



Email Policy Update

Widows to play Holi in Vrindavan

By Press Trust of India @india.com | February 25, 2015 4:59 PM | [Comment](#)

Tags: Benaras, Holi, Varanasi, Vrindavan



Lucknow, Feb 25 - Breaking age-old barriers, thousands of widows from Varanasi and Vrindavan will sprinkle colours on each other as part of Holi celebrations beginning March 3 in the temple town. At least 1,000 kg 'gulal' (coloured powder) in different colours is being arranged for Holi during the four-day celebrations being organised by NGO Sulabh International, which will end on March 6. Living on the margins of society, these widows who wear only white sarees will smear a gamut of colours on each other to celebrate the festival in Vrindavan, breaking away from years of social stigma prevalent in the society. **(Read: Holi 2015: Treat your skin to aromatherapy before the festival of colours)**

"Their participation in Holi symbolises a break from tradition which forbids a widow from wearing coloured saree, among many other things," said Bindeshwar Pathak, mentor of Sulabh Movement.

This special celebration is set to add a new colour to the Holi festivities in 'Braj', popular among both Indian and foreign tourists. Joining the celebrations will be a large number of widows from Varanasi.

Only a few days ago, hundreds of widows living in Varanasi played Holi with 'gulal' for the first time at the famous Assi Ghat on the bank of river Ganga in Benaras as a prelude to Holi festivities from March 3. Pathak said the special Holi celebrations for widows is an effort to bring them from the margins into the mainstream.

Vrindavan is known as the 'City of Widows' for the sheer number of women who find shelter there after being shunned by their families. Most of them hail from West Bengal. The organisation, which has organised similar arrangements for widows on Janamashtmi and Diwali, aims to bring about a change in people's mindset through this initiative.

"Such colourful celebration will bring about some change in mindset. But it will not be easy," Pathak said. The Supreme Court has time and again lambasted the Centre and Uttar Pradesh government for the pathetic condition of widows living in Vrindavan. About two years ago, in the light of the apex court's observation, Sulabh pledged to extend support to thousands of widows by giving them vocational training and basic education, among others.

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