana, Mughal Empire, women rulers, gender and power, mercenary armies, religious conversion.

INTRODUCTION

In the turbulent landscape of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century India, as the Mughal Empire crumbled under internal rebellions, regional power struggles, and the encroaching influence of the British East India Company, few figures embodied resilience, ambition, and strategic acumen as strikingly as Begum Samru. Born around 1753 as Farzana, is an indispensable component in the history of India during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the initial half of the nineteenth century. As a fifteen-year-old nautch girl, Farzana earned a livelihood by dancing in the courts of royal people in the circle of old Delhi. She rose from the life of a nautch (dancing) girl in Delhi's famed *kothas* (A *kotha* being a traditional Indian house notorious and infamous as the house of pleasure and debauchery where women danced for rich men) to become the autonomous ruler of the principality of Sardhana. For nearly five decades, she commanded a formidable mercenary army, navigated complex alliances with Mughal emperors and European powers, amassed one of the era's greatest fortunes, and left an enduring architectural and cultural legacy.

Begum Samru's history is one of extraordinary transformation. Initially the consort of Walter Reinhardt Sombre (also known as Samru), an Austrian mercenary renowned for his military prowess and shifting allegiances, she inherited and consolidated his *jagir* (land grant) after his death in 1778. Displaying remarkable political skill, she secured recognition from Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, took command of approximately 3,000-4,000 troops- including European mercenaries- and actively participated in battles, often riding horseback in male attire, complete with a turban and hookah. Her interventions helped stabilize Mughal authority on several occasions, earning her the title *Zeb-un-Nissa* ("Ornament among Women").

What makes Begum Samru a compelling subject for historical inquiry is the way she defied the rigid gender norms and social hierarchies of her time. A woman of humble origins in a patriarchal, feudal society, she exercised sovereign power, managed administration effectively, expanded her territory's prosperity, and engaged in diplomatic maneuvering with the British while maintaining ties to the Mughals. Her conversion to Catholicism in 1781- taking the name Joanna Nobilis- added another layer of complexity, blending cultural, religious, and strategic dimensions to her identity. She is often regarded as the only Catholic

ruler in northern India and is remembered for commissioning the magnificent Basilica of Our Lady of Graces in Sardhana, where she was later buried.

This research paper explores Begum Samru as “A Woman Who Defied Her Age,” examining her life through the lenses of gender, power, identity, and agency. It analyzes how she leveraged military command, courtly intrigue, religious adaptation, and architectural patronage to carve out autonomy in a period of profound political transition. By situating her within the broader context of eighteenth-century Indian history- marked by the decline of Mughal centrality and the rise of colonial forces- the study highlights her role not merely as a colorful personality but as a shrewd political operator whose strategies illuminate the fluid possibilities available to exceptional individuals amid empire’s twilight.

Her legacy challenges simplistic narratives of women in pre-colonial and early colonial India, revealing a figure who was simultaneously a product of her turbulent era and a defiant architect of her own destiny. Through this examination, Begum Samru emerges as a powerful symbol of female leadership, adaptability, and ambition in one of South Asia’s most transformative historical periods.

Begum Samru is usually depicted in late Mughal or early Company-style miniature paintings, where her visual representation itself becomes part of her historical meaning. These portraits typically show her as short in stature, fair-complexioned, often elderly, and richly adorned in expensive jewellery and embroidered garments. In several paintings she is wrapped in Kashmiri shawls, a detail that signifies both elite status and her claimed Kashmiri ancestry. Some images present her in solitary authority, seated with a *hukkah* in hand like a traditional Mughal noble, while others portray her surrounded by courtiers or even leading troops into battle. These representations were not accidental but functioned as political symbols, projecting her simultaneously as a Mughal aristocrat, a sovereign ruler and a military commander.

Early Life and Marriage

Begum Samru (c. 1750-1836), also known as Joanna Nobilis Sombre, Farzana and Zeb-un-Nissa was likely born around 1749-1750 (1745-46 implied by her epitaph) in or near Kutana (or Kotana), close to Meerut in present-day Uttar Pradesh. Although her birth name is commonly unknown and whatever names she was called were conferred to her by the people in the later times. She was the daughter of a petty Muslim Mughal nobleman of Kutana. Her

father has been variously named Asad Khan or Latafat or Lutf Khan. Latafat Khan is believed to have had two wives and Farzana was born of a Kashmiri dancing girl called Zeldah.¹

After the early death of Latafat Khan, the property was immediately taken over by Farzana's step mother and her son. So Zeldah and her daughter Farzana aged 6 years had no choice but to explore the capital city of Delhi, which was then known as Shahjahanabad where her mother reportedly died leaving Farzana orphaned or in difficult circumstances. Farzana's circumstances forced her into becoming a nautch girl in Delhi's Chawri Bazaar.²

According to Burn, Latafat Khan died in 1756 when Farzana was about six years old. The scanty property Latafat Khan left behind him was at once appropriated by the son of his senior wife. Zeldah, knowing no alternative, turned to her roots. She had originally been discovered by Latafat Khan in a *kotha*, a salon or brothel, in Delhi's Chawri Bazaar, and it was to there that she

now returned with her disinherited daughter in tow. It must have been about ten years since she had last seen the city. So Zeldah and her daughter Farzana aged 6 years had no choice but to explore the capital city of Delhi, which was then known as Shahjahanabad where her mother reportedly died leaving Farzana orphaned or in difficult circumstances. In the early teens, the circumstances forced her daughter Farzana to enter a *kotha* as a nautch girl just like Zeldah did a few years ago.³

John Lall, a distinguished Indian Civil Service officer says that Farzana grew into a young beauty with flashing eyes a pearly complexion and lively wit. She entered the *kotha* in Delhi's Chawri Bazaar, associated with a woman named Khanum Jan. Chawri Bazar was a space commonly associated with moral stigma but also one that operated as a centre of cultural exchange. These spaces enabled women to acquire linguistic skills, political awareness and social intelligence, all of which later proved crucial in Farzana's transformation into a powerful political actor. She trained and worked as a nautch girl (dancer/performer), entertaining patrons in the declining Mughal era. This was a common path for girls in hardship, involving dance, music, and social/sexual companionship.⁴

Walter Reinhardt Sombre

After reconciliation during Anglo-French war most of the European mercenaries went back to their homeland but some of them decided to serve the Indian local rulers. Such soldiers were available as mercenaries on hire and were eagerly welcomed by the nawabs and the Rajas in India. Walter Reinhardt Sombre from Luxembourg/Austria was one of them who stayed here to earn his fortunes in India. Walter Reinhardt after reaching India in 1750 had served the

British, French and Jats, i.e any force willing to employ him. Reinhardt firstly chose to join the East India Company in Bengal for better prospects but soon went to Chandernagor to re-enlist with the French. However, finding the French prospects in India weakening he enrolled with the Nawab's army in Calcutta. It was very soon that the Battle of Plassey happened and Reinhardt just missed upon the greatest opportunity with the English. Reinhardt who now was known as Sombre or Somers or Sumru (due to his sombre expressions) faced an uncertain future in the maelstrom of Indian politics.

Sombre however, continued with the Bengal Government under Mir Qasim who had enlisted one Mr. Gregory as his Commander in Chief. Gregory who was impressed by Reinhardt's self confidence put him in command of two battalions. Gregory however, himself having failed the Nawab's expectations was beheaded which put Reinhardt under unavoidable pressure to perform. Meanwhile, Mir Qasim intercepted a shipment of the East India Company at Patna while Ellis the British Commander took charge of the city and the fort extinguishing all hopes of a settlement between the English and the ruler of Bengal. Qasim very soon regained possession of the fort and the city. This invited the ire of the Company which deposed Mir Qasim and reinstated Mir Jafar on the throne. This enraged Mir Qasim so much so that he summoned Reinhardt to eliminate the Patna prisoners including Ellis. He committed the most heinous of murders, directing the massacre leading to the most inhuman of slaughters. He personally butchered 51 Englishmen and 100 others at Patna in October 1763. The incident turned out to haunt Sombre for the rest of his life for he was given the infamous title of the "Butcher of Patna".⁵

After Patna massacre, Sombre moved out and joined the nawab of Awadh who enlisted him in his preparation against the British. Awadh at the time was ruled by Nawab Shuja ud Daula who completed an alliance with Mir Qasim and the Mughal Emperor which challenged the British in the battle of Buxar 1764. However, the superiority of the European military tactics led to the decisive defeat of the Indian forces in a hotly contested battle. After this Reinhardt who was the most sought after by the English as the Butcher of Patna, decided to move only after arranging for his finances by robbing the Begums of Awadh. Having gathered the funds, Reinhardt mustered his brigade and left for the capital city of Delhi.

Reinhardt created and maintained three thousand self-serving army and moved towards Jat Raja of Bharatpur who was looking for military assistance. In 1764, Reinhardt presented himself before the Jat Raja of Agra-Jawahar Singh who planned an assault on the Mughal capital and General Sombre's brigade added positively to the Jat forces. A peace settlement was made between the Mughals and the Jats. It was here that the retrieving Jat Raja was

presented amongst other gifts a young teenage girl, who in turn conferred her on Reinhardt. In 1767, the teenage-Farzana became the much older Reinhardt's close companion, assuming the role of his wife as Begum Samru. This was the decisive turn of Farzana's life. He took her into his *zenana* (harem) as a companion or junior wife/concubine. At the time of marriage, Farzana was about 15 years of age. She soon became his favored partner and accompanied him on campaigns, learning military and political skills.⁶

Military Career and Political Strategy of Begum Samru

In the second half of the 18th century the Mughal Empire disintegrated and the political map of India was redrawn. Mohammad Shah, who reigned from 1719 to 1748, never exercised his own judgment. He was the last Indian emperor that ever set upon the peacock throne of Shah Jahan. After the death of Mohammad Shah, his incapable son Ahmad Shah (1748-1754) became the king. He was deposed and blinded in 1754 by Imadul Mulk, who with the help of the Marathas secured the office of the wazir. After that a new emperor was enthroned with title of Alamgir II (1754-59) and under whom the Mughal kingdom further declined. During the reign of Alamgir II the condition of the Empire grew worse. Ahmadshah Abdali invaded India several times and seized the Punjab and the Marathas became powerful at Delhi. The wazir then put the emperor to death and placed another Mughal prince Shah Alam II (1759-1806) on the throne. For thirty-two years he was practically a state prisoner in the hands of the Marathas or the Afghans. In 1788, the marauder Ghulam Qadir deposed and blinded the emperor, and then threw vinegar in the wounds. The costumes of the court were threadbare and the precious stones had been picked out of the *pietra dura* work of the Imperial apartments. Shah Alam appealed to Mahadji Sindhia for help. Mahadji Sindhia defeated Ghulam Qadir and drove the Pathan out of Delhi. Shah Alam was restored to the throne, but all real power was in the hands of Mahadji whom the emperor regarded as his son. A blind emperor ruled from a ruined palace; most of the talented poets and artists had fled to Lucknow and only those too old or decrepit or impoverished to leave remained.⁷

In these situations Walter Reinhardt and Begum Samru emerged as the most powerful protector of the empire. After Walter Reinhardt's marriage, Begum Samru rose rapidly through intelligence, charm, and adaptability during the chaotic late Mughal period of shifting alliances, mercenary armies, and European influence. The return of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II to Delhi after the death of the Najib ud daula the deputy of Ahmad Shah Abdali changed the fortunes of Reinhardt and Farzana. They fought against the Jats from the side of Mughals under Mirza Najaf, the Mughal Commander in Chief in 1773 at

Agra and defeated the Jats. Samru was presented in the royal court and graciously received by the Mughal monarch. He was also endowed with the titles of Zafaryab Khan and Muzaffar ud Daula during one of his campaigns and for the maintenance of the troops he was offered the *Jagir* (fiefdom) of Sardhana in present day Meerut district, making Samru its feudal ruler. Actually Najaf Khan, who had known Waller Reinhardt (Samru) and the fighting qualities of his battalion, while in the service of Mir Qasim, persuaded the Emperor to assign a *Jagir* to him for the maintenance of his troops. Afterwards the *Jagir* was known as the principality of Sardhana. It was approximately 800 square miles in the Doab stretched from the Ganges to the Jamuna and in length from beyond Muzaffar Nagar to the vicinity of Aligarh. This *Jagir* yielded annual revenue of six lacs of rupees.⁸

Begum Samru accompanied Reinhardt on his military campaigns and began to play an essential role in managing Sardhana and its land revenue dealings, Begum Samru's military career demonstrated exceptional strategic skill and political adaptability. She maintained a disciplined standing army and became a crucial power broker in North Indian politics. Begum Samru had lived among Reinhardt's military force and formed strong relations with his officers. Thus, after his death in 1778, they looked to 28 years old widow Farzana as his successor, rather than Reinhardt's insane Muslim wife and an incapable son. He was buried in the garden of his house in Agra. Mirza Najaf gave Samru's titles to his son and preserved the force. This son of Samru got from the Emperor the title of Zafaryab Khan, at the request of the Begam, his step-mother; but he was a man of weak intellect. A petition was duly signed by the members of the brigade who could write and attested by all who could not and the priceless document was taken to Delhi and submitted to Emperor Shah Alam. Soon Farzana was confirmed in her possession by the Mughal Emperor himself. She had now attained the dignity and power of an independent ruling princess with an army of her own. From a *kotha* in Chawri Bazaar, the begum eventually came to rule over the territory of Sardhana and commanded an army of 4,000 troops.⁹

During these periods Delhi faced increasing threats from the rising Marathas, Jats, Sikhs and Rohilas, and the waning Mughal Empire relied on the support of the Begum who provided her armies for protection. Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II bestowed her title *Zeb-un-nissa* and honoured with a *khilat* (ceremonial robe) for her services. The title and award brought her into the emperor's inner circle of trusted nobility and she was given a land grant near Delhi. Begum Samru's support was instrumental to Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II during periods of political instability, and she aligned herself with the Marathas in resisting British expansion. In 1783, she negotiated a settlement with the Sikh General Baghel Singh at Tis

Hazari, preventing an attack on Delhi in exchange for a generous payment by Shah Alam. In 1787, she broke the siege of Red Fort by the Rohilla chieftain Ghulam Abdul Qadir Ahmad Khan with a bold attack. Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II was so grateful that he gave her the title *Farzand-e-Azizi* meaning ‘beloved daughter’ (of the state) or Farzana for short. At the same time, she negotiated pragmatically with the Sikh confederacy and Company officials whenever necessary. Her alliances were not driven by ideology but by survival and autonomy, allowing her to preserve sovereignty at a time when most Indian rulers were losing theirs.¹⁰

In the Battle of Assaye in 1803, she fought alongside the Marathas. Although the Maratha Alliance suffered defeat, her army was the only contingent that did not scatter and retreat. Instead, they made an orderly retreat to fight another day. But by 1803 she realised that the British were the emerging superpower and sued for peace. At the peace talks, British General Lake was so impressed by her that he gave her a kiss, completely scandalising her troops! She pacified them by explaining it away as a fatherly kiss. She thus became a British ally, while retaining her autonomy.¹¹

Begum Samru proved herself not only as a courageous military commander, but also as a competent civil administrator. Under her rule, the Sardhana Jagir flourished, generating substantial revenues. In her territory of Sardhana she implemented systems of revenue collection, ensured public order and governed with notable fairness. Contemporary European accounts frequently described her as tolerant and just. She emerged as a major patron of art, literature and architecture, building palaces in Sardhana, Jharsa and Chandni Chowk. These structures symbolized not only wealth but political legitimacy, asserting her right to rule within a cultural framework that blended Mughal and European traditions.

Conversion and Religious Identity

Three years after Reinhardt’s death, Begum Samru, the established ruler of Sardhana converted to Catholicism in 1781 and adopted the name Joanna Nobilis Sombre. While the reasons for her conversion are unclear, she continued to retain both her names, enabling her to associate with a larger community of Catholics, as well as to remind her political foes of her military prowess. Her conversion did not interfere with her status of a powerful landholder in northern India. It is said that this act was both spiritual and political. Through Christianity she forged closer links with European powers and missionaries while retaining control over a religiously diverse population. She displayed remarkable tolerance, funding Hindu temples, Muslim institutions and Christian churches alike. Her greatest architectural

legacy, the Basilica of Our Lady of Graces in Sardhana, remains one of the finest colonial churches in India and stands as a powerful symbol of her hybrid religious and cultural identity. Basilica of Our Lady of Graces is one of India's minor basilicas situated in Sardhana in Uttar Pradesh.¹²

Despite her change in faith, the Begum did not forgo earlier practices and norms associated with other religions. She maintained her Islamic appearance even after conversion, much to the disappointment of the priest who had baptised her, while simultaneously spending lakhs of rupees on Christian institutions. She held lavish Christmas feasts where she hired dancing girls and musicians for entertainment, which her European guests recorded with intrigue. While Begum was a Christian, she followed the north Indian practice of not eating with people from other castes and communities, choosing to puff away at the *hukkah* instead. Begum Samru built one of the largest churches of the time in north India, where she attended Mass every Sunday. At the same time, she dispensed money to her subjects during Eid and celebrated Diwali and Holi, practices that annoyed her resident bishop.

Patron of Architecture

She had constructed several historical buildings in Delhi, Sardhana and many other places associated to her. She also built several magnificent monuments, including a palace in Chandni Chowk, which allowed her to remain close to the Mughals, who were almost like family to her. This palace became a site of action during the 1857 mutiny. Now called Bhagirath Palace, it houses the Central Bank, but is a shadow of its former glory. In Sardhana, one of her palaces currently serves as St. Charles Inter College, while another functions as a boys' school. Her Jharsa Palace near Gurugram serves as the District Collector's quarters.

Begum Samru, referred to by some as India's only Catholic Queen. She is also known for building the largest Catholic Church in Sardhana known today as the Basilica of Our Lady of Graces, constructed in 1822. For this purpose, she commissioned her own Italian military engineer, Major Anthony Reghelini, to build a church for Sardhana. The engineer developed a fusion style of Italian and Islamic architecture. The minarets outside and the *pietra dura* (ornamental stonework embedded in the walls) inside are inspired by Mughal design, while the dome and marble work are inspired by St Peters in Rome. The Church was built at a cost of Rs 4 lakhs but Reghelini erected a sturdy church. It is one of the 23 minor basilicas of India, and the only one in the north. The structure consists of a blend of architectural styles, of Indian and Islamic features added to a European cross-plan church. The church's domes lie

next to large steeples reminiscent of Islamic minarets, while the central altar contains *pietra dura* or *pacchikari* designs. The church helped Begum Samru establish relations with Europeans, beyond the networks she had established with the British in India later in her life.¹³

In 1822, the church opened its doors to the public, and Begum Samru wrote to Pope Gregory XVI, requesting the appointment of a bishop. He obliged by sending Bishop Julius Caesar Scotti in 1834. During her lifetime she continued to support the church and other charitable institutions receiving tokens of appreciation from the Pope himself.

Death and Historical Legacy

Begum Samru died in January 1836 aged about 83 having lived through the decline of Mughal authority and the consolidation of British imperial power. The East India Company, the imperial agent in India, inherited her grand fortune. She was buried under the basilica in Sardhana. Near the Altar was made an 18-foot-tall marble sculpture of Begum Samru with her torso draped in a shawl. Since she had no children, she bequeathed most of her property to Reinhardt's son from his previous marriage. Unfortunately, the British usurped most of the estate which was valued at several billions of rupees. Recognizing its rich history, Pope John XXIII elevated it to the status of a basilica in 1961. Today the monument stands testament to the incredible story of a woman who defied the limits of her time.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Begum Samru represents a forgotten alternative history of India, one in which power was not exclusively male, not exclusively British, and not exclusively hereditary. Rising from extreme poverty to become one of the most powerful military and political figures of North India, Begum Samru stands as one of the most remarkable examples of female agency in early modern Indian history. Begum Samru was a Muslim who converted to Catholicism, a dancing girl who became a warrior and an aristocrat, and was described by her contemporaries as dressing more like a man than a woman, sporting a dark turban and ever-puffing away at a hookah. She was a shrewd leader who was able to find a favourable position in the ever-dynamic political terrain of 18th century northern India. While she had first supported the waning Mughal empire, from the 1790's the Begum began to provide service to the rising Marathas, before joining the British to ensure that she could maintain her landholding rights if they emerged victorious.

Her life cuts across categories of class, religion, gender and empire, making her not merely a historical curiosity but a deeply significant figure in understanding the transitional world between Mughal decline and British ascendancy. Her life reveals that the late eighteenth century was not merely an age of decline and colonial conquest, but also a period of social mobility, experimentation and unexpected agency. Remembering Begum Samru forces us to rethink Indian history as a space where individuals could transcend class, gender and religious boundaries to create new forms of authority and belonging.

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2. *Ibid.*
3. Lall John (1996). *Begum Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame*, New Delhi, Variety Book Depot, Prologur, page XVIII.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Mahendra Narain Sharma (1985). *The Life and Times of Begam Samru of Sardhana*, Vibhu Prakashan Sahibabad, p. 35.
6. Brajendranath Banerji (1925). *Begam Samru*, M.C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, p. 14. In 1764-1765 when Mughal emperor Shah Alam was away to fight battle of Buxar against British, Jawahar Singh attacked Delhi and while going back he took away Farzana and brought her to Bharatpur. After four or five months Jawahar Singh took in his service for his amusement and also for the foreign soldiers especially the contingent of Samru. Meanwhile the chief queen, Hansia alias Rani Kishori, the wife of Suraj Mal and mother of Jawahar Singh, thought of getting rid of Farzana because she was a mohammadan and it was not befitting to the reputation of the Jat Raja to be tied to the apron strings of a dancer. Hence for the meritorious services of Samru with whose help Jawahar Singh could crush the leading enemies of his father's days, Farzana was given over to Samru as a reward (Dola). Samru welcomed the gift as he was already attracted by her glamorous beauty, musical talents and high dancing qualities. He took her into his harem and

- married her. (Mahendra Narain Sharma (1985). *The Life and Times of Begam Samru of Sardhana*, Vibhu Prakashan Sahibabad, p. 62.)
7. *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.
8. Brajendranath Banerji (1925). *Begam Samru*, M.C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, p. 12. The small but fertile principality of Sardhana comprised parganas of Sardhana, Baraut, Barnawa, Kotana, Budhana, Jewar, Tappal, Dankaur and Pahasu in the Doab, and on the western side of the Jamuna Badshahpur, Hansi and Ranya. The estate was extremely wealthy and well provided with fine towns such as Baraut, Binauli. Barnawa, Sardhana, Jewar and Dankaur, and close by her dominion were large parts of Meerut. Shamli, Kandhla, Baghpat, Tikri. Chhaprauli, Tanda, Khurja, Shahdara and parts of Delhi. Its extent from north to south was 36 miles and from east to west 24 miles Sardhana was the principal pargana of the whole *Jagir* and the seat of its administration. (Mahendra Narain Sharma (1985). *The Life and Times of Begam Samru of Sardhana*, Vibhu Prakashan Sahibabad, pp. 18-19.)
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12. Mahendra Narain Sharma (1985). *The Life and Times of Begam Samru of Sardhana*, Vibhu Prakashan Sahibabad, p. 69.
13. *Ibid*, p. 160.