

**A STUDY OF STATE AND POLITICS OF CULTURE IN
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RAJASTHAN**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “A Study of State and Politics of Culture in Eighteenth Century Rajasthan” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Swati Detha.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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To

*Indrani,
and
Soka Gakkai family of JNU Chapter
which
has given me
a new lease of life.*

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

Scholars of political history – concerned with ruling elite or with mass movements (from orientations both left and right), after construe their subject rather narrowly as the archives directly dictate their direction and progress. For them, the structure of politics is accepted as axiomatic. However, they ignore the theatre of politics and consider it as irrelevant. The fortuitous survival of documents may guarantee the future immortality but, it is a necessary indication of their real historical significance. Much that has been of greatest importance in the past lacks adequate archival evidence.

Indeed, scholars from history and other disciplines have often stressed on the need for a much broader conception of political action. A de contextualized study of power and society, and as a system of relation is necessary to comprehend historical activities. Politics is not just limited to the doings of those in authority and the responses of those who are subordinate. It should be treated more wisely as the valued means whereby, the hierarchies of dominance and deference are created, maintained and overturned. Viewed in this light, the study of power is not limited to asking questions about who governs and they govern, but it involves an investigation of how it is possible to keep important issues off the agenda of public discourse altogether. In particular, our concern should be to study the ways in which ruling elites try to create alternative modes of thought seem off limit and even unthinkable, and seek to present only one particular way of ordering and organizing society.

Deployment of power in society is always strategic and tactical. It exists not as some essential thing or elementary force, but rather as a relation. Analysis of the multiple ways in which power was deployed in the Rajput states during the Eighteenth century engages us to study the various cultural aspects of the region.

The Idea behind the Research

In pursuit of a deeper understanding of nature of Rajput States, we must analyze the power organizations with three characteristics of form

1. Organizations involve collective and distributive power. Most actual power relations – say, between a state and its subjects – involve both, in varying combinations.
2. Power may be extensive or intensive. Extensive power can organize large numbers of people over far – flung territories. Intensive power mobilizes a high level of commitment from participants.
3. Power may be authoritative or diffused. Authoritative power comprises willed commands by an actor and conscious obedience by subordinates. Diffused power is not directly commanded, it spreads in a relatively spontaneous, unconscious, and decentred way. People are constrained to act in definite ways, but not by command of any particular person or organization.

The most effective exercises of power combine collective and distributive, extensive and intensive, authoritative and diffused power. A single power source is rarely capable of determining alone the overall structure of society.

Objective of Research

The objective of the study is to comprehend the structure and function of the Rajput states in its completeness, and be able to answer the questions as to why and how the state has evolved in a particular form and not any other. By looking at the eighteenth century states of Amber, Bikaner, Marwar and Mewar, I will try to identify the elements that constructed these states and facilitated their evolutions. This research is basically an attempt to realize the role of culture in the conception and perpetuation of a state.

Survey of Literature

Secondary Literature

Most of the secondary works related to Rajasthan are chiefly of the nature of political history of different dynasties and states. The texts like *Rajasthan ka Itihaas* by G. K. Ojha, *Glories of Marwar and the Glorious Rathores* by Bisheshwarnath Reu, *Rajasthan through Ages* by Suresh K. Sharma and Usha Sharma, *Rajput of Rajasthan*, by M. S. Narvane, *Rajasthan ka Itihaas* by G. K. Ojha and others in this category download exhaustive details of wars, succession, alliances, and treaties. For authors like R. K. Saxena. (*Rajput Nobility*), G. D. Sharma (*Rajput Polity*), Gian Sharma (*Administrative system of Rajputs*), Shyam singh Ratnawat (*Rajput Nobility*) and R.P. Vyas (*Role of Nobility in Marwar*), the understanding of the administrative system and the land revenue system was the whole sole meaning of the state-craft. However, they have thrown valuable light on the military system, police, judiciary, taxation, trade and commerce of Rajasthan. By getting to know the jagir system, the numerical strength of nobility, its composition and organization we atleast have in view the basic structure of the state. Though these works are very basic in nature, but they provide strong foundations for future research. Anil Chandra Banerjee in his works *Lectures on Rajput History* and *Aspects of Rajput State and Society*, discusses some of the sociological aspects of court circles of Rajasthan. G. N. Sharma in *Rajasthan Studies* provides the information of same nature along with a very rich data on male dressing trends in eighteenth century Rajasthan. Kalyan Kumar Ganguly in *Cultural History of Rajasthan*, K. S. Gupta and G. K. Ojha in *Rajasthan ka Rajnatik evam Sanskritik Itihaas* and Ram Pandey in *Rajasthan ka Sanskritik Itihaas* – in their attempt to describe the cultural aspect of history ended up giving a different shade to political narrative. But at the same time, they do inform us about different castes and communities of Rajasthan, their social life, dress, ornaments, lifestyle, moral values, etc. They also describe the changing trends in religion and society. William A. Noble and Ad Ram Sankhyan in *The Idea of Rajasthan*, Hem Bala Bhargava in *Royalty, Feudalism and Gender*, and Shashi Joshi in *Rajasthan mein Nari ki Sthiti*, delineate the position of women by throwing light in the life of Jnani Dyodi, the

common women, their right in property, education, etc. The classical Hindu myths of sati and jauhar and the study of symbolic representation of sati memorials inform us about the theoretical aspects of the prevalent social practices. Authors like Usha Kasturia, Narendra Bhanawat, Satyendra Upadhyaya, and Motilal Menaria have contributed a lot to history by describing the folk culture of Rajasthan. Folk culture also has a history of its own and by trying to grasp it, we track the linear path of the development of mass psychology in a particular direction. Mass memory and the apparatuses to structure it follow a few rules and by being able to decode them, we can decipher the historical processes better. Hiralal Maheshwari, Purashotlanlal Menaria, Agarchand Nahata, Norman P. Ziegler and other authors writing on the literary trends of Rajasthan produces a view of alternative modes of modeling the mentality of people. Though written in last few decades, these book are historical in nature and deal with the entire journey of the literature of Rajputana, till date. Literature reflects a live image of the society of past and gives a lot of information of popular culture along with elite culture.

An examination of the ideals of honor and states of Rajput society can help us understand the role of social in political. Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma delineate the processes by which symbols and objects are deployed to communicate the political messages between the ruler and ruled, in a social structure where there is a wide gap between the two. R. K. Saxena in *Rajput Nobility*, R. P. Kathuria in *Life in the Courts of Rajasthan* and S. S. Ratnawat in *Rajput Nobility* (Jaipur) explains the clan nature of ruling elite of Rajputana. The ruler was only the head of the clan which dominated a particular territory. Thus, the king exercised a jurisdiction, more or less, over an aristocracy consisting mostly of his own kinsmen. These authors not just describe the administrative apparatus of Rajput states but also the formal gestures exchanged by the rulers and nobles. They discuss the conferring of titles and honours, etiquettes, positioning in court, and other such minute details, which acted as catalyst amongst the nobles to exhibit exemplary services to the state. The ceremonies of public life such as coronation, condolence, processions, celebrations, etc., which formed the nerves and sinews of the administration of state has been seen with minute and exact details.

In *Politics of Patronage and Protest*, Dr. Nandita P. Sahai has discussed how in the adverse political and financial conditions the state realized the importance of human resources as a productive force. Acute shortage and competition for the skilled labour goaded the state to evolve the legitimate traditions to attract the working class. The new ruler and his subordinate lineages got engaged in patronizing the skilled work force in their respective territories in an attempt to gain legitimacy and reinforce their position. In her article, *Crafts and statecraft in Eighteenth Century Jodhpur*, she makes it clear that it was a political involution garbed in the form of patriarchal benevolence and paternal affection.

Searching the cultural basis for political relations in traditional India Norbert Peabody in *Hindu Kingship and Polity in pre-colonial India*, looks at the political architecture from a different angle. The Vallabha Statue of Shri Brijnathji of Kota formed the fountain head of political authority. Since, the Vallabh Sampradaya had been growing in popularity in the urban centre of Kota, the Maharaja encashed on it to legitimize his own political position. He formalized and elaborated the worship of deity and integrated devotion into rituals of royal court. The supernatural powers of Lord Krishna were implicated to maintain and perpetuate his rule. While in case of Orissa during the sixteenth century, Garhjat chiefs used the ritual policy for their acceptance in social integration. Herman Kulke in *King and Cults* show that a major way to enhance the legitimacy of the newly established rule in its immediate surrounding seems to have been the royal recognition and incorporation of the local deities directly linked with the regional populace. One text of the same genre, *Symbols of Substance* by Valcheru Narayan Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subramanyam describes the way the Nayaka Kingship was constructed by courtiers and poets in dominant symbolic media of the time. The issue of relationship, Vedic and Hindu traditional beliefs and state in Early medieval India has been very well portrayed by Ronald Inden. He has studied in detail the ceremony of dona, auspicious and inauspicious signs, castes, etc. and the world of hierarchy constructed upon them. Somewhat on the same lines, Daud Ali in his book *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, has examined courtly literature, etiquettes, palace routines, the exchange of honors and courtesies, the protocol of court, courtly sensibilities etc. and interpreted

their role towards the formation of a definite state structure. Mubarak Ali Khan has broken fresh grounds and compiled some interesting information in the field of legitimizing traditions by his book *The Court of the Great Mughal*. This work provides us with an insight into the royal prerogatives and their mediation between the emperor and his subjects. Since, there is no work directly related to my interest of research, I need to take clue from the works done on relatively similar themes on other areas, and advance.

When we look beyond the boundaries of Indian history, the first name that comes to our mind is Michel Foucault. His work is epistemological as well as historical. He analyses the way the world is mediated and meaning is constructed. He has studied the basis of social structure of power, the distribution systems and perpetuation of power in discourse and symbolic system. Norbert Elias, in *Court Society*, draws the picture of the court of Louis XIV. He discusses in minute details the structure of the dwelling of one of the most absolute monarch and its significance as an indicator of social status. He also throws light on other issues of court circles which draw hierarchical differences amongst nobles, viz. court aristocratic figuration, etiquette, ceremony and bonding with the king on the basis of courtesy. David Cannadine and Simon Price in *Rituals of Royalty*, and Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley and Sherry B. Ortner in *Culture / Power / History*, have tried to understand the concept of power and culture in different historical societies, and shown how they are shared by all members of society. In their view power is productive and inciting and it cannot be stripped away from social relations and without it history can not be understood. Edward Muir, gives some what the same picture in *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*. In order to grasp the social philosophy, one must not forget that the relations of communications par excellence – linguistic exchanges—are also relations of symbolic power between speakers or their respective groups. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Pierre Bourdieu postulates that religion and politics achieve their most successful ideological effects by exploiting the possibilities contained in social ubiquity of the legitimate language. Georges Duby in *Chivalrous Society*, cast a fresh light on the social relation through fourteenth century French history.

To explain the working of politics and its inter-relation with society there are some purely theoretical works, which without giving any specific examples just inform us a lot about the operations of state machinery. Michael Mann identifies four substantive sources of social power: economic, ideological, military and political, and gives his IEMP model of power organization. Control over all four of them gives you firm and efficient grip over society. Norbert Elias in *Involvement and Detachment*, studies the neglected aspects of human action – their emotions and tries to explain why people act in a particular way only. The issues of authority and legitimacy, the ideology and its articulation, and symbols and their impacts have been dealt very seriously by Eric A. Nordlinger in *Politics and Society* and by Maurice Bloch in *Ritual, History and Power*. Richard Fox in *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule* examines the network of political, economic, and ritual ties linking the local communities to the larger society. He examines the state from its very inception to its full-fledged evolution and identifies various stages of its developments and different actors required to stimulate its forward progress.

There are a large number of other secondary works which contribute indefinitely towards the decipherment of political and social processes of state formation and various cultural forms involved in actually materializing this process. However, without referring to primary sources we can not actually get in touch with social and political happenings of eighteenth century Rajasthan.

Primary Sources

The chief sources of our information on Eighteenth Century Rajput state are contemporary, literary and genealogical texts. These were mostly composed by members of literary communities like Charans, Bhats and Brahmins, who enjoyed royal patronage. By the mediation of these sources, we get to know a lot about the rule, ruler, ruled, and significant personalities and events of the time. Though these compositions are excellent examples of literary and intellectual skills, yet we must bear in mind that they were produced to fulfill the specific demands of the then political system, and therefore, need to be perceived accordingly. Aware of such circumstances, we must take caution, while

reading these records, that only one half of the truth has been told and the other half is for us the recover.

Khyats are one of the chief modes of throwing light on the history of Rajasthan. Khyats are usually based on ancient bahis, vanshavalis, oral traditions, contemporary historical descriptions, patta – parwanas, etc. Since, most of these sources are not reliable, the khyats can not be called scientific. *Bikaner re Rathoran ri khyat* written in mid-nineteenth century by Dayaldas Sindhayach is popularly known as Dayaldas ri Khyat. This khyat is a good example of description of events in a linear and continuous fashion. Though the events prior to him may not be considered authentic, yet the developments happening in the period contemporary to Dayaldas are comparatively more reliable. It might not be politically authentic, but it can be expected to present a relatively true picture of religious, moral and cultural aspects of historical Bikaner. Though written in the patronage of court, under scrutinous eyes, it can be depended upon for studying the lives of people, their fairs, festivals, their belief and ideologies, etc. to help us visualize connections between polity and society facilitated by culture.

The modern scholars of the history of Rajasthan, call Col. James Tod an enthusiastic Charan. His *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, composed in 1832, is the first surveyor of the geography of Rajasthan. Through his magnum opus work, he has presented the historical, sociological, religious and economic aspects of Rajasthan, (especially Mewar). His descriptions about Marwar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Amber are brief yet significant from informative point of view. Tod was highly interested in economic sources of Rajasthan. In his work he has written about nature, land, productivity, agriculture and industrial state, commerce, etc. a lot. Many times he gave suggestions to Maharana about ways of enhancing state income. He has studied the feasts and festivals, Gods and Goddesses, fasts and worship, and other socio-religious aspects of Rajasthan. He has conducted extensive personal surveys of temples and historical monuments. He was highly appreciative of valor, generosity, patriotism, and other such tendencies of Rajputs. He has written a lot about Jauhar and the sacrificial tendencies of Rajput women in

laudatory form. His accounts of history of Rajasthan is not just based on the writings of poets and Charans but also on Rasos, edicts, copper plates, pattas, coins and state records.

Vir Vinod by Kaviraja Shyamaldas, was out in printed form by 1886 A.D. Composed fully in Hindi, *Vir Vinod* is highly informative about the history of Mewar, but is actually a text of history of entire Rajasthan. It was the first historical text written immediately after Tod's work. Thus, we can see the influence of scientificity of western historiographical trends on it. However, other than Nainsi's work, he refers to all other khyats as old records only. He gives the geographical description of India and Rajasthan. Then he moves on to draw a live image of history of Mewar, its socio-economic condition its administrative systems and various cultural practices. It is also a record of entire Rajasthan through social, political and economic perspective. The impartiality and transparency of *Vir Vinod* is exemplified by the fact that Shyamaldas has not hesitated to write the criticism of his patrons Maharana Shambhu Singh and Maharana Sajjan Singh. Thus *Vir Vinod* can be depended upon for its analysis and factual information.

Kaviya Karnidan was the court laureate of Maharaj Abhey Singh of Jodhpur. He composed *Suraj Prakash* to commemorate the military exploits of his patron. Though he was in state service, yet he can be considered bold and independent enough to speak the truth, as is evident from the following example – Maharaj Abhey Singh and Sawai Jai Singh met at Pushkar. Kaviya Karnidan was also present. Jai Singh insisted that the poet should recite a couplet in praise of both of them. Karnidan recited the following couplet:

Jodhpat aur Amberat, dono thap us thap,
Kurma mariyo dikaro, kamdhaj mariyo boap.¹

(i.e. The Jodhpur and Jaipur rulers are equal to one another, the Kachwaha killed his brother and the Rathore his father.)

1 Hiralal Maheshwari. *op.cit.*, pp. 210.

Veer Satsai was written by Suryamal Mishran in second half of nineteenth century. It is entirely written in poetical form. The couplets of this text are though not political in nature, yet they give us a lot of information about the ethics and values of historical Rajput society. It was targeted to inflame the minds of Rajput men with the characters of bravery and heroism. We can also evaluate the spirit of social awareness by *Sagat Raso* of Girdhar Aashia. This is again a poetical text. It is one of the very few works meant to inspire the women folk towards their duty of sacrifice. It eulogizes sati, jauhar, acts of promoting their husbands and son's to participate in war and discourage them from acts of cowardice. The role of women in the specific structure of Rajput societies was acknowledged in *Sagat Raso*. It can be studied to mirror the facts of society and examine the ways women were made to contribute towards the perpetuation of state structure.

An examination of secondary and primary literature confronts me with some question, which can direct my research towards the comprehension of the process and evolution of Rajput states. The questions I grapple with are:

Research Questions

- What are the terms in which the state has been understood till now and are they capable of defining the state structure in its entirety?
- What are the supporting pillars of the state edifice and how do they operate and contribute towards the inception and perpetuation of any monarchy?
- What is the form and the process of the dispersion of the state policy by the mediation of which the interests of a few people in authority percolate downwards and outwards?
- What is the form and process of the public response by the mediation of which power moves inwards and onward?

- How does the evolved out state structure maintains and perpetuates itself?
- What are the standards which decide the selection of a certain set of ideologies and not the rest?
- Are people just reduced to the status of utility objects in the process of state formation? Who actually governs and who is governed?

Scheme of Chapterization

Chapter 2

Politics of Literature and Ceremonials

This chapter will chiefly focus on modes of connecting the subjects to the kings. This purpose will invite us to study the following themes:

I. Politics of Literature and Genealogies

The origin of Rajputs, their authority to rule and their purity of race, are some of the aspects which have drawn the attention of historians. All the genealogical texts are replete with mythology, allegory and improbable circumstance. The composition of these records was initiated by the will and command of the rulers to fulfill the demands of the contemporary methods of social dominance. Construction of a desired past and ancestry by bards and Charans was a part of politics of markers of status and authority. Though crafted, yet their philosophy draw from the social ethos. The intimate association of people with religion led the Charans (and other people related to this art) to synthesize a mythological past that would be appreciated and epitomized by the masses. This literature also informs us about the nature of society, its ideals and standards, and at the same time reveals the nature of political dominance Rajasthani society required to be controlled. The works of the native bards afford valuable data in facts, incidents, religious

opinions and traits of manners, many of which being carelessly introduced, and thus to be regarded as the least suspicious kind of historical evidence.

II. Politics of succession and coronation

The religious sentiments of the subjects were exploited further in the ceremonies of the investiture of royal authority. Succession alone was not deemed enough to be transformed into the right to rule. Some ceremonies of investiture of regal power have been in vogue from times immemorial. The coronation or *rajyabhishek* ceremony gave a constitutional right to the monarch who assumed the reins of the government on his succession to the throne. The rituals practiced during the coronation ceremony were so elaborate and ostentatious that they tended to cover the entire mythological and spiritual beliefs of the people and ensured a divine will in favor of the prince to rule the kingdom. It is important to understand the cosmological concept of a religion, its translation into a physical form and its mechanism of handing over the political authority to an individual.

III. Politics of Palace Routine.

An observation into the daily routine of the ruler throws light on the ideal way of living life, exemplified by his role model. This is a classic example of the way politics reaches into the most private spheres of personal life and sets the distinction between right and wrong. The hard work and sincerity would inspire his nobles and subjects to follow him. His dedication to religious deities and his activities of pilgrimages and donations would spread the message of followable practices far and wide. The extension of patronage to Charans, poets, astrologers and the learned men, can be considered as an organized and systematic way of taking political authority to the lowest echelons of society in a silent and subtle way.

IV. Politics of Ceremonials

The feasts and festivals, carnivals and public ceremonies, may be considered as medium whereby the political dominance is portrayed before the people in the garb of culture and their consent is taken without their knowledge. The pomp of Gangour, Teej, etc. was used in the service of the Rajput chiefs. In the form of these processions the notions of cosmic order and hierarchy were deployed and utilized by ruling elites as a means of ordering and disciplining their realms. An observation made into the symbolic meanings of chhatra (royal umbrella), chanwar (fly whisk), Shankha (conch shell), flags, buntings, drums, horses, elephants, etc. draw a relationship between earthly order and heavenly order. Ceremonial occasions were complex mechanisms of collective effervescence, meant for mobilization of bias. Spectacle and pageantry were hand maids of power.

Chapter 3

Politics of Court Culture

This chapter is chiefly meant to analyze the symbols, rituals and traditions which help in establishing a relation between the ruler and ruling elite, at a differential plane. The issue will involve us in the examination of the following themes:

I. Politics of Accession to Jagir

The relation of a jagirdar and the monarch was one of a delicate balance. The balance had to be maintained on the king's side to ensure that the noble do not start considering himself the owner of the assignment, while on the noble's part, he has to be aware that the king do not debar him from his hereditary position. A number of traditions were invented to maintain the cycle of dependence on each other. No one should be allowed to forget

the role of another. How this all was accomplished, leads us to the investigation the practices involved in the process of accession of jagir, and the symbolic importance of Khadag bandhai and other ceremonies involved.

II. Politics of Prerogatives of Nobility

For the king to be seated safely on the throne, it is essential for him that nobility is not united. To divide them, differences are created in them. The nobles were granted certain prerogatives. By allowing them to use these by varying degrees, differences were created amongst them. The rights to use drums, royal insignia, the right to ride on a horse etc. were certain prerogatives which were allowed to the ruling elite in certain differential categories which tended to classify the nobility.

III. Politics of Appointment of Muttasadis

This is yet another way of creating differences in the nobility and to instigate a sense of superiority and inferiority within one particular class of courtiers- muttasadis. We will see how the gifts bestowed by the rulers on the newly appointed officials varied according to their ranks in hierarchy. The concept of gradation of official hierarchy, which was just existent in an abstract form, here took a physical form. By variation in the ornaments and garments bestowed on muttasadis, the crystallization of hierarchical order becomes visible.

IV. Politics of Arrangement of Durbar

Durbar is a place where a formal proceeding of the court takes place. The supremacy of the king must get reflected in all aspects of his activity. The court is the scene where he could psychologically overawe his subordinates and make an impact of his splendor and glamour. An observation of a durbar in its proceedings is essential to understand the way a bond is established between the king and his Rajput sardars.

V. Politics of condolence and Mourning Durbars

A study of rituals followed on the death of a royal family member, an important noble or the sovereign himself, throws light on the way the nobility and the subjects are implicated in the process of state formation. The number of times the naubat is not beaten is directly related to the seniority of an individual in state hierarchy. The prohibition of any merriment on the passing away of the king is to draw the entire populace into political affairs. This way authority percolates down and the legitimacy of a dynasty is strengthened.

VI. Politics of Dress Code.

Dress is a medium which speaks volumes about status and dignity. A dress code in the courts of Rajasthan, gave an identity to the courtiers by separating them from the general public, just on the basis of looks. It gave coherence and identical nature to the ruling class. But, within the nobility itself, it worked as a system to categorize people on the basis of the rank and keep them in their limits.

VII. Politics of Court Etiquette

Etiquette is a very fine, subtle and highly refined way of examining the solidifying of the fluid differences within the ruling elite. A study of each and every detail of a individual's entry into durbar, his salutation, the sovereign's response to it, the position of sitting or stand, taking leave, etc. will throw light on the standards of status. The etiquettes were so designed as to confer the highest position to the kings. The prestige attached to every act gave the nobles their relative position.

VIII. Politics of some other traditions of Court Culture of Rajasthan

There are some traditions which can not be classified into one category but they are still significant to be understood in order to grasp the operations of power. They throw more light on the way the nobles are made to strengthen the position of king and a set system of politics in the Rajput states of Rajasthan.

Chapter 4

Genesis of culture

The production of culture is not free from politics. Its generation is not fully spontaneous and autonomous. It is controlled and directed, and is inclined to nourish a certain form of political authority. The ways of materializing these concepts draws us to the study of following themes.

I. Genesis of Rajput Culture

The social environment in which Rajputs are brought up inculcate in them the values of heroism, sacrifice, hospitality, charity, gratification of revenge, truthfulness etc. This is accomplished by the mediations of certain traditions, literary trends, beliefs, rituals, etc. All these modes of communications defines the rights and wrongs, and do's and don'ts of Rajput society.

II. Politics of Folk Literature

Literature is a great carrier of ideas and motivator of living them in our lives. In the absence of variety of means of entertainment, the poetry acquired an important place in the lives of masses. A look at the poems of eighteenth century can help us understand the social structure better. The couplets inspired the people to follow the path of bravery, dedication, patriotism and other such qualities which supported the political edifice.

III. Politics of Folk-Culture.

Singing of certain long stories was an important means of entertainment and education of eighteenth century Rajasthan. The folk tales of popular heroes, revered as Gods, impressed the minds of people to stand for the protection of cows, feminine modesty, protection of motherland, etc. The stories of Gogaji, Tejaji, Gulal Singh and other impressed the minds of people and inspired them to follow their foot steps.

IV. Politics of Sati Memorials

Sati can be described as the highest virtue of dedication and contributed to the strengthening of a certain political system. To promote people towards this act, the politics of sati memorial is to be analyzed. The structures like swastika, trisul, shivalinga, nandi, sun, moon, and other Hindu motifs enhanced the venerability of sati memorials. Giving the highest status i.e. worship, to sati memorials is to give instructions to the people to indulge in such activities and thereby contribute constructively towards the state structure.

Chapter 2

Politics of Literature and Ceremonials

Chapter 2

Politics of Literature and Ceremonials

The Concept

The relation between culture and nature was expressed through symbolism even in the early stages of human history. In each culture, a set of powerful symbols have evolved over centuries that not only have a high inspirational value but also provide specificity to a particular group. A social group conveys its aspirations, ways of life, behavioral code, familial relationships, fantasies and taboos through symbols. Symbology, coupled with ritualism, has been popularly associated with religious sphere. Anthropologically, rituals can be defined as, 'culturally standardized repetitive actions, primarily symbolic in character, involving the supernatural and the religious realm'.¹ In different social organizations performance of specific rituals have contributed towards preservation of separate identity of different groups. 'Rituals are used for socialization of new entrants to a social group and to familiarize them with the distinctive features of that particular realm.'² The life cycle rites not only controlled and provided entry to various roles in the Rajput society, but no one could take a new status or role without performing the prescribed rites. These rites were effective symbols which determined the placement of an individual in the social organization.

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An important realm, which has a strong symbolic dimension, is the political universe. As the states grew larger in size and the power holders became distanced from the ruled, the political environment became dependent on the symbolics and rituals. 'Authority became an abstraction that could be communicated just through the symbols and rituals.'³ It would be interesting to note as to how people had associated themselves with the utopian Puranic Empire, with which they had no direct contacts. Commonly, rituals and symbolic

1 Edward Muir. *Ritual in early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp 21.

2 Theodore W. Adorno, J. M. Bernstein. *The Culture Industry*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp 103.

3 Norbert Elias. *Involvement and Detachment*, London, Blackwell Publishers, 1987, pp ix.

devices that communicate authority have been associated with monarchical polities in which rulers were considered divine and distant, who radiated supernatural powers. In political culture, performances of ritual have special significance for legitimation of authority. It has been aptly observed that 'ritual is used to constitute power, not just reflect power that already exists'.⁴ In monarchical polities, the symbols of divine and royal that was clustered around the king were motivated by the need to place more distance between the ruler and the ruled. The rituals of a monarchical system reinforce exaltation, segregation and distinction.

Delineation of the Themes

Symbolism and rituals have always remained an essential ingredient for image construction of the political actor, legitimation of authority and garnering public support. However, in any society, at any given point of time, intentions of the rulers and their modes of attaining them, gets so amalgamated with the social patterns that they pass our observation. The social practices of eighteenth century Rajasthan has to be fragmented into the following themes to be able to analyze the forces of politics acting behind screen. In this section we would consider the factors which act as the connecting link between the state and the subjects, or in other words, the ruler and the ruled (not the ruling class in particular, though it can not be fully avoided).

- (I) Politics of Literature and Genealogies,
- (II) Politics of Succession and Coronation,
- (III) Politics of Palace Routine,
- (IV) Politics of Ceremonials.

⁴ Adorno. *op.cit.*, pp 108.

I. Politics of Literature and Genealogies

Literature was the predominant media of the eighteenth century Rajasthan, through which kingship and political legitimacy were constructed. The court laureates and their rhetorical and panegyric works eulogized their patrons for their ancestry, generosity, noble deeds, bravery, godliness and luxuries. They left no stone unturned to present their patrons as Gods. Col. James Tod calls this a sort of contract or understanding between the bard and the prince, 'a barter of solid pudding against empty praise'.⁵ Yet, by the medium of excellent literary skills, it captured the minds of the people, binding them to the royalty by yielding their sanction.

Different genres of Rajput Court Literature

'Most of the court literature is historical in nature as it was written by contemporary scholars who wanted to perpetuate the exploits of their masters and to praise them and their ancestors.'⁶ The literature of the historical nature can further be classified into following sub-categories,

- Khyats,
- Vanshavalis,
- Vats,
- Raso or Veerkavya.

1. Khyats

The khyats were written in prose by Charans. They gave us authentic description of contemporary events and were very useful from the historical point of view. The khyats were often written generation after generation and were not the work of single person. These were, 'not presented to the rulers, rather were consulted when some dispute arose regarding relationship or regarding some other matter in which precedence had to

5 Col. James Tod. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, New Delhi, KMN Publishers, 1971, vol. I, pp xv.

6 Dr. Hiralal Maheshwari. *History of Rajasthani Literature*, New Delhi, Sahitya Academy, 1980, pp.117.

be decided'.⁷ The Charans attached to the court of the ruler or the noble wrote day to day happenings in their bahis which were used for preparing the khyat. Nensi's Khyat of seventeenth century is a work of great repute. Jodhpur ki Khyat, Khyat Rathoran ri, Sisodiyan ri Khyat, Dayaldas ri Khyat are some of the famous khyats which have proved very useful in historical research. The khyats follow the pattern of Persian histories⁸ and are very systematic in presentation.

2. Vanshavalis

The vanshavalis are genealogies of the ruling princes and in flashes they throw some some light on the incidents and happenings during their reigns. The Amarkavya vanshawali and other such vanshavalis of Maharanas of Mewar are works of this nature. The Jodhpur ra Rathoran ri Vanshawali gives genealogical details about the rulers of Jodhpur. The Marwar ra Rathore Sardaran ri Khamp Peedhiyan Gam rekh ri Vigat is the vanshawali of the Rathore nobles of Marwar and also includes the gazetteer giving information about their estates etc. Such vanshavalis, prepared during the eighteenth century are found in abundance in the libraries of Rajasthan. 'These vanshavalis were mostly prepared by the court astrologer or purohit or bhat and presented to the ruler especially on his birthday. The ruler deposited them in the state library. The author was awarded with the cash or other gifts'.⁹ It seems that nobody worried about the authenticity of the dates of accession etc. of the previous rulers which have often been found to be wrong. The details about the recent and the contemporary rulers were authentic. 'the names of the usurpers were generally omitted from the genealogical tables of the dynasty.'¹⁰ It shows that they were not treated as legitimate rulers and were not held in esteem.

7 Ibid, pp 124.

8 B.L. Mali. *Rajasthani Sahitya ka Itihaas*, Vivek Publishing House, 1990, pp.17.

9 Agarchand Nahata, *Rajastani Sahitya ki Gauravpoona Parampara*, Delhi, Radhakrishna Prakashan, 1967, pp 29.

10 Maheshwari. *op.cit.*, pp 120.

3. Vats

The vats are historical anecdotes about one or more rulers and the nobles of Rajasthan. These are generally written in prose interspersed with verses here and there. These vats though not very reliable, often yielded information about the incidents which even khyats have omitted. Fiction was no doubt, a part of these vats yet, 'some vats helped in the discovery of some historical facts'.¹¹ Some non-historical vats have also been found. These were meant to amuse and educate the people. Some of the important historical vats are- Rawal Rana ji ri vat, Beeja- sorath ri vat, Vat Sanghaha, Raja Risalu ri vat, Achaldas Khichi ri vat and Lalmewari ri vat.

4. Raso or Veerkavya

'Prithviraj Raso set the fashion for the Rasos in Rajasthan.'¹² These were written mainly to eulogise the heroic deeds of the patrons. The Khuman Raso of Dalpat which is dated 1740 to 1760 AD contains the accounts of the battles fought by the Ranas upto Raj Singh. The Shatrushal Raso of Dungar Singh written in the eighteenth century faithfully follows the style of PrithvirajRaso.¹³ These Rasos seem to be very popular in Rajasthan during the eighteenth century as they are found in large number. Rasos are mostly of literary value. Some of them have yielded historical material, otherwise they generally resort to poetic flights. Supernatural elements form an essential part of their description of wars and battles. The Suraj Prakash and the Viradshringar of Karnidan and the Rajrupak of Virbhan Ratnu were written to commemorate the military exploits of Maharaja Abhey Singh of Jodhpur in Gujrat wars. Ashia Man Singh composed the Mahavajas Prakash to eulogize the brave deeds of Mahaya Singh of Batharda (Mewar) in the battles with Ranbaz Khan.

11 Ibid, pp 122.

12 Dr. Jagdish Prasad Srivastava. *Dingal Sahitya*, Allahabad, Hindustani Academy, 2000, pp 79.

13 Maheshwari, *op.cit.*, pp 125.

There are some other works also describing the valour of heroes in the battlefield, such as, *Rupak Gogadevji* by Paharkhan, *Maharana Sangram Singh II ka Yudha Kaushal* by Girdhar, *Zalim Singh Mertia Rathore* by Bakhta, *Raja Ummed Singh Sisodiya* by Chawand Das, *Rathore Sher Singh Mertia (Rian)* by Paharkhan, *Jhamal Thakur Devi Singh Pokharan ka* by Sabaldan, *Rawat pahar Singh Chundawat (Salumbar)* by Badridas and *Chouhan Udey Singh(Garhi-Banswara)* by Hukum Chand.

There is more of similarity rather than originality in these works. Same types of expressions have been used in all of them, viz, 'when the armies move the earth shakes, the dust storm hides the sun, when the battle begins the fairies garland the brave, when blood is shed the yoginies drink it from the khappar (skulls) and when dead warriors lie on the battlefield, Lord Shiva prepares a garland with there severed heads'.¹⁴ Without these supernatural allusions, the poets felt that their *kavya* was incomplete.

The decline of the Mughals deprived the Rajput rulers of opportunities of the heroic deeds on the battle grounds either in support of the Mughals or in their opposition. The era of peace made them indulge in luxurious life and internecine wars or intrigues. When the muse did not find heroic incidents to sing about, they began to compose their works on the glamour and glory of their ruler's palaces and the society around them. They exhausted all their metaphors and similies in describing the decorations and the colours of the palaces and activities therein.

Nandram's *Jagvilas* was written to commemorate the inauguration of the lake palaces of Maharana Jagat Singh II. Bisan Singh's *Vijey Vilas* lauds Maharaja Vijey Singh. Adha Kishan wrote *Bhim Vilas* in honour of Maharana Bhim Singh.¹⁵ These poems were panegyrics of the rulers rather than the songs of their valor and brave deeds.

Literature was the chief mode of communication, connecting different echelons of society. Though the major section of the populace was illiterate, yet the message of

¹⁴ Ibid, pp127.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp 128

literary texts reached the masses through the medium of folk culture, songs, plays, etc. thus giving rise to the multiplicity of forms of expression. The performances of these themes became the nondetachable part of popular entertainment. Hence, taking and inscribing the message onto the hearts of people. An examination of origin of Rajputs can be a good example to study this force in action.

Role of Politico-Religious Literature in Origin of Rajputs

Drawing the cycle of Rajput lineage in north India, Richard G. Fox, marks its initiation into a situation where the state is weak or just absent. On the rise of such circumstances, ancestors-adventurers arise and spread unhindered to stake their claims to local political power.¹⁶ Sometimes, the lineage founder settles on virgin land. In virgin or waste territory the lineage ancestor often acted as an agricultural entrepreneur. To assert his claim over the land of his activity, the service of Charans, Bhats and Brahmin were required. The genealogies created by them 'tried to link the Rajputs with the ancient kshatriya dynasties of Rama and Krishna'.¹⁷ The extremely elaborate and distinctive construction undertaken by these scholars was a conscious effort patronized by the rulers, who sought to legitimize their status as genuine kshatriyas. These genealogies often made use of 'potent icons or myths of legitimacy, in most cases revolving around the divine origin'.¹⁸ One of the earliest symbols that Rajput rulers carefully evolved by the medium of these literary compositions, as their legitimizing and identifying feature, was the myth of ancestry that bestowed divinity in them. In Mewar, the Ranas sought to establish their supernatural antecedent not only by claiming ancestry from Lord Rama, a popular and predominant deity of Hindu Pantheon, but they regarded Lord Shiva, another powerful divinity of Hindus as the real crowned king of Mewar.¹⁹ These myths were perpetuated in public memory rituals that were performed by the kings to reinforce their divine nature.

16 Richard G. Fox. *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule*, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1971, pp 69.

17 Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma. *Honour, Status and Polity*, New Delhi, Rawat, 2004, pp 66.

18 Ibid, 68.

19 Nandini Sinha Kapur. *State Formation in Rajasthan*, Delhi, Manohar, 2002, pp 281.

The 'concise genealogical sketch of the Rathore rulers of Marwar'²⁰ gets reflected elaborately in Suraj Prakash, Raj Roopak and Vijay Vilas, chiefly composed during the eighteenth century. Though Tod, do find them authentic for the contemporary information, he still doubt their information of the past, based totally on Puranas and genealogical legends.²¹ Speaking of their religious nature, Tod remarks 'their philosophy, their poetry.....took a character from its intimate association with the religion of the people'.²²

He further adds:

In the absence of regular and legitimate historical records there are however, other native works.....which abound in names, but are extremely barren of events; or they are related so much without circumstances and causes, that the most profound and eloquent writer must despair of rendering them either instructive or entertaining to the reader. The monks (Brahmins) who lived remote from public affairs considered the civil transaction as subservient to the ecclesiastical, and were strongly affected with credulity, with the love of wonder, and with a propensity of imposture.²³

Tod gives, the detailed history of the thirty royal races of Rajputana, and as per the traditional beliefs he finds that, 'In the earliest ages there were but two races, Soorya and Chandra, to which were added four Agnikulas; in all six²⁴'. About he Gehlots, the Lord of Chitore, he writes, 'By universal consent, as well as by the gotra, its princes were admitted to be the direct descendants of Rama, of the Solar line. The pedigree is deduced from him, and connected with Soomitra, the last Prince mentioned in the genealogy of the Poorans.'²⁵

A doubt hangs on the origin of this justly celebrated race. The Rathore genealogies trace their pedigree to Cush, the second son of Rama; consequently they would be

20 Tod. *Annales*, vol.II, pp I .

21 Ibid, pp 2-8.

22 Ibid, pp XV.

23 Ibid, pp XV.

24 Ibid, pp 70.

25 Ibid, pp 71.

Sooryavansh. 'But by the Bards of this race they were denied this honor, and although Cushite, they were to be the descendants of Casyapa, of the solar race, by the daughter of the Dyte (Titan). The progeny of Hirna Casyapa is accordingly stigmatized as being of demonic origin.'²⁶

Similarly, on the basis of traditional accounts, he opines about Kachwahas, 'The Cushwaha race is descended from from Cush, the second son of Rama. They are Cushites, as the Rajputs of the Mewar are the Lavites of India'.²⁷

These and such ideas were constantly circulated in the society by the state system, in order to get the sanction of handling the administrative affairs. The state always held monopolistic possession of the sacred realm to help perpetuate their political dominance. This 'symbolic capital'²⁸ not only yields sanction but also constitutes privilege. This was the 'essential political process through which disparate groups seeking political power gained legitimacy'.²⁹ Once the required genealogies are crafted and the strong foundation of desired state structure is laid, the job is not over. The process has to be followed in continuum to sustain the political edifice and to retain the 'monopoly of the opportunity for the well born'.³⁰ To attain this end, a set of values, ideas, concepts, practices and myths can be identified in literary traditions and social institutions.³¹ Ranabir Chakraborty has chosen to call Brahamans (and other literary communities engaged in the genesis of genealogies) as 'traditional intellectuals'³² performing the function of manipulating popular themes and locating ideological domination in non-coercive organs of society.

26 Ibid, pp 74.

27 Ibid, pp 75.

28 Norbert Peabody. *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Pre-colonial India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp 52

29 B.D. Chattopadhyaya. 'The Emergence of the Rajputs as the Historical Process in Early Medieval Rajasthan' in Karine Schomer, Joan L. Erdman, Deryck O. Lodrick and Lloyd I. Rudolph ed., *The Idea of Rajasthan*, Delhi, Manohar, 1994, pp 186.

30 Edwards Shils. *Tradition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp 15.

31 Kunal Chakrabarty. *Religious Process: The Puranas and the making of a regional tradition*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp 14.

32 Ibid, pp 15.

The phenomenon of flow of authority is not just from top to bottom, but both ways. The higher echelons of political control have to take clues from society itself. It has to indulge in the comprehension of the trends and norms valued in the society, and then project these identified ideologies back on the society in the form of myths keeping themselves in the centre. This act would fetch them recognition and legitimacy. Thus, the state cannot decide the norms it wants to project on the society, but is the society itself which decides the norms to be projected on it (though it is itself unaware of it). In the words of Foucault 'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and the effort of power which it induces and which extends it'.³³ Lastly, the bodies of information to be transmitted, generated by these literary compositions, do not remain limited to the books only, but gets communicated to the masses by the mediation of oral recitations by Charans and Bhats.³⁴ Recitation, singing or expressions of words in a way different from speaking, makes a more permanent effect on memory and inscribes the message deeper, thus serving as a significant tool of social control.³⁵

2. Politics of Successions and Coronation

The Rajputs acquired the political authority over any territory by the collective efforts of their clan. They would therefore, indulge into the practice of safeguarding their prerogatives for their descendants. In this endeavor, first of all, they patronized the generation of such genealogies and histories, which made the people accept their right to rule. Further, to perpetuate this in continuity, a large number of rituals and ceremonies were designed to make believe the subjects the superiority of the ruling elite. Thus such devices have to be employed in the process, which would drive the collective mentality of the masses in a specific direction. 'The progress of society depends on the history of mind.'³⁶ 'It led to the creation of a state which for more than a millennium continued to

33 Norman P. Ziegler. 'The Seventeenth Century Chronicles of Marvara: A Study in Evolution and use of Oral Tradition in Western India', in *History of Africa: A Journal of Method*, vol 3 (1976), pp 129.

34 Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Vintage, 1977, pp 133.

35 Maurice Bloch. *Ritual, History and Power*, London, Berg Publishers, 1989, pp 19 -49.

36 Georges Duby. *The Chivalrous Society*, London, University of California Press, 1977, pp 188.

vegetate without originality, living on a tradition inherited from the past'.³⁷ The rules of succession and coronation were such that they would exclude a large section of population out of competition and thus avoid unnecessary disturbance to the ruling elite and the state structure. The validity of their claims of legitimacy was based on the rational, traditional and charismatic grounds.³⁸ It just makes us believe, 'Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product'.³⁹

A look at the rules of succession makes it clear how the royal authority was reserved for a single lineage for centuries and the outsiders were discouraged to even aspire for it. Succession in Mewar was generally regulated by the law of primogeniture as is evident from the successions of the Ranas from Lakha to Jawan Singh. Out of twenty five rulers fifteen inherited the throne by primogeniture, three were usurpers and four inherited the throne as younger brothers and one as uncle of the deceased Rana as no other relative was available. Twice the ruling Ranas made an effort to nominate the younger prince as their heir because their mothers were their beloved consorts.⁴⁰

Similarly, in case of Bikaner, from Rao Bika(1472-1504) to Maharaja Dungar Singh (1872-1887), out of twenty, twelve princes succeeded on the basis of primogeniture.⁴¹ The other successions were exceptions because of some urgency or necessity.

In Amber (Jaipur) , from Rao Prithviraj to Maharaja Jaisingh III (1821-1835), out of eighteen, eleven princes inherited the throne through primogeniture, two were usurpers, an uncle and another a grandson.⁴²

37 Averil Cameron. 'The Construction of Court Ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies' in David Cannadine and Simon Price ed. *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp 108.

38 Max Weber. 'Authority and Legitimacy' in Eric A. Nordlinger. ed. *Politics and Society*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1970, pp 36.

39 Sherry B. Ortner. 'Theory in Anthropology since the sixties' in Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, Sherry B. Ortner ed. *Culture/Power/History*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp 402.

40 G.K. Ojha. *Rajasthan ka Itihaas*, Jaipur, Pragati Prakashan, 1960. vol. II, pp 269.

41 Ibid, pp 298.

42 Ibid, vol I., pp 18.

Succession in Jodhpur (Marwar) presents altogether a different picture, as 'the customs of Rathores are different from those of other Rajputs, for that child succeeds, whose mother, the father has loved the most, though he may be younger'.⁴³ The succession in Jodhpur was rarely smooth and in accordance with the rules of primogeniture. Nomination by the dying king was not enough to decide the issue of succession, rather the support of the principle nobles of Marwar was essential. In Marwar it has been a common saying that, 'Rinmala thapiya tiko raja', i.e. The prince supported by the descendants of Rinmala (nobles of right flank) will be the ruler.⁴⁴

Here, we can observe that the right to rule remained confined to just one lineage. Even though the nobles played the decisive role, yet they themselves could not acquire the throne. They had to choose from the members of the royal family only. However, the succession was not deemed enough to invest the prince with the right to rule. Some ceremonies of investiture for regnal powers have been in vogue from time immemorial. The coronation or Rajyabhishek ceremony gave a constitutional right to the monarch. 'It presented the king as God's special representative on earth, who was to be regarded by his subjects as the visible image of god, and whose authority gained an overwhelmingly powerful heavenly sanction.'⁴⁵ The anointment would usually put an end to succession disputes and create an environment for peaceful governance. It is accomplished by evolution of traditions capturing the sentiments of the people. Domination of ritual performance in any society means, to live 'a life of emotion and not of thoughts'.⁴⁶

The consecration of a Rajput ruler took place twice or thrice. The first was known as gaddi birajana or occupying royal cushion. It took place immediately after the funeral of ruler or twelve days after his cremation. It was an installation ceremony in which the nobles played a prominent part. The tilak (red mark on the forehead) was applied by the

43 R.P. Vyas. *The Role of Nobility in Marwar*, Jodhpur, Navratan Publications, 1970, pp 9.

44 Ibid. pp 10.

45 Averil Cameron. *op.cit.*, pp 107.

46 Muir. *op.cit.* pp 1.

noble holding the traditional privilege of anointing the tika. It was a simple ceremony devoid of any pomp and show.⁴⁷

The second and the main ceremony was held according to the mahurat (auspicious moment) as predicted by the royal astrologers. Large scale preparations were made for it. This coronation ceremony was organized with ostentations, pomp and show. Grand functions and festivities were held on this occasion.⁴⁸

The third ceremony was generally performed in the Mughal court for the Rajput vassals. The Mughal emperor or his prime minister put the tika of accession on the fore head of the concerned Raja and bestowed royal gifts of robe-Khilat on him. This tika could be held immediately if the ruler was present in the Mughal court at the time of the death of previous ruler. This could be had at first, or second or the last ceremony. There was no fixed procedure for it. It mostly depended on the convenience of the emperor and the presence of the concerned prince at the Mughal court.⁴⁹ The Maharanas of Mewar received their tika from the Mughal emperors through special envoys in their own court. They never attended the imperial court at Agra or Delhi.⁵⁰

Here, it is clear that the dominance of the Mughal emperors was always held in the courts of Rajputana and their formal approval in the form of a ceremony was essential to acknowledge a prince as a ruler. At the same time the local ruling elite was also significant and a ceremony again needed in their presence. Celebration of the king's accession at a grand level in accordance with the auspicious planetary position ensured the people of heavenly support for a just and prosperous rule. The analogy with the physical universe not just guaranteed the blessings of God, but also 'bound the human and cosmological processes together in a hierarchy of complex relationship'.⁵¹ The rulers saw it in their interest not merely to ally with ecclesiastical hierarchy.....but also to

47 R.P. Kathuria. *Life in the Courts of Rajasthan*, Delhi, Sultan Chand and Sons, 1987, pp 46.

48 Ibid. pp 47.

49 Ibid. pp48.

50 Ojha. *op. cit.* Vol II, pp. 260.

51 David McMullen. 'Bureacrats and Cosmology: the ritual code of T'ang China' in David Cannadine and Simon Price ed. *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp 215.

sacrifice their 'unlimited sovereignty' for one that was 'limited and stunted' by being sub-ordinated to ecclesiastical control'.⁵²

A look at the details of the coronation rituals gives us the picture of the exhaustive exploitation of Hindu beliefs. The coronation ceremony programme began with invocation for peace viz Aindri Shanti etc. much in advance. A day prior to the coronation after Yogyantar Sanskar, prince's body was purified with the soil dug from various places. This was mixed with water and the paste was applied to the various organs of body of the would be ruler.

The head was purified with the soil obtained from the top of a hill, ears with soil from ant-hill, right hand with soil dug with the tusk of an elephant and left hand with that dug by the horn of an ox, back with mud from a tank and belly with from the confluence of rivers, both sides with the soil gathered from the banks of a river, his waist with the soil collected from the door of a prostitute, thighs, knees and buttocks with the dust of an elephant shed, of a cow shed and of a stable, respectively and feet with the dust raised by the wheels of a chariot.

The body of the prince was then washed with water mixed with five holy secretions of the cow. After this he bathed with water brought from tanks. The prince fasted and spend the night in total abstinence. He slept on the bed of grass on or ground.

Next day after taking his bath the prince dressed up in white clothes, tied holy grass on the arm, changed the sacred thread (yajnopavita), said his prayers and invoked for forgiveness of ten types of physical, oral and mental sins. Then he invoked Pushkar and other holy places, performed Chandrayan-vrat, Matrika-pujan and Shradh oblations. His queens clad in ornaments (solah shringar), entered the mandap (canopy) from the east and consecrated the prince while standing on his left side.

52 Janet L. Nelson. 'The Lord's anointed and the people's choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual' in David Cannadine and Simon Price ed. *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp 159.

Under the canopy the vedi (seat) was established in the north-east corner for the purpose of coronation (in other ceremonies it was established in the south-western direction). The Kashmiri carpet was spread and over it was placed a golden or ivory throne having the symbols of eight lions on four pedestals. Tiger skin was spread on the cushion. The prince then adopted the insignia of royalty i.e. the throne (takhat), umbrella (chhatra), fly whisk (chanwar) and the crown (mukut). While ascending the throne the king was sprinkled with ghee (butter oil) trickling from a perforated golden pot by the Brahman who stood in the eastern direction, milk through the silver pot by the Kshatriya standing in the west and holy water through earthen pot of rudramatiya (shudra) standing to the north.

It is also suggested that the four pots were filled with five ratnas (jewels), five types of soil, five types of grass, and five holy secretions of cow. They were then to be covered with copper plates and tied with cloth and placed in east, west, south and north of the mandap.

Having worshipped Lord Ganesha, the sacrificial pillar (yup stambha) was set up by offering milk and curd. Oblations were made to the nine planets (navagraha) and main havan (fire oblations) was performed. In coronation five principle Gods Vishnu, Rudra, Indra, Agni and Surya were mainly performed.

Eight reciters (japak) of the vedas were up in the Mandap, two each in the east for reciting the Rigveda, in south for the Yajurveda, in west for the Samaveda, and in the north for the Atharvaveda. This recitation went on for the whole night.

Next morning the prince was clad in new clothes, worshiped nine planets, offered sacrifice to Narayan and Laxmi, Shiva and Parvati, Brahma and Brahmani, Indra and Indrani (god and goddesses), Surya and Chandra (Sun and Moon) and Ganga and Yamuna (sacred rivers). He then tastes Madhupark (curd mixed with honey) while seated on the Bhadrapiith (small seat) in the south of the mandap. He performed aachaman first on the bull's skin (for desiring prestige) and then on the elephant's skin (for desiring

wealth- Laxmi). After performing the havan the Maharaja took his ceremonial bath. He sat on the bhadrapith and was sprinkled by honey through a porous pot having a hundred holes, then with milk, curd and water respectively. He was smeared with seven auspicious dusts as earlier and five holy secretions of cow and then bathed with scented waters. He, then, put golden bracelets on the legs with symbols of Swan, worn sacred thread and new clothes and turban and put a garland of champa flowers round the neck and performed salutations from the bhadrapith to the west to Vishnu (kurma or tortoise), to the south to the Shesh (celebrated serpent who serves as the couch of lord Vishnu) and to the other side to mother earth and to all. He then saluted the Sinhasana (throne), got on to the foot stool and spread mustard seeds around it, chanting sacred verses and paid respects to all Gods. The Raja was shown the vessel containing the medicinal herbs. He then looked his own reflection in the bronze pot full of ghee and put a gold coin in it and gave it to the brahmana.⁵³

Reciting mantra he was shaded with the chattra and wore the Mukut. The guru (priest) named him so and so varma. The Raja then worshipped the weapons, sword, dagger, bow and arrow, etc.. After it he worshipped the insignias of royalty- chanwar (fly whisk) , chhatra (umbrella), conch shell (shankha), golden mace, the flag, buntings, drum, horse and elephants, etc. He performed some sacrifice to god and goddesses.

After the performance of these religious rituals prisoners were set free.⁵⁴ This can be understood as 'good faith economy'⁵⁵, which actually nothing and brings in immense faith of subjects. The Raja then offered clothes, cattle and money to the Charans and Brahmins. This can be understood as the show of royal generosity and encouragement to propagate their fame,

53 Ojha. *op.cit.*, vol I, pp 80.

54 M.S. Narvane. *Rajput of Rajasthan: A Glimpse of Medieval Rajasthan*, Agra, Laxminarayan Publishers, 1972, pp 23.

55 Richard Burghart. 'Gift to the Gods; power, property and ceremonials in Nepal' in David Cannadine and Simon Price ed. *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp 159.

On this occasion, the Raja appointed his ministers and officers and received nazars from them.⁵⁶

He was then taken on an elephant in a procession with his nobles and ministers and the royal retinue and passed through the main streets of the capital and paid obeisance to the deities of the temples en route.⁵⁷

After the procession an open durbar was held where the nobles were presented to the new ruler. Muttasadis- officials, principle citizens and merchants etc. in due precedence paid there homage. All of them paid nazar and nichrawal according to their rank and status. After receiving the nazars the new Maharaja bestowed favors on them in the shape of siropavs, horses, elephants, etc. according to their traditions in vogue and privileges of the incumbents. The envoys from the rajas, nawabs and friendly states presented tika (coronation felicitation) by way of recognition in the shape diamonds, pearls, gold coins, elephants and robes etc.⁵⁸

The appointment of royal office holders is the first step to assert the administrative authority of the newly anointed king. Further, taking a procession in the midst of people is the open declaration of his being the king. Finally, allowing the ruling elite to offer nazar and nichrawal, is the process by which a bond is initiated between the ruler and his sub-ordinates. Earlier nazar and nichrawal were offered to the father of the present monarch, now, performing the same act, a new relation is developed with the the new ruler. Also, it initiates the obedience and submission of the state power holders.

Besides, the religious ceremonies of consecrations, there evolved some local traditions for the coronation of the new ruler in nearly all states of Rajasthan due to some incidents of historical significance. These traditions have always been kept up and ceremoniously adhered to.

56 Kaviraja Shyamaldas. *Vir Vinod*, Udaipur, Shakhtawat Publishing House, 1974, pp. 199.

57 Ibid, pp 199.

58 Ibid, pp 200.

The rajyabhishek ceremonies of Maharanas of Mewar included a fairly old tradition of applying tika by the Bhil noble of Oghna while the Bhil chief of Undri held the platter of scorched rice and kumkum (red paste). The chief of Oghna used to cut his thumb and apply the tika with his blood on the forehead of the Rana. He then took the Rana by arm and seated him on his ancestral throne. The Bhil chiefs earned this privilege in lieu of their alliance with and promise of loyalty to Bappa Rawal- the founder of the house of Mewar.⁵⁹

In Dungarpur also there was a similar tradition. The Balwaia Bhil sept enjoyed the right of applying the tika on the forehead of the new ruler of Dungarpur state. The rulers of Dungarpur were Sisodiyas and belonged to the same house as the Ranas of Mewar, so they might have kept up this tradition of their parent branch.⁶⁰ Besides religious rituals of the coronation, the right of applying the tilak on the forehead of the prince of Marwar went to the Thakur of Bagri- one of the prominent nobles of Jodhpur. It was a hereditary privilege of the house of Bagri since the accession of Rao Jodha.⁶¹

In Bikaner also the tradition of applying the tika has come down from the times of Rao Bika (1742-1804), the founder of Bikaner House. The right of applying tilak at the time of rajyabhishek of the successor of the throne of Rao Bika was that of a Godara Jat of Sekhasar who got it by a contract of submission settled with Rao Bika on behalf on behalf of Godara Jat community.⁶²

The Meenas of Khalikho who had been the lords of the soil before the coming of the Kachhwahas, as a compromise, were entrusted with the protection of the treasures placed in Jai Mandir and the guarding of the seraglio and the person of the prince. The Meenas discharged their trust of guarding treasures and palaces most faithfully and have left no blot on their faithfulness and loyalty.⁶³

59 Ibid. pp 378.

60 Ibid. pp 380.

61 Ibid. pp 491.

62 Dayaldas. *Dayaldas ri Khyat*, Jodhpur Rajasthani Shodh Sansthan, 2005, vol. II, pp 108.

63 Tod. *op. Cit.*, Vol II, pp 141.

The evolution of such traditions show that either they were accidental or were adopted to emphasize the contract entered at some earlier stage of establishment of the state. Such traditions and customs did not have any religious value but they were constitutional in nature. They were politically motivated and reminded the rulers of the high service rendered by the ancestors of the particular chiefs for the house of the sovereign. A bond of friendship and reciprocal loyalty is exhibited in these age old traditions.

These and other such traditions effectively involved those forces in the process of state forces which would otherwise prove disruptive. These are good examples of studying the ways power was reserved for some people and the ways outsiders were prevented to encroach upon it. All such activities of state should be examined thoroughly to understand history deeper and wider.

III. Politics of Palace Routine

No monarch can rule just by military and administrative prowess. Once any individual has secured a throne for himself, his position is still not secure. He has to communicate the message of his being the king to the local public, in order to subvert any idea of rebellion against him. At the same time the public is to be trained and moulded in such a way that it contributes to the security and continuity of the established political order. The first step towards it is the publicity of the palace routine. 'The royal household was conceived as a sort of 'icon' of the kingdom. The activities that transpired within the household, had an emblematic character, both in signalling and constituting relationships between agents of political order. Those who congregated at the royal household 'enacted' and affirmed relationships which extended far beyond the royal residence itself. Procedure within the royal household were thus of utmost importance.'⁶⁴ An analysis of the routine of the rulers of Marwar can help us understand the matter more effectively. Ordinarily, their routine was as follows,

Before sunrise: The Maharaja got up and prepared himself for the work of the day.

64 Daud Ali. *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp 109.

Early morning: He visited the temple where he performed worship for one or two hours. Maharaja Vijay Singh was a devotee of Bal Krishna, while Bhim Singh Singh was of Hinglaj ji. They visited their respective deities.

9 A.M. To 11 A.M. : Maharaja held public durbar where state business was transacted.

Noon : had his meals and took rest.

Afternoon 3 to 4 P.M. : The durbar was held in the afternoon, if necessary, for state business. Consultations for two to three hours were held with the nobles and officers, if necessary.

If the the durbar was not held at time, the Maharaja spent his time in pleasure activities viz. observing the acrobatic feats, combats of wrestlers and animal fights etc.

6 to 8 P.M. or 8 to 10 P.M. : A durbar was held where commandants of various expeditions were given reception or bade farewell. Besides business or official decisions, appointments, transfers and promotions were also ordered.

The Raja with his retinue and the courtiers often enjoyed music and dance. Secret consultations took place after the durbar and sometimes in the bed room of the Maharaja.

The festival durbars were held on fixed dates and days but had no fixed time. The Diwali durbar was generally held from 5P.M. onwards while the holi durbar was held in the afternoon. Akha Teej durbar in the first part of night while Rakhi Poonam in the second quarter of the night.

After about midnight the Jodhpur ruler went to sleep.⁶⁵

The daily routines of the Maharaja of Udaipur and that of the Maharaja of Jodhpur have a close resemblance. These routines confirm to the standard laid down by Kautilya in his Arthashastra.⁶⁶

65 Bisheshwar Nath Reu. *Glories of the Marwar and the Glorious Rathores*, Jaipur, Pragati Prakashan, 1969, pp 319.

66 Kathuria. *op. cit.*, pp 68.

The rulers had a high concept of kingship and regulated the daily routine of their life with a sense of duty. They personally supervised every detail of administration and took a full part in the public life. They regulated their routine on the principle that the king's presence was required everywhere. The king presided over all the business of administration in consultation with his ministers, and civil and military officials. He discussed all political, social and religious problems.⁶⁷

The Rajput rulers always connected to their people through their religious activities and exploited in their favor. The Mewar rulers superseded the Brahmin priest as officiant of the ceremonies at the shrine of Eklingji, they assumed the title of Diwan of Eklingji and exhibited this divine connection on official correspondence. In all the royal processions on important occasions, the deity of Lord Shiva preceded Maharana. The name of Eklingji was evoked in common parlance as well as by the ruling elite, while greeting each other. Swearing in the name of Eklingji ensured a commitment to promise.⁶⁸

The Ranas regularly relegitimized their link with Lord Rama through various symbols and rituals. The banner or the flag of the Sisodiyas with a golden sun on a crimson field was a symbol that proclaimed their relationship with the Suryavansh (race of the God). In fact, sun, as a symbol of their divine descent, was given universal precedence in Mewar. The chief entrance to the city was called Suryapol (portal of the sun), chief apartment or hall of the palace was called Surya Mahal (hall of the sun) and to the Surya Gokhra (balcony where an imposing symbol of the sun was placed) the Maharana paid their obeisance which formed a daily ritual before every meal.⁶⁹ These served as constant reminders of the Maharana's status as the sun's representative.

In addition to this, rituals, forms of worship and art forms were also devised that sought to reinforce the illustrious and divine descent. A popular mode by which the Maharana tried to consolidate his identity and distinctness as the supreme and divine authority

67 Mubarak Ali Khan. *The Court of the Great Mughals*, Bochum, 1976, pp 41.

68 Suresh K. Sharma and Usha Sharma. *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, New Delhi, Popular Publisher, 1999, pp 114.

69 Pratibha Jain. *op.cit.*, pp 90.

among his people and nobility was through patronization of religious festivals organized by the state. Religion became a potent political instrument for perpetuation and enhancement of the ruler's legitimacy and status. Dushehra was the most prominent state festival in all Rajput states where rulers claimed descend from Lord Rama, since the festival was celebrated as Vijaydashmi (victory festival) in commemoration of the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana- the demon king. The Maharana worshiped the Khejri tree on Dushehra, since Lord Rama performed the same ritual while leaving for a life in the forest. The Maharana even held his durbar in a canopy fixed on a platform near the tree, known as Khejri Ka Durrikhana. Thus, we see that 'each generation inevitably play on the dead whatever tricks it find necessary for its own peace of mind'.⁷⁰

The performance of these rituals 'predicted the future occurrence of auspicious and avoided the inauspicious'.⁷¹ This 'cultural economy of devotion'⁷² helped the rulers to keep his subjects calm and obedient, who would otherwise get panicked and rebellious in the wake of any external threat or natural disaster. 'The local religious traditions were used to bolster any process of resistance.'⁷³ By the means of publicizing the daily routine of the sovereign, the people are being taught the ideal way of living their lives. This calls for 'understanding the role and nature of the political in social life'.⁷⁴ It shows how the politics was inscribed in the texture of everyday. 'The relations of everyday life bear stamp of power.'⁷⁵ Teaching 'collective rhythms'⁷⁶ to the people directs them towards doing their duty as a man sincerely, conforming to the social order, and not falling out of line. Every established order tends to produce the naturalization of its own arbitrariness. All people, irrespective of their social, political or economic position, make their specific

70 Muir. *op cit.*, pp 1.

71 Ronald Inden, Jonathan Waters and Daud Ali. *Querying the Medieval: Text and History of Practise in South Asia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 181.

72 Peabody. *op.cit.*, pp 81.

73 Jacques P. Leider 'Forging Buddhist Credentials as a Tool of Legitimacy and Ethnic Identity: A Study of Arakan in Nineteenth Century Burma' in *Jounal of Economic in Social History of the Orient* 51 (2008), pp 409.

74 Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, Sherry B. Ortner ed. *Culture/Power/ History*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp 4.

75 *Ibid*, pp 4.

76 Pierre Bourdieu. 'Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power' in Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, Sherry B. Ortner ed. *Culture/Power/ History*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp 158.

contribution to the reproduction of power relations of which, they are the product themselves. 'The taxonomies of mythico-ritual system at once divide and unify, legitimating unity in division, that is to say, hierarchy.'⁷⁷

To conform the God's rule in their empire, every dynasty in Rajasthan had a religious preceptor (purohit). The purohit was appointed by the ruler. His office was hereditary and was held by his progeny. Some of the rulers appointed additional purohit. In major states, office of the Vyas was also prevalent. The Rajput rulers built temples and gave endowments and assigned villages to the brahmins and the priests. The rajas took up the role of protectors of religion, brahmin and cow.⁷⁸ They regarded it as their sacred duty. They also extended their patronage to Charans, poets, astrologers and learned men. They bestowed on them Karor Pasava or Lakh Pasava.⁷⁹ The brahmins and priests received royal bounties every now and then. They also established hospitals, inns, wells, etc. for the benefit of their people.⁸⁰

All the activities of this kind took the fame of the monarch and his generosity in each and every corner of the empire. Many a time their fame outlived their lives. Royal gifts or land or income to the temple or its priest was 'an important act of statesmanship to gain divine support'.⁸¹ Once the divine support is secured, the public support is already won. These were the gifts by which relations of reciprocity were created by human and celestial gods. Brahmins or Charans were also the important intermediaries in furthering the interests of the state. The gift of this 'Symbolic Capital'⁸² implies the giver's undeclared calculation with the recipient's undeclared calculation.

77 Ibid, pp. 160.

78 Anil Chandra Banerjee. *Aspects of Rajput State and Society*, New Delhi, Vishal Publishing House, 1983, pp 185.

79 Reu. *op.cit.* pp 173.

80 Ibid, pp 175.

81 Burghart. *op.cit.*, pp 243.

82 Bourdieu. *op.cit.* pp 166.

IV. Politics of Ceremonials

Politics is not just confined to the doings of those in authority and the responses of those who are sub-ordinate. It is more about how they do it. 'The rituals of real are not mere incidental phenomena, but are central to the structure and working of any society.'⁸³ Festivals and carnivals are the sites where parties involved are constantly negotiating the questions of power, authority and the control of the definitions of reality.

Festivals have always provided an occasion to old and young, poor and rich, commoner and the ruler to get together and to know one another. Festivals provided a common ground of meeting for different strata of society. They had an important place in the social life of the people and so these were publicly celebrated. The rulers and their nobles joined their people in these celebrations. The royal procession and the pageantry added grandeur and glamor to the occasion. The rulers came amidst their people and felt one with them on the festivals. It created a feeling of affection for the Raja among the masses. Such occasions provided the people an opportunity to see their ruler, who was not ordinarily accessible to the common people. Festivals were celebrated with all solemnity and pomp. Among the festivals, Dushehra were most important as a state festival. Another festival of merriment was Holi. Celebration of these continued for a couple of days. Diwali, Akha Teej, Basant Panchami and Raksha-bandhan were some of the other important festivals on which durbars were held.

Before delving into the description of these festivals, we must bear it in mind that these grand celebrations were not merely pomp, but pomp in service of power. By its glamor and grandeur a spectacle is created, which in turn bedazzles the minds of its spectators and leave them with the feeling of awe and fear. It makes the people realize the superiority of the state, and their own minuteness, and above all, the vast insurmountable gap between the two. The political hierarchy is just imposed on the lives of the people and they are just made to accept it and give their consent, even without their knowledge.

83 Cannadine. *op.cit.*, pp 3.

Gangour

It is held in the honor of Gauri, the goddess of creation sacred to Rajputs. This remarkable festival of Rajasthan has always been celebrated with peculiar splendor at Udaipur on the third of the bright half of Chaitra.

The Maharana rode on his horse on the sound of the third nakkarah (kettle drum). The gun sounds from the Eklinggarh announced the commencement of Gauri's procession. The Maharana with his cavalcade proceeded to the Pichola Lake. The arrangement of the procession used to be in a set precedence given hereunder-

Elephant carrying the royal insignia was followed by the elephants carrying nobles and officers of the court.

Then came the army and artillery with their bands. Tamjam, and Khasa elephants with golden and silvery seats (howdas) moved ahead of the first grade nobles, ministers, bards and high officers on their horses.

Then followed the bodyguards and the personal attendants of the Rana carrying the banners, insignia and other lawazama (paraphernalia).

The Rankankan orchestra played sweet melodies.

The Maharana dressed up in royal robes, wore ornaments, necklaces and carried his sword and shield. He rode on horseback, on his both sides chanwar (fly whisk), was waved and over his head was held the royal parasol (chattra). Changir, Kirniya, Adani, Chawa etc. of the lawazma (parts of the royal insignia) surrounded him.

Some nobles and courtiers followed the Rana on their horses. They were followed by mounted soldiers and kettle drums.

On the sides moved the charidars (heralds) who warned the people to move out of the royal path. The drummers (dholi) sang couplets describing the heroic deeds of the

Maharana and his ancestors. In this way the procession moved to the banks of the Pichola Lake.

From the other side the image of Gauri, well dressed and well decorated, was borne through the Tripolia to the Lake by the females of the royal household accompanied by some of the nobles and officers. As the procession reached the lake the Maharana attended by his nobles, ministers and courtiers remained standing till the goddess was seated on her throne near the bank of the lake. The women then formed circles around Gauri and sang and danced for some time. When the ablutions were over, the goddess was taken back to the palace. The Rana and his courtiers then moved into the huge boats. The Maharana occupied his gaddi on the boat and his first grade nobles occupied seats according to their precedence and some of the courtiers remained standing. The second grade nobles occupied another boat. The boats then moved towards the south of the lake. Display of fireworks made the sight very picturesque. After boating Khas (special) durbar was held. Such a programme continued for three or four days.⁸⁴

Now let us analyze the details. First of all, it was a connected to the religious sentiments of the people. A grand celebration for the celebration would anyways bring its organizers close to their heart. It also served as an occasion of show of state's mightiness and greatness. The sound of the guns and cavalcade can be understood as the display of strength and military prowess. 'Whenever, the monarch went out of his palace, he was accompanied by all the royal paraphernalia: standards, weapons, music, well- equipped elephants, horses, camels, dignified nobility and the uniformed soldiery. These processions displayed the power and richness of the ruler, and were used as an instrument to impress the people, and create a deep loyalty for the royal dynasty. The personality of the ruler emerged as invincible and majestic, which gave a sense of pride in having such a mighty and glorious ruler.'⁸⁵ 'The 'raj-chinhas', which constituted insignia of royal power, were indispensable in any political system that depended on the unity of clan, hierarchical system and ranking. The ruler to distinguish himself from his kinsmen and

84 Shyamaldas. *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp 120-123.

85 Mubarak Ali Khan. *op.cit.*, pp 70.

assert his status and power to potential rivals embraced the traditional emblems associated with power and rule. The common place arsenal of the rulers comprised the gaddi or throne, chanwar (fly whisk), chhatri (decorative umbrella), kalangi (a decorative piece of jewel that adorns the turban), etc..⁸⁶ In the procession the singing of the royal praise was meant to impose the supremacy of the royal lineage on the minds of the subjects. Lastly, the worshipping rituals of Gauri were meant to show the highest place given to the God in the state and the dedication of the ruling clan to it. Even, here, we see that the hierarchies were strictly adhered to and presented before the people. This is to show the monarch on the highest ladder of authority. Once, it is displayed before the people, it gets the popular consent, thus making it impossible to challenge and shatter it. We can study the other chief celebrations in the light of these explanations.

Dushehara

It is and was the most important festival for the Rajput warrior class. Every Rajput state made elaborate preparations for it. Actual celebrations commenced on the first of the bright half of Asoj month and continued as Navratra (nine days). On the tenth day was celebrated the victory festival (Vijayadashami) in commemoration of the victory of Lord Rama in the epic age.

The festivities actually commenced with the Sthapana on the first day. The historic swords and arms were placed near the war deity Durga, also known as Mahakali. It was known as Khadag Sthapana (placing the sword). It was accompanied by sacrifices of goats and buffaloes. The sword was worshiped for nine days and then it was brought back to the palace with all solemnity, which coincided with Dushehra celebration.

All over Rajasthan this festival was celebrated in a magnificent style. The nobles were required to be present in the state capital with their quotas of soldiers. The kings held

⁸⁶ Pratibha Jain. *op.cit.*, pp 92.

durbars, received nazars and nichrawal and conferred ranks, honors or rewards on nobles, muttsadis or deserving state officials. On this occasion Sami tree (Khejara), horses, elephants, weapons and arms were worshiped. The horses and elephants purchased during the year were bathed, decorated and paraded before the Raja, who named each of them.

In next one or two days the ruler inspected his own regiment and the regiment of his nobles. The guns were fired to show that they were in working order. The regiments then paraded before the King with the nobles in the warrior's dress and carried with them gun, sword, spear, shield arrows, and bow etc.⁸⁷

Dushehra or Vijayadashami was a festival arousing the devotion or the religious sentiments of every Hindu. Therefore, it served as a great opportunity to revive the emotions of bravery and sacrifice, and thus to renew the pledge of dedication of one's life for the Dharma. The worship of the arms, sacrifices, the parade of the entire military force etc. were all the constant efforts to keep the army in a good shape and create a sense of supremacy of their might. It is also clear by the following words of Tod, who himself observed this festival and termed it as an imposing spectacle:

'The hilarity of the party, the diversified costume, the various forms, colors and decorations of the turbans, in which some have heron plum, or springs from some shrub sacred to the god of war; the cluster of lances, shining matchlocks, and black bucklers, the scarlet housings of the steeds and waving penons, recall forcibly the glorious days of the devoted Sanga, or immoral Pertap.....'⁸⁸

Holi

Of all the Hindu festivals Holi is one of gaiety and merriment. It falls on the full moon day of the month of Phalgun. The most interesting and lively feature of the festivities,

87 Shyamaldas. *op.cit.*, vol.I, pp 131.

88 Tod. *op.cit.*, vol I, pp 467.

after lighting the Holi fire, was the throwing of dry colors and colored water. Everyone, irrespective of age, caste and sex participated in Holi revelries. There are many eighteenth century paintings which faithfully depict men and women mixing, freely playing pranks, throwing colored water and dry color (abira, gulal) on one another. Playing on musical instruments, singing and dancing are also depicted very colorfully.

The rulers of Rajasthan played Holi with their people from elephant's back. The people threw colors on him and he threw on them. The prince moved in royal processions accompanied by his courtiers. The Maharana of Udaipur after 'Phag' or Holi in the evening held a durbar in Naginbari. The nobles and officers after the feast were awarded coconuts and wooden swords.⁸⁹

Birthday

The ruler's birthday was celebrated very solemnly by visiting and worshiping the titular deity of the house and by worshiping other principle deities in the temples of the capital. Yajna (hom) was also performed. A visit to the chhatris (mausoleums) of the ancestors was an important part of the celebration. A special durbar was held in which after tilak and aarti the nobles, muttsadis and khawas pasbans offered their nazar and nichrawals. The revenue of the districts was presented to him. The ruler rewarded and promoted his nobles and officers on this occasion. The scented kesariya color was sprayed on the clothes of all those who came to the durbar. Later on aargaja (sandal paste) was applied to all. Laung (cloves), doda (illychi, cardomom) and jayaphal (nutmeg) were distributed to all as a token omen of good luck.

Many times the birthday ceremonies and festivities were held away from the court in the seraglio by the royal mother and the queens of the ruler.

⁸⁹ Shyamaldas. *op.cit.*, vol I, pp 135.

The ruler used to give gold to the brahmins on this occasion. Tuladan was also performed by weighing the ruler against cereals, silver or gold depending on the prosperity of the state.⁹⁰

Besides, birthday celebration most of the rulers celebrated the anniversary of the day of their accession to the throne (gaddi birajana). The celebration resembled that of the birthday.⁹¹

Thus we have observed that to share in a ritual performance means not just to recall an emotion through repetition, but to live it as a unified performance. By long histories of commonplace actions performed under watchful eyes until they are no longer common but so exquisite, so appropriate to the moment, so precious in details that they become 'the rituals to create the experience of solidarity in the absence of consensuses.'⁹² 'Of all known religious beliefs whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all things, real or ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred.'⁹³

Inference

In this chapter, we have tried to analyze the traditional forms through which the royalty communicated to the general public and earned legitimacy by them, through indirect methods and at the same time without their knowledge. The fact that certain beliefs, institutions, and practices existed, indicates that they 'served those who lived in accordance to them'.⁹⁴ The human beings who lived in accordance to them were not fundamentally different from those who lived in succeeding generation or who are alive now. They did not arrive arbitrarily at the beliefs. The institutions in which they lived

90 Ibid, pp 133.

91 Ibid, pp 133.

92 Muir, *op.cit.*, pp 4.

93 Ibid, pp 3.

94 Shils, *op.cit.* pp 328.

were not forced upon them from outside . These institutions had to make sense to them, if they took them seriously. These traditions were not so crippling that the human beings could not live under them. Nor did they prevent the human race from accomplishing great things. Rather the opposite happened. They enabled many great things to be accomplished by the individuals in a dramatic form and by collectivities working much more gradually and silently.

Chapter 3

Politics of Court Culture

Chapter 3

Politics of Court Culture

The Concept

Traditions and usages always played a prominent part in all matters of state. The Rajput states were no exception to this rule. It all depended on the ability of the ruling chief, how best he could manage his relations with the nobles, to maintain the well being of his state. It is an acknowledged fact that the chief always tried to diminish the power of his nobles in whatever way he could, while the nobles were also on a constant look-out to weaken the ruling chief. 'Strong and powerful nobles often led to delay and revolt against the authority of the chief'¹ The royal court was the fountain-head of all power and authority within the state, and by keeping a control over its affairs the sovereign could actually keep control over all the major activities of society. The court served the purpose of a truth-generating apparatus of society'.² How this process is accomplished is the theme of this chapter. In courts such ripples were created which moved outwards and covered the entire region. To study this process would be to make effort to understand social history in an effective way. After all, 'social history has carefully to consider each relic of the past'.³

The king was supposed to do a very specific ordering of people, places and things – an ensemble of relationships. 'The major objective of any king with respect to this order was to establish the proper hierarchical relationship of the constituents of his domain as a kingdom – himself on his throne, his counselors at court, the people of the royal capital at their livelihood, and the people of the countryside in their village.'⁴ When all these were

1 Dr. Shyam Singh Ratnawat. *Rajput Nobility*, Panchsheel Prakashan, Jaipur, 1991, pp 95.

2 Michel Foucault. pp 110.

3 Georges Duby. *Op. Cit.*, pp 3.

in order, then abundant revenue was forthcoming, the army was well equipped, once allied remained loyal, and finally, the king's position was secured. All this was made possible by the objectification of the concept of honor and status in the form of titles, position in court, privileges, awards, etc. ' Domination no longer need to be exerted in a direct, personal way when it is entailed in possession of the means (economic or cultural production) of appropriating the mechanisms of the field of production and the field of cultural production, which tends to assure their own reproduction by their very functioning, independently of any deliberate intervention by the agents.'⁴ Objectification guaranties the permanence and cumulativity of material and symbolic acquisitions, which can then subsist without the agents' having to recreate them continuously.

The social and political operation of the 'regime of truth'⁵ is organized around the norms which act as disciplining instruments. Theodore W. Adorno and J.M. Bernstein consider the process of the generation of culture as an industrial production, specifically designed for consumption of masses, and manufactured more or less according to plan. ⁶ The entire practice of culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms. The culture industry is driven by the internal organization of the object itself, with its inner logic. 'The most ambitious defense of the culture industry today celebrates its spirit, which might be safely called ideology, as an ordering factor. In a supposed chaotic world it provides human beings with something like standards for orientation, and that alone seems worthy of approval.'⁷ The operations of culture industry should not be underestimated in the running of a state, as its chief role lies in the development of the consciousness of its consumer. How this process was accomplished in the eighteenth century Rajput states by the mediation of culture is the issue of discussion and analysis of this chapter. This section will focus on the modes of traditional ties connecting the nobility with the monarch and serving him.

4 Pierre Bourdieu. *op. cit.*, pp. 178.

5 Foucault. *op. cit.*, pp. 230.

6 Adorno. *op. cit.* pp. 85.

7 *Ibid*, pp. 89.

Delineation of Themes

To be able to decode the various modes of making the nobility subservient to an individual, without the virtual use of power, we can examine the following themes,

- I. Politics of accession to jagir,
- II. Politics of the prerogative of the nobility,
- III. Politics of appointment of muttasadis,
- IV. Politics of arrangement of durbar.
- V. Politics of condolence and mourning durbar,
- VI. Politics of dress code,
- VII. Politics of court etiquettes,
- VIII. Politics of some traditions of court culture of Rajasthan.

I. Politics of Accession to Jagir

The customs of accession to jagir in the Rajput states were so designed to reaffirm the superiority of the monarch and the dependent position of the puttaitis.

The vassal had to pay nazrana in cash at the time of his accession to the jagir. It was mostly one year's revenue of the jagir inherited, but fifty percent more was charged if the heir was an adopted child. In Marwar it was called Hukamnama, elsewhere it was known as nazrana or peshkash. Often it was settled by negotiations through officers called Kamdar or the Vakil. When the incumbent of a jagir died, his estate was placed under zabti (escheat). On the demise of a chief, the Prince immediately sent a party consisting of a civil officer and a few soldiers who took possession of the estate in the Prince's name. This sequestration in the local language was termed as zabti or qaid khalisa (in Mewar). The heir of the jagir sent his request to the court to be installed as the vassal and

offered to pay the proper nazrana. The heir having paid the nazrana (hukamnama, peshkash) repaired to the presence, where he performed homage and made protestations of service and fealty. He received the fresh grant and his investiture was completed with the girding of a sword round his waist by the Prince. This was known as khadag bandhai or talwar bandhai. It was an imposing ceremony, performed in a full assembly of the court. After the nazrana was paid, and the sword buckled to his side, the noble received a siropao and a steed which marked the completion of his investiture. The zabti was then recalled and the noble returned to his estate to take over the jagir and to receive the congratulations and homage of his sub-vassals.⁸

Looking at the details of the accession to jagir, we observe that confiscation of jagir at the death of the jagirdar is a reminder to the nobles and people that the entire land of the state belonged to the sovereign. When it is granted again to the heir of the deceased sardar, it is reaffirmation of the fact the true owner is the raja and only he has the right to bestow land on anyone. 'He enjoyed the highest rank. Seen in these terms, the terrestrial authority of the king was established.'⁹ The payment of nazrana is symbolic of acceptance of once dependant position, since it was offered by the inferior to the superior only. The presence of heir in the court and his request for grant is a further confirmation of it. The tying of a sword (the most sacred weapon of Rajputs) was a reminder to the new puttait to be ready for war and sacrifice. Performance of this ceremony at a grand court, in the presence of all the significant nobles was an attempt to make them the witness of the ruler's generosity to grant the jagir and to impose the duties of the vassal on him. Siropao is always given by a superior to the sub-ordinate, and its acceptance is significant of the recipient's agreement to his comparatively inferior status.

When a noble expired or was killed in a battle, the Maharaja paid condolence visit to his heir or son, who received him at the gate of his haveli (house) while wearing a white turban. After seating the ruler the noble presented two horses to the sovereign which were

8 Tod. *op.cit.*, vol I, pp.129.

9 Richard Burghart. *op. cit.*, pp. 237.

generally returned. The Maharaja or the Maharana presented to the said noble a coloured turban embroidered in gold and of a special design, which signified the end of mourning. There was no time or period fixed for such visits. It could be made any time after the death of the old thakur and the installation of the new one. Often the coloured turban was sent to his residence as a token of ending condolence.¹⁰ If the heir of the thakur was a minor he was brought to the court by his near relatives and the Maharaja conferred on him the siropao or turban of matmi (condolence). When the Maharaja was himself a minor, the chief noble or the Pradhan (who was himself a Rajput) carried the Maharaja's sword to the deceased noble's house in procession attended by the nobles present in the capital, the Diwan and the state officials, and the ceremony of nakhekh (visit for condolence) was solemnly performed.¹¹ The ruler often went to enquire about the health of thakurs injured in a recent battle (Mizajpursi).¹²

The naubat (drum sounds denoting time accompanied by sounds of other musical instruments) sounded four times in a day. Whenever the principal noble of the state died, the beating of the drum was suspended for once either in the day or in the night. In Jodhpur, the suspension of naubat in the nights only, was the rule.¹³

If a noble was killed in a battle on behalf of the state, his successor was excused from payment of hukamnama or peshkashi (fee of succession). In case a sardar died while on service, either at the state capital or elsewhere, some reduction was made in his son's succession fee. Those who were exempted from payment of succession fee because of their outstanding services or some sacrifice, were issued fresh pattas (grants) by the ruler on application without any payment of the nazrana.¹⁴

10 Bisheshwar Nath Reu. *Rajasthan ka Itihaas*, Jaipur, Pragati Prakashan, 1964, vol. I, pp. 157.

11 Ibid, pp. 157.

12 Ibid, pp. 158.

13 R. P. Vyas. *op. cit.*, pp. 187.

14 Ibid, pp. 188.

On analyzing the condolence rituals of Rajasthan, we observe that the death in battle field was encouraged by their medium. The visit of the ruler was the highest honor anyone could have in the kingdom, and the monarch bestowed this upon the bravest warriors only. The condolence was ended by the receiving coloured turban by the king only. Mizajpursi, was in a way another mode to encourage heroic deeds on the battle field. The mourning of the death of any important noble by suspending the naubat, was to acknowledge the services of the deceased noble, and to encourage people to follow his footsteps. The same thing is demonstrated by the exemption and reduction of peshkashi to the successors of the nobles died in battle or in state service.

II. Politics of the Prerogatives of the Nobility

In case of Rajasthan, the rights of the nobles were an indicator of their comparative position in the hierarchy. This was a means to reinforce the position of the ruling dynasty in relation to its governing class.¹⁵

When summoned by the ruler for consultations on all important matters concerning the state, the noble of the first grade and the sirayats when they came to attend the durbar could beat their drums upto the main gate of the city. In Udaipur, the drums of the nobles sounded upto Surajpole (city-gate), except that of Raj Rana Jhala of Sadri, who could beat his drums upto the gates of the royal palace.¹⁶

The nobles of superior rank were entitled to use some insignia of royalty viz. banners (nishan), kettle drums (nakkara) preceded by heralds and silver mace bearers (ballam bardars, ghoti bardars, chaori bardars). They were also allowed to bear the parasol (chanwar) waved over them. The nobles could use these insignia (lawazma) when they

15 Averil Cameron. *op. cit.*, pp. 136.

16 Tod. *op. cit.*, pp. 270.

were alone or were in their own jagirs. It could not be used in the precincts of the royal palace or in presence of the ruler.¹⁷

The nobles were required to dismount from their steed before entering the palace for attending the durbar. For different ranks of nobles different places were fixed for dismounting. In Marwar when nobles came to Jodhpur fort they dismounted at various places on way to the fort and covered the remaining distance on foot. The sirayats had the privilege of dismounting at the upper end of Jodhaji's Falsa (Jodha pillar near entrance to the fort) whereas the nobles of the lower grade dismounted between Imartipole (gate) and Jodhaji's Falsa according to their rank. The brothers of the ruling Prince dismounted inside the Lohapole and the Rao Rajas outside the Lohapole.¹⁸

Whenever the ruler visited his noble's haveli (residence) the concerned noble received the ruler outside the gate of his residence (deodhi or haveli) and advanced a few paces to welcome the prince. A red strip of cloth was spread (pagmanda) on which the ruler walked and entered the gate. A small crimson shamiana with raised cushion (gaddi) was arranged inside the haveli. The ruler occupied his seat on gaddi. The noble then made a nazar of two horses or an elephant according to his rank. If the Maharaja had come to condole, the horses were returned otherwise one horse would be accepted and the other returned. The noble then offered nichrawal, followed by his sub-vassals who made appropriate nazars and nichrawals. On festive occasions, the ruler spent sufficient time at the noble's house and often had his dinner there. The nobles had to present a big sum of money on such an occasion. The ruler before returning conferred siropao on the noble in accordance with his rank and bestowed gifts on his followers and family members. The ruler was often given a banquet where dancers and singers tried to amuse the Prince.¹⁹

17 Ibid, pp. 270.

18 R.P. Vyas. *op.cit.*, pp. 190.

19 R.P. Rathuria. *op.cit.*, pp. 112.

When the ruler, due to illness or his minority, was not in a position to go in person his sword and shield were carried with all the solemnity to the noble's residence where it was placed on the crimson cushion. Nazars and nichrawal followed as usual. The principal noble who carried the sword to this place would then offer siropaos on behalf of the ruler.²⁰

Whenever the ruler was out of the state capital, it was the duty of the principal noble to look after the royal zenana and take care of the administration of the capital city. When the Maharana of Uaipur went out of his capital, the Rawat of Salumbur was invested with the government of the city and the charge of the palace during his absence. Similar privileges were held by the chief of Pokaran in Jodhpur and the chief or Chomu in Jaipur. When the royal zenana went for pilgrimage or on a visit out of the capital, a noble was deputed to escort them. When the zenana (seraglio) accompanied the ruler on some campaign or on an excursion, the zenana cavalcade was escorted by a thakur or a group of thakurs who were especially assigned this job.²¹

We get to see here, the process of objectification of the concept of honor in the forms of drums, royal insignia and the point of dismounting from the horse. These objects became the embodiments of status. Allowing these prerogatives to the nobles by varying degrees led to their gradation. Granting these rights did not cost anything to the ruler but paid him a lot. By not permitting to use these objects to the limits the king did, was a reminder to the nobility of his inferiority. The visit of the sovereign to a nobles residence implied the highest treatment given to anyone. This was targeted to reflect and maintain the supremacy of the monarch.

A fixed order of rank was followed while offering nazar and nichrawal. This was an attempt to create and maintain hierarchical differences. Even, the fixing of amount according to the ranks was also aimed to perpetuate these differences. It is essential for

20 Ibid, pp. 114.

21 Ibid, pp. 151.

the sovereign to have a divided ruling class, with conflict of interests. A nobility divided is a guarantee of king's position. If there are no difference amongst them, then they can get united and subvert the throne.

III. Politics of Appointment of Muttsadis

Though the Rajput sardars formed a majority in the courts of Rajasthan, yet the civilian ministers wielded a great influence in the administration of the state. The nobility consisted of the Rajputs while the ministers generally hailed from non-warrior classes—Vaishyas, Kayasthas and often Brahmanas. The people of these communities appointed as Diwans, Pradhans, Bakhshis, ministers or heads of the departments, formed a class of officers and ministers known as “Muttsadis”.²²

The appointment to the posts of Diwan, Pradhan, Bakhshi etc. was announced in a durbar in the presence of the person concerned. The appointment was accompanied with robes of honor (siropao) and ornaments in accordance with the rank and file of the post.

The following presents were bestowed on the person appointed as diwan:

Siropao (Robes of honor) consisting of Pagh (turban), Kurti (coat), Bago (dhoti) and potio (payjama);

Ornaments: Kada (bracelets), moti (pearls), motiyan ri kanthi (necklace of pearls), sirpech jadau (studded ornament worn on turban).

Palkhi (palanquin).

He used to put on the dress and ornaments awarded to him and made juhar-mujra (salutations), offered nazar and nichrawal and went to his haveli (residence) in the palkhi

22 George Burton. *Chiefs and the Leading Families in Rajasthan*, 1896, NAI.

(palanquin). The charge of office was signified by handing over of the seals of the office and the kalamdan (inkpot and pen placed in a small wooden box).²³

The next to the Diwan was the Bakhshi, whose appointment was generally accompanied with the following gifts from the ruler:

Siropao consisting of Pagh, Vago, Potio and ornaments kada, moti, motiyan ri kanthi, and a palkhi.²⁴

All other honours and privileges were similar to those of the Diwan. It seems that the posts of Diwan and Bakhshi were equivalent posts in all respects excepts that their spheres of work were quite different. The appointment on second grade posts viz. Karkun and Hakim of a town or district, Kotwal, Darogha, Bakhshi of a Sarkar (Crown-land), Kiledar (keeper of the fort) etc. were accompanied by a siropao, kada or thermo which was worn by the incumbent who saluted the ruler in the court as usual.²⁵ The Kiledar of Jodhpur fort on appointment got siropao with Kada and Moti which shows that this post was somewhat higher and important in nature.²⁶ The musahib (adviser) got a siropao and an elephant besides the patta (grant) of a village. Appointments to other administrative and civil posts were announced in the durbar and the incumbent was asked to make salutation which was considered enough to invest him with the power and functions of the post. No material gifts were bestowed on them.²⁷ The non-brahmanas made mujra but brahmanas gave their blessings (ashirvad) to the ruler.²⁸

We can very clearly observe here that a grand, impressing ceremony was meant to impose upon the newly appointed noble his duties more deeply. He is bound to be loyal to his master even at the cost of his life, since he has accepted his subjugation in presence of dignified nobility. As already discussed before, receiving of siropao and ornaments marks an agreement of one's sub-ordination. So, also, the variation of ornaments according to a muttasadi's position in official ladder is a marker of seniority.

23 G.K. Ojha. *Rajputane ka Itihaas*, Jaipur, Gyandeep Prakash 1984, vol. II, pp. 1304.

24 Ibid, pp. 1319.

25 Ibid, pp. 1319.

26 Ibid, pp. 1320.

27 Ibid, pp. 1321.

28 Ibid, pp. 1323.

IV Politics of Arrangement of Durbar

Whenever the ruler intended to hold a special durbar he sent summons known as “Khas Rukkas” to his nobles. On Dashahara, it was obligatory for all nobles to attend the court and bring their quotas of soldiers with them.²⁹ In ordinary routine court, the words were sent around to the residence (havelis) of the nobles and those present in the state capital attended the durbar.

A vivid description of the arrangement for such a durbar at Jodhpur is preserved in Kaviya Karnidan’s Suraj Prakash. It says,

“Maharaja Abhey Singh of Marwar, after morning prayers ordered the assembly of the court. The obedient attendants were dispatched to inform the eight sirayats (aath thakurait) and other nobles. The servants spread carpets in the palace courtyard where court was to be held. Soft cushions stuffed with four types of wool were placed over them. Carpet weight (Matange, Mir Farsh) of similar colors were placed at reasonable distance to prevent the sheets from flying or fluttering. This scene resembled that of a Kashmir garden.

The carpet weights looked like beautiful toys of the children of the god of love—Kamdeva, who was pleased to see them. The embroidered silk sheets spread over the cushions had designs of flowers and creepers which looked like the garden of Kamdeva on the land of beauty. A green woolen door mat which graced the stairs of the hall, made even the blue clouds feel shy. To protect the assembly from heat of the sun, a gold embroidered canopy was raised on the gilded poles which were tied with red silken ropes to provide a contrast of colors.

29 Marwar Precise: containing a General History of the relations with marwar etc., NAI, pp.12.

The ropes had a golden thread running around the rope which looked like the waves of Saraswati River rising from the constellations. Under the same canopy, in the middle was placed the golden throne with chhatra (parasol), pillows, masnad (round pillow) and gaddi (cushion). It seemed that these royal insignia were conquered from Lord Indra. The seven storeyed palace of the ruler looked grand and its windows served as sources of light. The ventilators glittered like gold. The precious stones studded in the walls glittered like the Sun. The perforations of the perforated marble screen looked like pearls. The golden embroidery of the canopy was very attractive. It seemed as if the garden of golden embroidery were spread all over. The curtains made of gold and silver threads with gold work on them reflected the golden light. It looked like a spring scene in the garden.

In obedience to the call of the ruler, nobles belonging to the thirty-six royal races came to the glamorous durbar. They were nicely dressed and their style of walking resembled that of an intoxicated elephant. They carried their weapons which rattled against their shields hung on their backs. These nobles were the great aidants of the Maharaja and protected the portals of Marwar. They had a sound physique and immense valor. They were generous, bounteous and courteous. They were victors in war and had never lowered their arms. These nobles came and sat in the royal presence Ministers—ripe with wisdom and experience. Khan-e-Saman (Chief of stores) and Bagsi were also present. The poets and learned men were also there. The attendants and personal servants remained in attendance. The groups of singers and dancers were kept in readiness.³⁰

Maharaja Abhey Singh entered the court, walking like an intoxicated elephant. Those present cried ‘Khama, Khama,’ —(forgive, forgive).³¹ Abhey Singh when he occupied the throne looked like a chakravarti raja. The fly whisk was waved over him. Neochhawar was done with all affection which resembled the shower of pearls”.³²

30 Kaviya Karnidan. Suraj Prakash, vol. II, ed. Sitaram Lalas, Jodhpur, 1985, pp. 178—181.

31 Ibid, pp. 182.

32 Ibid, pp. 182.

The description shows various arrangements made and the paraphernalia required for holding the durbars in the states of Rajasthan. The grace and glamor of these courts has been vividly described by bards and poets through metaphors. 'No chairs or couches adorned these durbars. Soft carpets covered by sheets of white cloth were spread to seat the courtiers and the guests according to their ranks.'³³

King's seat was usually a couch, the four legs of which were inlaid with ivory and the surface covered with a slab of stone sprinkled with sandal pigment. But the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan used the couch (with parasol) which was commonly known as 'sinhasana' or 'takhat' on coronation, birthday or festive occasions. The Maharaja squatted on the crimson cushion (gaddi) spread over the carpet. Over the royal cushion was created a gold embroidered crimson canopy on gilded poles tied with red silken ropes having gold lining.³⁴

Kaviya Karnidan was the Rajakavi of Abhey Singh, so he definitely eulogized his master. Still there is a lot of reality in his work. The Charan's work gives a lot of description of the glamor and grandeur of Abhey Singh. A highest level of luxury is portrayed in the court of Marwar. We come across the details of prolific use of gold, precious stones, ivory, etc. Not only the most expensive and fine material was used, but also the finest skills of craftsmanship was invested in it. The ruler was bound to present a live image of splendor to his court to his courtier, in order 'to create awe and fear'³⁵ in them. His supremacy should be conveyed through court, a microcosm of his state.

It would lead to the feeling of psychological nihilism of the spectators, which would, in turn make them suppliant. The king's supremacy is must to be displayed through his spheres of public activity. It can be understood better in the terms of Norbert Elias, who explains in the case of French history, 'A duke must build his house in such a way as to

33 R.K. Ojha. *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 603.

34 Kaviya Karnidan, *op.cit.*, pp. 179.

35 David Cannadine and Simon Price, *op.cit.*, pp. 1.

tell the world; I am a duke and not merely a count. The same applies to every aspect of public appearance. He must make sure that in official social life he has precedence over others...The compulsion to display one's rank is unremitting. If the money to do so is lacking, rank, and therefore the social existence of its possessor, has very little reality. A duke who does not live as a duke has to live, who can no longer fulfill the social duties of a duke is hardly a duke any longer.'³⁶

We can also conclude it this way, 'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation distribution, circulation and operation of power'.³⁷

V. Politics of Condolence and Mourning Durbar

Condolence Durbar

Whenever some member of the royal family viz., the heir, prince, princess, dowager queen or a queen died the maharaja dressed in white clothes and wearing white pearls held a condolence durbar where the nobles, muttasadis and khawas pasbans came in white dress and white turban to express condolence. After a while the ruler gave his courtiers leave to depart.³⁸

The colored turban and colored clothes with diamond studded, gold ornaments were worn by the ruler and his courtiers when the state mourning was over. The period of mourning was fixed in accordance with the status of the deceased in the family and his relationship with the ruler. The playing of the naubat was stopped for two to seven days during the mourning. The beat of the drums announced the expiry of the mourning period.

36 Narbert Elias. *Court Society*, pp. 63-64.

37 Michel Foucault. *op.cit.*, pp. 133.

38 Reu. *Rajasthan ka Itihaas*, vol. II., pp. 1109.

When the news of the demise of a contemporary ruler of a sister state was received, beating of the drums (naubat) was forbidden for three times (teen tank) or from one to two days.³⁹

If a ruler of another state was on a visit to the capital he personally paid a visit to the host ruler to condole him on the demise of a member of his family. The host did not advance upto the gate of the palace to receive the guest as was the protocol. He received the guest ruler by rising from his seat and offered a seat on the cushion. After the condolence when the visitor left, the ruler stood up and bade good bye to him. The usual protocol was suspended during mourning.⁴⁰

On the 'death of any member of royal family, the nobles had to come to court to express their grief. We can observe an enactment of hierarchy here also when the period of grief and abstaining from beating the naubat were suspended in accordance to the status and importance of the deceased. Not beating the drums on the death of the ruler of the related states was a diplomatic step to join in the pain of the grieved state and thus improving the relations and preventing hostility. On the visit of any ruler to condole another, though not a great welcome was given, yet expression of respect was essential in accordance to his comparative his position. These were all done to earn the goodwill of each other and avoid any disharmony.

Mourning Durbar

When a ruling prince died, a state mourning was proclaimed and since this day everybody wore white turban and white clothes. The moustaches were also shaved. The successor of the deceased ruler held a mourning durbar. He attired in white robes, wore a white turban and put on necklaces and ornaments of white pearls. The nobles, muttsadis

39 Ibid, pp. 1110.

40 Ibid, pp. 1112.

and khawas pasbans attended the durbar clad in white dress. The death of the Maharaja was condoled. At the close of the durbar, the rule (aan) of the new maharaja was proclaimed and the playing of the drums (naubats) was resumed. The news of the accession of the new ruler was sent to the provinces and the districts. The gates of the walls of the capital city were thrown open and soon the city life returned to normal. During this mourning period singing, dancing and other such amusements were forbidden throughout the state.⁴¹

When the state mourning was over, another durbar was held to signify the ceremonious termination of other state mourning. The new ruler attended the durbar in white turban and white dress. The nobles and other courtiers were also dressed in white. The ruler changed his white turban for the colored one (Rang ka Pecha) and ordered his courtiers to replace their white turbans with the colored ones (Rang ki Paghan) distributed to them from the royal stores. The cost and the quality of the turbans varied with the rank and file of the courtiers. This changing of the turbans signified the end of the state mourning.⁴²

On this occasion for the first time since the accession of the new ruler singer and dancers were introduced in the court. The amusements and merriments which were hitherto suspended were now officially permitted.⁴³

This ceremony was commonly known as “Sogbandhai”. In Jaipur it was known as “Rang ka dastur”.⁴⁴ The colored turban for the new ruler was presented on this occasion by his in-laws. In Mewar, the new Maharana went with his nobles to the gardens or vegetables farms for worshipping the vegetation as a mark of termination of the mourning period. It

41 Dayaldas Sindhayach. *Bikanerki Khyat*, ed. Hukum Singh. Bhati, Jodhpur, Maharaja Mansingh Pustak Prakash, Shodh Kendra, 2005, pp. 83.

42 Ibid, 84.

43 Ibid, pp. 86.

44 Ibid, pp. 87.

was known as Hariya Pujan or Hariya Dekhua.⁴⁵ This ceremony brought back normal life to the court and the ruler.

Death of a king was a highest grief for any Rajput state and thus the highest order of expression of sorrow was practiced- shaving of moustaches. All sorts of merriment was prevented. Thus entire state was involved into royal grief. It was a medium of forcible control of private life and bringing it into the fold of political life. It thus entrenched the authority and bonding to royalty much deeper into the lives of masses. The people were made to participate in the political affairs, in accordance to the benefits of the ruling dynasty. The same was practiced by lifting the ban on dancing and singing. The enjoining of the public, the nobility and in-laws (ganayats) were all designed to subtly divert the flow of power toward the newly appointed ruler.

VI. Politics of Dress Code

‘The Court was the administrative source head of the empire where all business of the state was conducted. Its dignity was maintained by strict observance of dress code.’⁴⁶ ‘At court, everyone appeared in dress and accoutrements which reflected their rank and function.’⁴⁷ To maintain the hierarchical order and establish the authority of sovereign ‘the costume of the imperial participants was strictly regulated.’⁴⁸ Tradition seems to become a site of contestation ‘that clothes and adornments have significance far beyond utilitarian functions, and that they reflect social distinctions and cultural identities have been recognized by anthropologists... A relationship between dress and social order in terms of power, authority, status and class, is apparent... The dress is a historical document, reflecting the whole gamut of cultural and social relations in which the

45 Shyamaldas. *op.cit.*, pp. vol. II, pp. 1543.

46 Mubarak Ali Khan. *op.cit.*, pp. 29.

47 Daud Ali, *op.cit.*, pp. 118.

48 Averil Cameron. *op.cit.*, pp. 112.

individual is placed.’⁴⁹ The quality, texture and design of clothes and the modes of wearing them reflect the complex relations within the social order. In all cultures, social distinctions can be broadly discerned by the differences in the mode of dress. In fact, dress often acts as an active agent in the articulation of social relations. ‘The body – cloth relationship in Rajasthan, like in all other cultures, was contingent upon the ‘prohibitions and commandments’ internal to its culture.’⁵⁰

In the eighteenth century courts of Rajasthan, a particular type of dress and head gear was generally prescribed for the courtiers which were worn while attending the courts. If some discrepancy was noticed by the chamberlain, the courtiers were not allowed to enter the audience hall till it was corrected.⁵¹

Every ruler bestowed robes of honor (siropaos) on his courtiers on different occasions. This helped to bring uniformity of dress in the court. Whenever a noble changed his traditional dress to the prescribed court dress the ruler expressed his pleasure by conferring gifts on him. The rulers themselves wore the types of dresses which they had prescribed for their courtiers.⁵²

Often the rulers prescribed a set pattern of tying the turban. In Mewar Maharana Amarsingh II (1698-1710) introduced Amarshahi turban and Maharana Ari Singh (1761-1773) set the fashion for Arishahi. In the late nineteenth century Maharana Swaroop Singh (1842-1861) prescribed Swaroopshahi style of tying the turban. In Amber Mansingh and in Jodhpur Vijey Singh set the pattern for Manshahi and Vijeysahi turbans respectively as parts of the court dress.⁵³

49 N. Panikhar. ‘The ‘great shoe Question: Tradition, Legitimacy and power in colonial india’ in *Kakatiya Journal of Historical Studies*, vol.1, No.1, May 2006, pp. 16.

50 Ibid, pp. 17.

51 S.S. Ratnawat. *op.cit.*, pp. 114.

52 Ibid, pp. 117.

53 R. K. Saxena. *op.cit.*, pp. 44.

Dress of the Rulers

The dress of the ruling princes was somewhat simple but impressive. It gradually gave way to modernity and by the eighteenth century dress of the rulers became rich, alluring and glamorous. This change was mainly due to the availability of various types of cloth and also due to the impact of the Mughal court.⁵⁴

Interesting descriptions of the dress and ornaments worn by the Maharaja in the eighteenth century are preserved in the official records of the states concerned. In V. S. 1775 Sawai Jai Singh of Amber married the daughter of Maharaja Ajit Singh of Marwar. On his occasion the following dress material was presented to him:

Pagh–Turban made of Mukeshi cloth,

Taas–Gold threaded cloth tied round the turban,

Potiyo, Ilaycho, Gospech Balabandi and Asa etc.⁵⁵

When Abhey Singh ascended the throne of Marwar in V. S.1780 (1723 A.D) the following garments and ornaments were sent from kirkirakhana (Department of Royal Stores) by Sawai Jai Singh of Amber as tilak ka saaz (presents on accession):

Chira–mukeshi, phenta–Gujarati, Balaband–Gujarati, Mahumudi– chikandozi, Sarpech, Alaycho, Masru butadar, Thirma–pasmi, Gospech–pasmi⁵⁷

Ishwari Singh on his appointment as the crown prince was awarded the following by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh:

Ornaments: Sarpech–studded with diamonds, cost	Rs. 1300.00
Kanthi–necklace of pearls, cost	Rs. 3795.00
Garments: Denavati–mukeshi	Rs. 37.12

54 R.P. Kathuria, *op.cit.*, pp. 171.

55 G.N. Sharma. *Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan*, Agra, Vinay Publications, 1968, pp. 143.

Jamah–Mahmudichikan	Rs. 109.00
Jamah–Sela	Rs. 1.25
Phenta–Gujarati	Rs. 52.00
Izar–Alapchi	Rs. 20.75
Turra–(ornament for turban)	Rs. 10.50
Alam–coloured	Rs. 9.87
Taihpech	Rs. 0.96 ⁵⁶

In the second half of the century we find Jodhpur Maharaja wearing the following garments made of different types of cloth with gold and silver work on them and imprinted with gold dust. They were of different colors and textures. Bright red (kasumbal), deep green (sabz) and saffron (kesariya) colors were very popular. Maharaja's dress consisted of–

Pagh (turban) Red, green or pink,

Chokro (piece of cloth tied over the turban) it had embroidered or printed border.

Turro (Decoration stuck in the turban. It was made of golden thread or of gold studded with diamonds.)

Bago (Long coat with frilled bell type bottom, mostly imprinted with designs in gold leaf or gold dust).

Duppato (used as waist belt).

Nemo, Samri and kati (other garments worn with the above).

Over these garments were worn the following ornaments:

Sarpech–Ornament (diadem) worn on the turban. It was made of rubies or diamonds.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 146.

Kanthi—Tight fitting necklaces of various types made of pearls and diamonds and with bunches of pearls or a plate of gold with diamonds hanging in the middle.

Mala—large necklace.

Dugdugi—Decoration worn in the turban and made of precious stones.

Chokro—Bunch of pearls of different sizes.

Other ornaments worn by him were poonchiyan, beetiyan, angushthan, balabundi, luumb, kada, chogo etc. All these were very costly ornaments and were manufactured locally or were purchased from different places.⁵⁷

Dress of the courtiers

The gaiety and glamor of the ruler's dress had its impact on his nobles and courtiers also. They imitated their lords thus giving rise to new fashions in the male attire.

Maharana Amar Singh II (1698-1710) introduced Amarshahi turban with Amsai dago and peti as the court dress in Mewar. In his parwanah to Kushal Singh of Vijaipur in 1705 A.D. he mentions various garments viz. dagali, dodhi dovada and kano which were worn by the dignitaries in Mewar.⁵⁸ Contemporary paintings, literature and records speak of jamah, vaga (bagho), jhaga and gudadi (qubah). These garments in design and cut resemble the Mughal costumes viz. Takauchiya, Peshwaz, dutahi, quaba, gadar, farji, and fargul. The Mughal influence on the male costumes in Rajasthan was immense.⁵⁹ The Mughal head dress and coats were also modified due to the contact with the Rajputs.⁶⁰

There was some seasonal change in the mode of dress of the courtiers. Dodhi of white color and kano of chikan were worn in summer while vanati-dodhi and jamah with linings were used in winter. On certain festivals or special court meetings definite colors of dresses were prescribed. On Basant Panchami everyone was required to come to the

57 Ibid, pp. 151.

58 Ibid, pp. 160.

59 Anil Chandra Banerjee. *Lectures on Rajput History*, Calcutta, Vishal Publishing House, 1962, pp. 91.

60 G. N. Sharma.*op.cit.*, pp. 163.

court in kesariya robes and turban, while on sharad Purnima they were to wear white clothes and white ornaments. When going for hunt sabz (green) clothes were worn by all. Color and texture of turbans also changed with the change of season or coming of festival. Turbans of bright red color (kasumbal) were worn in the rainy season and saffron (kesariya) in summer. On Teej festival laharia, a multicolored turban was very common. On Dashahara madil (flowered design turban of gold threads) and on Holi white or yellow turbans were used. At the time of mourning white robes with white turban were put on, abandoning the color and gaiety.⁶¹

As regards footwear, no rule was prescribed because all shoes had to be left outside the hall. All courtiers had to squat on the cushions covered with sheets so no footwear could be worn in the court. However the nobles mostly used red leather or velvet jootis (Indian shoes) having sharp ends.⁶²

Thus, we use that the dress of the rulers and the nobles were medium to create exclusiveness and superiority. It separates them from the general public and gave uniformity to the ruling class. The emperors no doubt reserved the most precious and rare gems for their own use only. These objects were used to give rise to pomp and show. The great artistic skills invested in the ornaments and garments further demonstrated their dignity and honor. The way of wearing the turban in a specific way spoke a lot about one's social status. The dress gave a king's identity to a king, and noble's identity to a noble. These markers of identity were thus strictly related to a person's hierarchical status. Anybody not belonging to the suitable category was not allowed to wear them. Transgression on unauthorized appropriation of dress code by any chief invited punishment, eg., 'Rawat Padam Singh of slumbur was fined Rs. 1100 because he had worn pearls in his Kalangi (decoration adorning the pag), a royal symbol to which only the Maharana was entitled'.⁶³ 'None but the favored ones could wear gold anklets.'⁶⁴ Thus

61 G. N. Sharma. *op.cit.*, pp. 163.

62 Ibid, pp. 166.

63 Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma, *op.cit.*, pp. 94.

64 R.P. Kathuria, *op.cit.*, pp. 109.

the dressing was used to draw lines between the people on the basis of ranks. The selective appropriation of traditional dressing practices was part of the technology of creating legitimacy and authority. The desire to stand out gets expressed by this medium.

VII. Politics of Court Etiquette

While most of the scholarships try to search the causation of past in wars and administrative systems, they fail to realize that some of the most significant historical happenings have been over in the twinkling of an eye. The course of history has been decided by minuscule and meticulous operations of etiquettes. In the modern sense, it was not a rational organization, yet precisely predetermined, each part of it was a type of organization by which every act received a prestige character symbolizing the distribution of power at the time, 'The king used his most private acts to establish differences of rank and to distribute distinctions, favors or proofs of displeasure.'⁶⁵ The etiquettes had a major symbolic function in the structure of society and its form of government.

A definite courtly culture had established itself in India since long. The Mughals developed a very advanced court culture. The Rajput rulers of Rajasthan learnt much from them and adopted it in their own courts. In the states like Jodhpur this influence was considerable while in Kota and Jaipur it was prominent. In Mewar much of old court etiquette was retained, though since Maharana Karan Singh (1620-1628) Mughal systems and traditions found their way into the Mewar Court. By the eighteenth century a definite court culture and court etiquette had come into existence in Rajasthan. It was not a mere copy of the Mughals court culture. Barring minor local variations the etiquette and system of the courts in Rajasthan were mostly similar throughout.

65 Norbert Elias. *Court Society*, pp. 84.

Entry to the Court

The entry to the court was regulated by the *dodhidar* (Chamberlain) who resembled the ancient *kanchuki* or *danddhar*. If the visitor was a noble or a courtier, *dodhidar* checked his dress and if some discrepancy in the prescribed court dress was noticed, it was got corrected before entry. The *dodhidar* then informed the ruler or the officer incharge of reception in the court and with his permission the visitor was allowed to enter the court. The *chobdar* *dodhidar* announced the name, the rank and the *byrd* (*virud*-titles) of the visitor or courtier and the ruler thus being informed of his privilege accorded him due honors.

The first grade nobles of Mewar when they arrived at *durbar hall* (*Sabha Shiromani*) made a request to the Maharana for permission to appear in his presence. The Maharana sent them a betel leaf (*pan*) as a token of permission to enter the court. On their entry the Maharana rose in his seat to welcome them. It was known as giving *tazim* and such nobles who enjoyed this honor were known as *tazimi*. The entry of other courtiers was regulated by the *dodhidar*.⁶⁶

Announcements and Byrds

Whenever the ruler moved towards the assembly hall, his arrival was duly announced by the *chobdar* (*naquib*: announcer) through set phraseology which was known as “*Nizar Daulat*” meaning that whosoever got the kindness became the rich. The sound of *Khama Khama* resounded in the hall and those present in the hall stood up. They bowed to the ruler on his entry in the hall and said, “*Khama annadata*.” (Forgive us, O’ giver of food).

66 J.S. Gehlat. *Rajputane ka Itihaas*, Jaipur, Rajvir Prakashan, 1965, vol. I, pp. 390.

Whenever a noble entered the durbar the herald (dodhidar:chobdar) made an announcement known as salamati which indicated the name, rank and status of the incoming noble.⁶⁷

Salutations and Reception in the Court

On entry into the Court, the nobles bowed and made three salutes with their right hand nearly touching the ground. The prince rose up in his seat if the noble was tazimi. The noble made three salutes again when he came to the middle of the hall. When the noble came near the ruler he again bowed down and made three salutes in the manner of kornish of the Mughals. The noble placed his sword in front and bowed down to touch the hem of the coat of the ruler. The prince touched his shoulder with his right hand and when the noble stood up straight Prince moved his hand to his bosom. This was treated a sign of acceptance of his salute. The noble then presented nazar and offered nichrawal, after which the Prince requested him to take his seat in the flank (misal) to which he was entitled. In some states this tradition of saluting thrice was not prevalent. The courtier was required to perform salute when he reached the middle of the hall, and presented nazar when he reached near the Prince. The nazar of a tazimi noble was received by the ruler while standing and of others while sitting.⁶⁸

The ruler treated his own brethren as nobles of the first order and accorded them honor, and privileges ordinarily enjoyed by the nobles of the said class.⁶⁹

The Muttsadis who held tazim and kurab enjoyed the position equivalent to the tazimi nobles and if they held the honor to sit were given a seat in the court. Rest of the Muttsadis used to keep standing during the proceedings of the court.⁷⁰

67 Tod. *op.cit.*, vol II, pp. 528.

68 J.S. Gehlot. *op.cit.*, pp. 396.

69 Kaviya Karnidan. *op.cit.*, vol.II, pp. 401.

Whenever some dignitary viz. the ruler or the heir apparent of another state, emissary of the Mughal Emperor, Peshwa or a Maratha leader of repute came to the capital, he was received at some distance from the capital by the chief nobles and prominent muttsadis deputed by the host ruler. When the guest arrived at the palace he was received by the host at the gate and led to the durbar hall hand in hand, where he was seated on the royal crimson cushion on the left corner or the right corner depending on the guest's rank and privilege and the custom prevalent in the host state.⁷¹

The host applied scent to the guest from the scent dish and the guest applied it to the host. The host then offered his guest a scented betel covered with silver and gold leaves. If some near relative died and the host was observing mourning, the scent and pan (betel) were not offered. When the guest rose to depart, the host accompanied him upto some distance to bid him farewell.⁷²

When it was time to declare the proceeding of the court as closed, the Maharaja distributed betel leaves to his nobles. The nobles of higher grades received the betels from the hands of the ruler himself while others received it from the Superintendent of the Department of Betels and Scent. This ended the court meeting and the first grade nobles or nobles holding dohri tazim rose to depart and the Maharaja stood up to give them tazim. Other nobles bowed to the ruler and left the durbar or the Maharaja left the durbar and then the remaining courtiers were allowed to leave.⁷³

Seat in the Court

In Rajput states of Rajasthan the traditional customs about seating arrangements in the courts were sincerely adhered to. The nobles of the higher grade and those muttsadis and khawas-pasbans who were conferred the right of sitting in the court, were allowed to sit

70 J.S. Gehlot. *op.cit.*, pp. 399.

71 Ibid, pp. 400.

72 Ibid, pp. 401.

73 Ibid, pp. 401.

in their respective places. The nobles of the lower grades and the remaining muttsadis and khawas-pasbans kept standing throughout the proceedings of the court.⁷⁴

The seats were fixed on the right and the left of the ruler in rows. These were known as jiwani and davi misals i.e. right and left flanks. The arrangement of seats was as follows:

On the back side of the ruler sat his sons. Brother and nephews,

On the right side in a row sat the grandsons;

On the left side in a row sat the uncles and other person of the royal blood;

In the front of the ruler were the Senapati (Commander in Chief), minister and other courtiers.⁷⁵

The Rajput courts in Rajasthan mostly took their inspiration with regard to seating arrangement in the courts from the rules defined in the works of polity. However no definite rules about the seating arrangements seem to have been in vogue in the earlier courts of Rajasthan and it may be inferred that the one who came earlier to the court occupied the first seats without reservations of any kind. At such a time the classification and segregation among the courtiers had not yet begun.⁷⁶

Rao Jodha, the founder of the House of Marwar, was probably the first ruler in Rajasthan who devoted his attention to fixing the seats in the durbar. Rao Jodha reserved the seats on the right flankj (jiwani missal) for his brothers i.e. those who descended from Rao Rinmal and for his own sons and descendants on the left. Bika, the founder of Bikaner State, followed him and likewise fixed the seats in his court for his descendants and for his uncles' progeny. In Jaipur the nobles of Bara kothri—twelve houses—the descendants of Prithviraj, occupied the first seats on both the flanks. The only exception was the

74 G.K. Ojha. *op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 1317.

75 Ibid, pp. 1327.

76 R.K.Saxena. *op.cit.*, pp. 221.

Mewar court where even the foreign Rajputs i.e. those not belonging to the Sisodiya clan, got more honor than the crown prince.⁷⁷

The nobles who held the privilege of occupying the first seats in any one or both the misals were known as Sirayats.⁷⁸ They were the nobles of the highest rank and enjoyed other higher privileges too viz. Dohri tazim, hath ka kurab etc. The nobles of the first and the second grades were allowed to sit in an open court on the left and the right side. The personal attendants—Khawas Pasbans, were assigned the task of waving fly whisk (chanwar) and peacock tail (morchal), holding the personal sword and shield of the ruler and those who were his bodyguards had to stand behind the ruler on the left and the right. Some second or third grade nobles who were assigned these jobs were also required to stand at the back. Often due to some outstanding service the khawas-pasbans were also permitted to sit in the court. This privilege was personal to the grantee and could not be enjoyed by his successor.⁷⁹

Often serious disputes arose among the nobles on account of their seats in the durbar. These disputes had to be settled by the ruler or an amicable agreement was brought about between the disputants.⁸⁰

Thus, 'each act had an exactly graded prestige value that was imparted to those present, and this prestige value became to an extent self – evident.'⁸¹ The direct use value, of all these minutely and exactly planned actions was more or less incidental. It simply served as an indicator of position of an individual. What gave the gravity to these traditions was solely the importance they conformed on those present within court society. They were expressions of power, rank and dignity. 'Once the hierarchy of special rights within the etiquette was established, it was maintained solely by the competition between the

77 Ibid, pp. 222.

78 Ibid, pp. 223.

79 Ibid, pp. 88.

80 J.S. Gehlot. *op.cit.*, pp. 401.

81 Norbert Elias. *Court Society*, pp. 85.

people enmeshed in it, each being understandably anxious to preserve any privilege, and the power it conferred.⁸² The mechanism perpetuated its own ghostly existence. To give it up would have meant to forfeit privilege, to lose power and prestige. The king used this competition for prestige to vary their ranks by the exact degree of favor shown to them. Etiquette was not petrified in kings hand, it was a highly flexible instrument of power. 'Viewed from this standpoint, it is not difficult to understand the measured attitudes, the calculated gestures, the ever present nuances of speech, in short the specific form of rationality that became the second nature to the members of this society that they exercised with effortless control of affects which its exercise demanded, was an indispensable instrument in the continuous competition for status and prestige.'⁸³

The court figuration of nobility reflected a chess board like arrangement, where the position of each individual was the part of a stratagem. Loyalty, courage, sacrifice, etc. were the qualities needed to perpetuate the Rajput states, so to encourage the nobility to behave in this particular way, etiquette and position of standing in court was made symbolic of status, honor and rank. The dignity and prestige attached to this special figuration by customary practices promoted the courtier to perform the acts which are beneficial to the king and the state.

VIII. Politics of some other Traditions of Court Culture of Rajasthan

The traditions of Rajput states meant to strengthen the sovereign were not present in scattered form but were wielded together to cover the entire space of the empire. The small and minute details related to the daily life of courtiers were crafted to make them more and more subservient and raise the authority of the monarch. There are some cultural trends which could not be classified together in one category, but they were

82 Ibid, pp. 85.

83 Ibid, pp. 88.

spread through out the length and breath of Rajputana to enslave the minds of their bearers for the benefits of the designers. On the basis of the analysis already done in this chapter, we can visualize them and understand them to decipher the process of state formation better. These traditions were,

- The courtiers (including nobles) were required to dismount at a fixed point from their palkies, horses or elephants and from there to move to the assembly hall on foot.
- The nobles would not attend the court except on Dashahara or when it was their turn to serve with their armed quotas, unless they received the official call known as Khas Rukka. It was written in a definite format and a fixed phraseology was used. The first grade nobles got Khas Rukkas from the prince (ruler) himself written by his personal scribe and imprinted with the special sign manual viz. sahi or hukamchey by the ruler. These rukkas were put into envelopes and sealed with the signet finger ring of the ruler. The nobles of the lower ranks got such summons on behalf of the ruler and imprinted with the office seal from the Diwan or some other officer of equal rank who was assigned this job.⁸⁴
- When Khas Rukka or Kharita of the ruler was delivered to the noble, he received it with due respect and after taking it in his hands, he raised it to his head. It was then opened and read.⁸⁵

Such summons of Khas Rukka had to be complied with immediately. The nobles on receipt of this urgent call repaired to the ruler's court without much loss of time. The quick compliance was much appreciated. In Maharana Sangram Singh's time Salumber Rawat had hardly reached his palace after a long time when the summons reached him. He immediately left for Udaipur without even meeting his family or even removing dust from his shoes. The Maharana was much pleased with his sincerity and quick obedience and honored him with more privileges.

84 Reu. *Rajasthan ka Itihaas*, vol. I. pp. 93.

85 Tod. *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 150.

- The nobles of Rajput origin and the Muttsadis performed mujra when they came to the court or received a gift. When a Brahman appeared in the court instead of performing salute (mujra) he gave blessings (aashirvad) to the ruler.⁸⁶
- Every courtier presented his nazar to the ruler. The nazar offered by the Charanas and the Brahmans was touched by the ruler and returned to the person concerned. They were exempted from the payment of nazars. The Nazar of all others were accepted.⁸⁷
- The court proceedings were closed with offering of the betel leaf. The nobles of the first grade got it from the ruler and others got it from the superintendent concerned. The betel leaf when presented personally by the ruler was received with due etiquette. The noble received the betel from the Prince in both hands while standing. The Prince rose in his seat while giving the betel. The noble after receiving the beera of pan performed mujra (salute) and left the hall.⁸⁸
- When the Maharaja received some gifts or new commodities from abroad, he distributed a part of it among his nobles. The produce of the royal garden was also shared among the courtiers in a garden party or was sent to the havelis (residences) of the noble.⁸⁷
- Like the Mughal, the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan bestowed robes of honour on their nobles from time to time. The Mughals called in Khilat but in Rajasthan it was known as Siropao i.e. from head to toe– a complete dress.⁸⁸ Presentation of such a dress was considered a great honour. The receivers put on this dress and performed mujra to the ruler as a token of gratitude for bestowing siropao.⁹¹
- Whenever the ruler wanted to banish a prince or a noble from his country, he sent to him a siropao consisting of sable (black) colored dress, black vestments, a sable shield and a sword of the same colour with a black horse. This was a definite hint that his presence was not required and banishment from the country had been pronounced on him. He left before the next sunrise with such of his retainers as

86 Reu. *Rajasthan ka itihaas*, vol. I, pp. 95.

87 Tod. *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 329.

88 Ibid, pp.192.

chose to accompany him. The banished prince or noble was free to go anywhere he liked and seek his fortune.⁸⁹

- Seekh ka Siropao was presented to the nobles when they sought permission to depart to their home towns. It signified that their request was granted and they could leave. When the ruler wanted someone to leave for his jagir he sent such a siropao to his residence.⁹³
- On festivals, the rulers bestowed on a noble or the purohit the dress which he had worn on a particular occasion. In Mewar the Chouhan chief of Kothariya received the dress worn by the Maharana on Dashahara. The Maharaja of Amber conferred his own dress worn on his birthday on Kumbhanis, and that worn on Rakshabandhan on his purohit. The Bagroo thakur got bow, arrows, quiver etc, with the saaz (saddle etc.) of the horse

On Dashara festival from the ruler of Jaipur, the Chiefs of Macheri (later on rulers of Alwar State) used to get the dress worn by the Maharaja of Jaipur on Diwali.

- Whenever some difficult expedition was at hand, the Mughal emperors held out a beera of pan (betel) in a platter and circulated it among their nobles and generals. The one who picked it up accepted to lead the expedition and was appointed the commander of the armies going on this errand. Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur repeated the same custom of holding out the beera in his court for taking revenge from the Gour chief of Deoti.⁹⁵
- When the ruler rode on an elephant, especially in a procession, his rear seat was occupied by the nobles of the first or the second grade who waved the fly whisk over the prince. In Mewar, Pradhan, who was a muttsadi, occupied this seat on the Maharana's elephant.⁹⁶

89 Ibid. pp. 192.

Inference

In this chapter, we have tried to focus on the traditional bonds connecting the ruler with the ruling class. This invites us to focus on the organization and the structure of the 'relational dynamics'⁹⁷ of court society. The relationship here was governed by particular codes of behavior. While questioning the activities of expression of respect, an entire new world of political thought regime opens before us. This helps us to discover the familiar territory of state craft on entirely different lines. The traditions are skillfully crafted to entrap the loyalty and services of the ruling class, and drive them towards contributing to the nurturing the state edifice. Their psychology was governed through indirect means and they were directed to create such currents which would lead to the flow of power towards the throne. The supreme authority, thus always rested in the king. The king then took up the role of distribution of honor and rank, along with material benefits. 'Power alone governs the distribution of rewards.'⁹⁸ These cultural forms of classification and differentiation did not cost anything to the ruler but paid him huge dividends. Its consumer, i.e. the courtiers, were integrated from above. The subtle operations of power are more important to be examined to grasp the structure and function of political systems. The important thing here is that 'truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power.. truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints. And it includes regular effects of power.'⁹⁹

97 Daud Ali. *op.cit.*, pp. 4.

98 Gerhard Lenski. 'Power, Privilege and Prestige' in Eric A. Nordlinger. ed. *Politics and Society*, New Jersey, Prentice hall, 1970, pp. 47.

99 Michelle Foucault. *op.cit.*, pp. 129

Chapter 4

Genesis of Culture

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Concept

To unravel the past of any region, 'we have to start with the idea that man in society constitutes the ultimate object of historical research in which he is the leading protagonist. Social history is in fact for all history'.¹ The operation of political machinery involves the study of multiple techniques of behavioral control and correction in society. 'Disciplinary power is managed by 'experts' and guided by knowledge: psychological, sociological, biological.'² While studying history our analytic emphasis should be on the ordering of the forms: institutional, ideational, psychological- within which social actors are situated. The point of understanding "systems" was ultimately to understand the basis of "social action".³ A historian should be interested in exploring not so much the political institution, but forms of power. These forms of power categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality attaches him to his own identity, imposes a laws of truth on him which he must recognize and which others must recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. 'The identities culturally made available to us are often deforming and debilitating, at once constituting and limiting, providing people with a narrow sense of possibility, keeping them in their places.'⁴ The parameters of personal identity-especially of one's place within a system of social differences and inequalities are structured into the objective environment. The organization of spaces (in houses, in villages and in cities) and time (the rhythms of work, festivals, celebrations)

1 Georges Duby. *op.cit.*, pp. 3.

2 Michel Foucault. *op.cit.*, pp. 80.

3 Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Orther. *op.cit.*, pp. 13.

4 Ibid, pp. 244.

embody the assumptions of gender, age, and social hierarchy upon which a particular way of life is built. 'As the actor grows up, and lives everyday life within these spatial and temporal forms, s/he comes to embody those assumptions, literally and figuratively. The effect is one of near – total naturalization of the social order, the forging of homologies between personal identity and social classification.'⁵ Understanding of power therefore invites analyses of the multiple ways in which power is deployed. 'Power can not be stripped away from social relations.'⁶ Without understanding it, history can not be understood. One of the forms of power through which it sleeps into social life is ideology. Ideological power derives from the human need to find ultimate meaning in life to share norms and values, and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices. 'Control of an ideology that combines ultimate meanings, values, norms, aesthetics, and rituals bring general social power.'⁷ Ideological power generates distinct organizational forms. It is predominantly diffused, commanding through persuasion, a claim of truth and inviting participation in ritual. 'Its diffusion has two principal forms. It may be socio spatially "transcendent." That is, an ideology may diffuse right through the boundaries of economic, military, and political power organizations. Human beings belonging to different states, classes, and so forth face similar problems to which ideology offers plausible solutions. Then ideological power spreads transcendently to form a new, distinctive and powerful network of social interaction. Second, ideological power may solidify an existing power organization, developing its "immanent morale." Transcendence is a radically autonomous form of power; immanence reproduces and strengthens existing power relations.'⁸

The concept of honor and status has remained pertinent to Rajput civilization. These have remained central to the lives of the people, history of the region, political behavior and social hierarchy. In all cultures these concepts are reflected through symbols, rituals, historical narratives, mythology, literary tradition and art forms. They acquire distinctive forms and categories in different regions and cultural traditions. Significantly, status and

5 Ibid, pp. 13.

6 Michel Foucault. *op.cit.*, pp. 88.

7 Michael Mann. *Sources of Social Power*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 7.

8 Ibid, pp. 8.

honor, as exemplified in the region of Rajputana, reveal, a specific pattern that is quite apart from that of other regions of India. 'Honor and status are projected through symbols and rituals which have formed a significant component of political life irrespective of the form of polity.'⁹ The rulers of Rajputana deployed different symbols and rituals in varying political contexts to create legitimacy and to mould people's understanding according to their political interests.

Delineation of Themes

The chapter involves us to discover the various cultural forms through which the people are captured psychologically and emotionally. The creation of legitimacy is more a cultural process. In order to understand these notions, we can study it under the following themes;

- I. Genesis of Rajput Character,
- II. Politics of Folk Literature,
- III. Politics of Folk Culture,
- IV. Politics of Sati Memorials.

I. Genesis of Rajput Character

While certain symbols, rituals and objects were widely deployed to project the public aura, authority and placement of an individual in a given hierarchy, achievement of real honour was linked to a code of conduct which had been evolved over a period of time in the Rajputana States. The paradigm of honor associated with these states was best exemplified in a set of values that set the ideal standard of conduct and also defined Rajput identity. These norms were evolved in accordance with their political and military requirements. Significantly, as is often misunderstood, the so-called Rajput dharma or vir-dharma was not confined to the warrior or ruling classes, but permeated even to the lower levels of social stratification as also the classes and communities other than Rajputs

⁹ Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma. *op.cit.*, pp. 10.

– Brahmins, Oswals, Kayasths, Vishnois, Jats, etc. ‘The tribal population comprising Bhils, Mairs, Banjaras, Kalbelias, etc., too adhered to certain principles that formed the code of honor for them.’¹⁰

Heroism was the supreme virtue for the Rajputs and the groups closely associated with them. Their education and anticipatory socialization sought to inculcate rather deeply the notion that warrior can go to heaven only if he died in a battle-field or emerged victorious. Similarly, it was asserted that a Rajput’s food was not digested without war. War in itself was upheld as a value. The Rajputs literally worshipped heroism. Not only heroes but inanimate objects associated with battle were equally venerable. There were specific rituals and festivals for worshipping the arms, especially the sword and the shield. The pledges in the name of sword (khadag ki aan) and weapons (ya sila ki aan) were held to be inviolable. The shield was considered the most exalted vessel for offering gifts. It was widely believed that the sword of a hero possessed healing and curing powers.¹¹

A warrior who died fighting in a battlefield was deified and worshipped. There was a deified putra (son) in every family. In Mewar, Raghudeva, Choonda’s younger brother, acquired divine honours and a place among the Pitri Deva (deified patrimony) of Mewar after his martyrdom. His image was to be found on every hearth and is daily worshipped. Twice in the year, he received homage from the entire clan – from the Rana to the lowest member in the hierarchy. Significantly, enshrinement of such heroes took place, irrespective of their caste status.¹² An image of a Meghwal who died in a battle is worshiped in the temple of Karnimata.¹³ In fact, during the early stages of state formation, the primary consideration for the conferment of honour on clansmen was the exemplary courage shown by them in the battlefield. An elaborate code of conduct was evolved which a true warrior was expected to conform to. For instance, retreat from the battlefield was the biggest disgrace for a warrior.

10 G.N. Sharma. *Rajasthan Studies*, Agra, Laxmi Narayan Publications, 1970, pp. 179.

11 Ibid, pp. 120.

12 Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma. *op. Cit.*, pp. 40.

13 Ibid, pp. 41.

The langar (gold worn in the feet) worn by a warrior was not a decorative ornament but it was emblematic of his resolve to remain undeterred in the battlefield or return victorious. It was popularly known as laj ka langar (symbol of honour).¹⁴ Similarly, it was unheroic to strike at the enemy's back. Even on the arena of warfare, the ethical values were adhered to the hilt. It implied courteous and hospitable behavior towards the adversary, which even involved offering the initial strike to him. The highest form of heroism displayed on the battlefield is that of jhumjhar, literally meaning struggler.¹⁵

Jhumjhars figure amongst the most illustrious of heroes because they continue to fight even after their heads had been severed. Many Rajput, families deeply cherish and revere their jhumjhars myths. They are revered as quintessence of heroism. Jhumjhars are worshipped in the form of a stone image of a warrior on horseback placed outdoors on the village boundary or near the village well. In fact, the warriors before embarking on a military expedition used to utter the name of a jhumjhar hero while girding their sword so that they could unleash similar havoc on the enemy.¹⁶ In Rajasthan, the urge to make supreme sacrifice was so strong that rival khamps (septs) tried to be in the harawal (vanguard) of the army so that they could either receive or make the first assault. It is this ideology of combat that continues to define the image of the Rajputs and their distinctive sense of honor in popular perception.

An essential component in the Rajput notion of honor and heroism was the ethic of protection. The primary basis of deference for members of nobility and royalty as also for individuals is their ability to extend protection and welfare of the people as their primary goal. Deification of folk heroes has been the result of their ability to extend protection to the common folk and their cattle. Among the major folk Gods are Papuji, Tejaji, Devnarayan, Gogaji and Harbhujji.¹⁷ Shrines in their honor are found in almost all the villages and towns. These are largely pastoral heroes who fought for the welfare of the

14 G.N. Sharma. *Social life in Medieval Rajasthan*, pp. 160.

15 Anil Chandra Banerjee. *Lectures on Rajput History*, pp. 101.

16 Ibid, pp. 162.

17 Narain Singh Bhati. *Sources of Socio- Economic History of Rajasthan and Malwa (1700- 1900 A.D.)*, Jodhpur, Maharaja Mansingh Pustak Prakash, 1989, pp.39.

village communities, often dying in the process. The aforesaid folk heroes are able to protect the faithful against cattle disease, snakebite, poverty and sickness. These deified heroes were not necessarily Rajputs, yet they received reverence from both – Rajputs and non-Rajputs, especially the cattle breeding castes.¹⁸

Another prevalent practice valued in Rajputana states was *vair* (vendetta) or *aant lena* (customarily tie a knot signifying determination to take revenge). In popular sayings, a son is deemed to be a *kaput* (a worthless son) if he fails to retaliate or is unable to seek revenge. Each individual, especially so the Rajput, is born with a debt to die (*marne ka rin*) in vindication of his personal and family honour and for upholding the glory of his clan. These blood feuds are over possessions such as land, water and women or result from incidents of humiliation. These blood feuds were not peculiar to Rajputs but were to be found among men of every community including the lower classes. Thus, the principle of revenge was universal and not caste-or class-specific. Failure of an individual to prosecute a feud tantamount to an acknowledgment of self-disgrace. The *vair* was transmitted from generation to generation since it was largely believed that to sheath a sword till the feud is balanced would be a blot that could never be effaced. It is an accepted fact that more people lost their lives in the pursuit of *vair* rather than in battles. The basic principle of a *vair* was blood for blood, better known in common parlance as *moondkati* (slicing of the head). Later, the term came to be known as compensation for the price of blood. If the king or the *jagirdar* was powerful enough, he could compel acceptance of *moondkati* or compensation to close the feud and thus avoid bloodshed and destruction. In medieval Rajasthan no money compensation was acceptable for termination of the feud. Only *dharati* (land) and *dulhan* (bride) from the guilty clan or family carried enough worth for the pacification of the adversary. There are numerous instances when *vairs* were quenched (*vair bujhana*) by cession of territory or by matrimonial alliance, at time of wholesale character between boys and girls of opposite party either voluntary or forced by the stronger party.¹⁹

18 Ibid, pp. 45.

19 Ibid, pp. 47.

Gratification of revenge despite being a noble sentiment and integral to the Rajput notion of a man of honor brought doom and darkness for people in Rajputana. In their frenzy for revenge Rajputs and non-Rajputs courted ruin and loss of everything a man ought to hold dearest and nearest, namely, his country's liberty and his ancestral religion. It is all the more regrettable because the Rajputs did not learn to sink petty enmities, unite for a common cause and thus divert the lava of a retaliatory spirit of *vair* from individual and the class to a national channel.

The ethic of honour was also the ethic of fidelity and gratitude to one's lord. i.e., *swami-dharma* or *syam-dharma*. According to Tod, "Gratitude, honour and fidelity....were the fountain of all virtues of Rajputs. Ask a Rajput which is the greatest of all crimes. He will reply 'forgetfulness of favour'. It is a rare thing for a Rajput to betray his Thakur, while instances of self-devotion to him are innumerable. Fidelity to the chief, *swami-dharm* is the climax of all virtues."²⁰ Basic to the Rajput system of value was his duty to preserve and strengthen the *kul* (lineage). However, despite the centrality of *kul* as the foremost source of honour and prestige, the primary political allegiance of the Rajputs was to their ruler or the chief whom they served.²¹ The ethic of fidelity, in fact, prevented many intrigues and challenges from within the states and the ruling lineage. The spirit of total commitment to the ruler remained crucial to the sustenance and strength of the polity of the erstwhile states of Rajputana.

In the states of Rajputana the sentiment of gratitude was not confined to the political realm but permeated the common cultural ethos. A person found wanting in *swami-dharma* was not deemed fit to live and was doomed to eternal pain. The *goonchor* (ungrateful, literally means people who abandon virtue) and *sachor* (violator of truth) were consigned by the authority of the bard to 60,000 years suffering in hell.²²

20 R.P.Kathuria. *op. Cit.*, pp. 97.

21 Suresh K. Sharma and Usha Sharma. *op.cit.*, pp. 21.

22 Devendra Satyarthi. 'The Charans of Rajasthan' in Suresh K. Sharma and Usha Sharma. ed. *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, pp. 117.

Hospitality and charity, motivated by a sense of social good and free from any sense of self-gratification, have been considered integral to construction of honour. Exalted individuals, famous visitors, well-known scholars, writers or artists are very well received in all countries. However, in Rajputana states, due to an acute sense of honour, hospitality and charity were not influenced by hierarchies of wealth, power or learning. Piety was shown to a visitor or guest just because he has entrusted himself to a man and his dwelling. These sentiments formed a part of the vir-dharma as it evolved in Rajputana states. Not only the Rajputs but other castes and communities as well viewed granting sharan or sirna (protection, refuge) even to the strangers as a privilege. Charan enjoyed the prerogative of offering sirna to endangered lives as his roof was considered inviolable even by his rivals.²³ Religious shrines and their head priests were also endowed with the privilege of sirna. Giving refuge was not confined to the ruling classes but the ethic of protection was a part of the lokachar (popular culture) wherein a person was granted shelter and treated most hospitably, irrespective of his status in the class hierarchy, his religion or his political affiliations.²⁴

In different cultural traditions giving has been perceived not only as a higher ideal but also a greater pleasure than receiving. In Rajputana states, in addition to reckless courage, his generosity and his capacity to sacrifice for others defined an ideal hero. Among the people of Rajputana some of the common charities were anndan (land grants), jaldan (provision for water) and dhan dan (monetary grants).²⁵

Sadavrat (perpetual charity) was one of the most popular hospitable rites in which free kitchens were organized for travelers and the needy in perpetuity. Rulers, jagirdars, wealthy mahajans and the religious shrines commonly organized sadavrats. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples when members of a particular caste group subscribed to the establishment of a sadavrat.²⁶ Such community participation for the cause of social

23 Ibid, pp. 123.

24 G.N. Sharma. *Rajasthan Studies*, pp. 230.

25 Ibid, pp. 232.

26 Ibid, pp. 233.

service testifies to the prevalence of high values and commitment to the deprived sections, even amongst the commoners.

Truthfulness to one's word formed yet another cherished value in the medieval Rajput culture. Observance of *aan* (pledge) even at the cost of one's life or by incurring losses was a common practice. In common parlance, people in Mewar took pledge in the name of *Eklingji* known as *Eklingji ki aan* as well as *gaddi* (throne) *ki aan* and *Maharana ki aan*.²⁷ The fact that such promises remained binding despite the fact that they did not carry any official acknowledgment show on the one hand the revered status of the Maharana and on the other it emerges as an example of Mewaris adherence to their word. As soon as a chief or *jagirdar* was appointed, his *aan* was declared in the area within his jurisdiction. Significantly, even tribals like *Bhils*, *Mairs* etc. had rituals that signified total adherence to their word.²⁸

The code of honor had deep impact on people's psyche. It determined values and affected socialization process. It also invoked a sense of commitment in public life. It is true that some of the concepts proved disastrous and led to their decline. In this context, a reference must be made to the pervasive practice of *vair* which engaged rulers, *jagirdars* and the common populace in endless internal feuds. In summation, one can say that code of honour provides useful insights into Rajput policy, interrelationships of social groups and formulation of social values.

II. Politics of Folk Literature

Literature and folk culture were the chief modes of transmitting ideas in society. Through it the mentality of the people was moulded into desired form. 'It has recently become customary among cultural officials as well as sociologists to warn against underestimating the culture industry while pointing to its great importance for the

27 Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma. *op.cit.*, pp. 45.

28 *Ibid*, pp. 48.

development of the consciousness of its consumer.²⁹ Rajasthani literature of eighteenth century was chiefly 'veer – sahitya'³⁰ meant to inspire people for sacrifice. It encouraged both men and women to lead a courageous life. It was full of thrill of war, emotions of warriors, feeling of devotion, sense of pride, sacrifice, bravery and self respect 'This art form on one hand inspired men-folk to challenge death in the battle-field, on the other hand, encouraged women – folk to take pride in the death of their husband and sons while fighting.'³¹

In this form of literature, a hero is generally described as a lion, boar, snake or as other animals for their resemblances of qualities, for eg.

'Isa sinh su jike awai ashaday,
Paney dhai ekaike gaijuha pade;
Vashaney saka jodh je lohba,
Balanth bahaduer ianjaan baha.'³²

(i.e. Such lion when they land on warfield, then each one of them by their strength defeat hoardes of elephants. For such skilled users of weapons it is said that they are strong, brave and have long arms)

A lion is considered an ultimate being of bravery in all culture. In Rajasthan, a snake is considered to be full of venom of revenge and anger, for eg.

'Bambi bheetar paudhiya, kalo dubake kai?
Poongi upar padharo, aavey bhog uthai.'³³

(i.e. Sleeping in its burrow, can the black one get scared, just call with the music of poongi (war) and it will come out raising its head).

29 Adorno. *op.cit.*, pp. 89.

30 Narendra Bhanawat. *Rajasthani Veer Kavya*, Agra, Ranjan Prakashan, 1970, pp. 200.

31 Motilal Menaria. *Rajasthani Bhasha aur Sahitya*, Delhi, Pathak Publishers, 1962, pp. 68.

32 Girdhar Aashia. *Sagat Raso*, Hukum Singh Bhati. ed., Udaipur, Pratap Sodh Sansthan, 1987, pp. 374.

33 Narendra Bhanawat. *op.cit.*, pp. 6.

Along with the description of warriors, Sagat Rasa also delves into the appreciation of horses of warriors. For the horse of Mohandas Kachhwaha, Girdhar Aashia writes:

‘Acchambho turi tej mei adhilambey,
Trinitha vcrashahu lamba nulambey;
Nihasey natu jhampaliye pan chadai,
Iso avio pag janoy ashadey.’³⁴

(i.e. a surprising horse was immediately brought. It was very graceful and tall in height. This horse was more blue than the clouds of rainy season. It used to make noise while breathing, dance and jump. It was so active that it would not allow anyone to sit on it easily. This horse has come so playfully as if a wrestler has come in the court.)

Same way Aashia goes on to eulogize the horses of other warrior of different states like Kalyandas Jhala, Mahesh Rathore, Dala Sankla, Saaya Gehlot and so on.

The deceased warriors were always remembered and appreciated. This would always promote the up coming youth to follow their steps. Once such eg. is,

‘Saaya bajiyo vado Gahilout sare,
Vatra ro Ghana meer saare viharey;’
Vairo sen dasor ri saris vagey,
Audhey rahey soor saktas aagey.’³⁵

(i.e. Saya came to be known as the greatest in all Gehlots. This son of a great warrior has killed a lot of samants. This slayer of enemies fought on the forefront against the army of Dashpur)

The Rajput believed that death in war immediately took them to heaven, as,

‘Pancholi petho pad satra aap padiye,
Judey nara chal naan lai chand jadiyo,
Vadey vigra chatral vaikuntha vasey,
Tiko padey rankhet lohey tarasey.’³⁶

34 Girdhar Ashia. *op.cit.*, pp. 385.

35 *Ibid*, pp. 491.

(i.e. Petha pancholi, after felling enemies, himself fell down. By taking part in the king's war, he made his name as bright as moon. This Brahman of Cheetar resided in heaven after being cut by weapons. By getting destroyed by weapons in the war field he has died.)

The loss of young male members of family in battle was a matter of pride for Rajputs.
Eg.

'Baitho jody bapare, bandh kasumbal pech,
Beto ghar aayo nahi, dholi bandhan het.'³⁷

(i.e. The son is sitting next to father on an auspicious occasion, with a red turban; but he did not return home to mourn the death of his father and thus to wear a white turban)

In the Rajasthani Veer Kavya, courage is not just limited to men. Even woman shared this emotion and encouraged men on this path,

'Sahali sabari hu sakhi, do ur ulti dah.
Doodh lajaye poot sam, balaya lajaye nah.'³⁸

(Dear friend, I can bear all other things, but if my husband brings disrespect to my bangles and my son to my milk – these two things can upset my heart to extremes-then it is unbearable.)

Thus, the women were also made to participate in politics and contribute in state formation by the 'politics of misrecognition'³⁹ or the fear of 'historical wound'⁴⁰ also acted as a strong driving force.

While exploring the public life of historical Rajputana we come across incidents of women folk being inspired to feel proud while giving birth to sons for dying in battle-fields, while committing sati or jauhar, or to face any other hardship. The process of

36 Ibid, pp. 545.

37 Narendra Bhanawat. *op.cit.*, pp. 38.

38 Suryamal Mishran. *Veer Satsai*, Prof. Kanhaiyalal Sahal, Prof. Pritam Gaur and Ishwardan Aashia, Calcutta, Bengali Hindi Mandal, 1951, pp. 10.

39 Bain Attwood, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Claudio Lomnitz. 'The Public Lift of History', in Public Life-Society for transnational cultural Studies, 54, Vol. 20, No.1, Winter 2008 pp.1.

40 Ibid, pp. 2.

production and consumption of culture just turned them into instruments of generation of power.

‘Hoon balihari raniya, thal bajaney deeh.

Beer jami ra je janey, sankal heeta seeh.’⁴¹

(i.e. I adore queens on the day of giving birth to sons. These queens give birth to lions who break all chains)

‘Kali karey badhawano, satiya ayo saath,

hathlevey judiyo jiko, hamain na chuttey haath.’⁴²

(i.e. The husbands of satis have died on battle –field. And satis have come to offer themselves to fire, while keeping the heads of their lords in their laps. On this occasion, Goddess kali, tells them that the hands that were united in panigrahan (marriage), will never be separated. They will continue to be together in heaven.)

‘Suto devar sej ran, prasav athi mo poot.

the ghar bhabhi baant than, paalo ubhaya pasoot.’⁴³

(i.e. the younger sister – in – law is telling to the elder one that here I have given birth to a son and there my husband lies dead on the war-bed, so, now, you divide your breasts between your and my son and bring up my son; I will commit Sati.)

Sati was projected as an occasion of pride for wives in literature. Not giving this opportunity was criticized in the poems,

‘Gandhan kuki re gajab, bhunda agam bhoun.

Balan Kadhaya atar dhan, muhango lesi kaun.’⁴⁴

41 Suryamal Mishran, *op.cit.* pp. 18.

42 *Ibid*, pp. 19.

43 *Ibid*, pp. 19.

44 *bid*, pp. 49.

(i.e. the scent making woman cried out, hey, this is unbelievable, he has come back home without doing anything. Now, who will buy this expensive scent which his wife has got made for the occasion of sati.)

The education of sati began at a very young age, as is clear by the following couplet,

‘Hoon balihari raniyan, saacha garbha sikhaya.

Jaccha hande taphey, harkhey dhidrig lai.’⁴⁵

(i.e. We adore those queens who give strong education to their children in wombs only. When the mothers are warming themselves near fire, their daughters look at flames with bright eyes.)

‘Dhol suntan mangali, mooncha bhun chadant,

Chanwari hi pahchaniyo, kanwari marmo kant.’⁴⁶

(i.e. at the time of marriage, when a bride saw her husband in the eager position (on hearing the drum beat), she could make out that her husband is yearning to go on war and thus have a short life.)

Following, all the steps of life cycle, the impression and intrusion of politics is so deep that women sing such a lullaby,

‘Ila no devni aapni, halariye jularaye.

Poot sikhavey palaney, maran badhayi main.’⁴⁷

(i.e. you should never give your land to anyone, with this feeling she rocks the cradle. While singing this lullaby, she is teaching the greatness of death to her son.)

Thus, we see that the folk literature was almost all pervasive and efficiently exploited the emotions of the people for the perpetuation of the state. Even the most private affairs of human life were guided and controlled by the needs of state. We also get to know a lot more about jauhar and saka, by keeping these theories in mind. While sati was a practice

45 Ibid, pp. 43.

46 Ibid, pp. 89.

47 Ibid, pp. 115.

of 'voluntary self immolation'⁴⁸ after husband's death, jauhar is performed before his supreme sacrifice of death in war (saka). Jauhar was primarily aimed at preservation of female chastity and virtue. 'To ensure the purity of blood and lineage, the higher castes, especially the Rajputs, exercised control over women's sexuality. During periods of turmoil, especially invasions or conquests, when the possibility of capture of women became imminent, the Rajput rulers resolved the problematic issue of protecting women's honour and the mixing of blood through the rite of jauhar i.e. immolating their women before they could be ravished by the enemy. Violation of woman's chastity not only meant dishonour and shame for the women at the personal level but it was effectively linked to the honour and prestige of the clan, ruler and the state.'⁴⁹

The practice of jauhar is related to the most striking tales of valor, heroism and sacrifice pertaining to women for protection of their own and the collective honour of the clan. The folks were educated in such practices through literature. 'Jauhar and saka were parallel and integral processes, which symbolized ultimate expression of protection of honour by men and women. Saka was the last-ditch attempt by warriors when they entered into battle with no expectation of survival or success. Jauhar and saka reflect, perhaps, the same psyche of making supreme sacrifice for preserving the honour of the clan and the state. Before men donned the kesariya bana for the ultimate battle, women mounted the pyre so that men could go and fight, without fearing for the violation of their bodies by the enemy. Jauhar symbolized the ultimate female Rajput value of courage and bravery in the sense that men were liberated from the fear of their women being exploited. This enabled the men to resist until the end.'⁵⁰

The people were prompted and inspired in this way by a highly emotive form of literature. Its performance takes its level of impression to even higher degrees. 'Using image, music and sound effect along with the spoken word, the dramatic style aims directly at emotions. It makes you feel strongly for the image created. Portraying the world in the present tense, plunges you into the midst of it, the dramatic features destroy

48 G.N. Sharma. *Rajasthan Studies*, pp. 125.

49 Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma. *op. Cit.* pp. 147.

50 *Ibid*, pp. 150.

the distance between you and the image and obliterate....your ability to think about what you are seeing.’⁵¹ Thus, the production of such literature targets the psychology of the masses and makes them follow the ways of life beneficial to the state.

III. Politics of Folk Culture

In Rajasthan there are some historical characters which are still alive in the public memory through oral traditions. These characters are worshiped by the people. Reverence is the highest form of devotion to any belief and can serve as a best form of instruction. In the folk culture of Rajasthan, narration of the stories of Pabuji, Gogaji, Tejaji, Devnarayan, Sawai Bhoj, Sultan, Galaleng, Dungji, etc. is going on since generations. These folk heroes are still alive in public memory, because of the narration of the stories in the musical form. When sung by specialists, along with the instruments, they are called ‘pawadey’.⁵² The singing troupes used to go from one village to another and perform there. ‘The stories were usually very long and some times they go on for months.’⁵³ The heroes of these stories really did exist once upon a time but they were not as miraculous as these folk performances depict. ‘Many imaginary incidents and characters kept adding on to the real story over a long period of time.’⁵⁴ It is natural to happen to anything which remains a part of oral tradition for a good enough period. Since, there is some element of historical reality in it and the folk culture keeps giving testimony of this truth (though in a magnified form), the folk culture acts as an interpreter of past in present. The culture speaks in a tone as if it has really been the spectator of the event. ‘Testimony’s authority lies, of course, in its promise of historical proximity, indeed in the impression or the illusion it creates of being the past or at least closer to the past than accounts of professional history. It is specially powerful when it comes in the form of the oral, and even more so when it is visual as well: I was there, and now I am speaking to you and you can hear me speaking. With testimony there is promise of a certain emotional and

51 Bain Attwood. *op.cit.* pp.84.

52 Dr. Satyendra Upadhyaya. *Role of Folk Literature*, Ajmer, Garuda Prakashan, 1983, pp. 58.

53 Dr. Usha Kasturia. *Rajasthani Veer Gathamak Pawadey*, Delhi, Hindi Academy, 1980, pp. 58.

54 *Ibid*, pp. 59.

gestural vividness- a vividness strongly reinforced by the customarily oral form of its delivery- that operates to transform it into a virtual transparent form of transmission.’⁵⁵

In the folk performances Pabuji, Gogaji, etc. have been demonstrated as the embodiment of all the ideals of a perfect human being. Since these legendary heroes laid down their lives for the values highly venerated by the society, they are worshipped. ‘But, actually, in their form the people worship those qualities for which they lived and died.’⁵⁶ Thus, they unknowingly try to imitate them and live those characteristic qualities in their own life also. ‘This is only one aspect of the individualizing and normalizing technologies of power.’⁵⁷ These traditions act as museums or exhibitions, where only that are displayed, which is to be presented. All these ‘sought to allow the people, and en masse, to know than to be known, to become the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge’.⁵⁸

There are a large number of such performative stories in the folk culture of Rajputana, and all of them too long to be described here, but we can discuss the central theme and the chief traits of some of them. We have to at the same time focus on the supernatural, imaginary and miraculous aspects of this oral tradition to be able to gauge its impressive impact. Its ability to control the psyche of the people lies in the creation of a picture bigger than real. The core story of Galaleng or Gulal Singh is ‘veer gatha’⁵⁹ or narration of chivalry. It depicts a hero who is brave and courageous, and gives up his life fighting the enemies all alone. It is a touching picture of an individual who is faced by the dual choices of either war or seeing his wife for the first time after marriage. Between duty and love, he prefers former and sacrifices his life for it. The story of Gogaji is popularly sung in Brij, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. It shows how Gogaji’s cousins got jealous of him, when he won kingdom for himself and intrigued against him, and how he defeated them in war. He is equally well presented by the folk performers as the protector of cows and savior of motherland from foreign invaders. The singing traditions put forward the image of a child with super human capacities. His love for

55 Bain Attwood. *op.cit.*, pp. 86.

56 Usha Kasturia. *op.cit.*, pp. 56.

57 Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley and Sherry B. Ortner. *op.cit.*, pp. 9.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 10.

59 Usha Kasturia. *op.cit.*, pp. 64.

Kevaldey and mode of winning her presents him as a total embodiment of a truthful lover and husband. His decision to wage a war when his wife is insulted, teaches people to follow the ideal of respecting and fighting for the modesty of women. Gogaji was also associated to have powers to cure the people of snake bite and bring them back to life.⁶⁰ Even today he is worshiped in this respect.

The folk musicians sing the praise of Tejeji who gave up his life protecting cows from dacoits. He was on his way to get his wife from her parental home when a guzari called out for help to save her cows. Tejaji immediately rushed to the call and lost his life in the battle. Presenting the example of ideal womanhood, his wife committed sati, who had not even spent a day with him.⁶¹ His continuous depiction in folk tradition has added a lot of imagination to this core story. It has definitely played a significant role in the historical time to teach the ideal of protecting cows.

Devnarayan, the son of Sawai Bhoj of Bagrawat clan is worshiped and praised for fulfilling his duty of taking revenge. 'The son who settles the score of ancestral animosity is worth public veneration.'⁶² The birth of such a son is a blessing. It is believed that God himself comes down in the form of such a progeny. So, the child is definitely shown in possession of super natural powers. Both his birth and childhood is a testimony of it. The proof of his bravery is clearly visible from his fulfilling the condition of getting the wooden doors from a demon for marriage. This brings alive the image of a hero who is endowed with qualities to control animals and nature. Finally, by fulfilling his duty of taking revenge, he proves himself to be a perfect human being, and worthy of social praise. Similarly, Pabuji is worshiped for protecting cows and taking revenge.⁶³ In 'Bhagravaton ki Katha'⁶⁴ the folk singers bring out the live image of heroes who stood for the protection of women and taking revenge. The story of 'Nihaldey – Sultan'⁶⁵ is depiction of the values and morals an ideal prince should live by. The tale of 'Dungaji –

60 Ibid, pp. 65.

61 Dr. Satyendra Upadhyaya. *op. cit.*, pp. 92.

62 Usha Kasturia. *op.cit.*, pp. 65.

63 Ibid, pp. 68.

64 Ibid, pp. 72.

65 Ibid, pp. 75.

Jawarji'⁶⁶ is yet another live example of keeping characteristics of patriotism and chivalry alive in society and inspiring the youth to embrace them in their lives. All the stories have been made interesting and more impressive by the attachment of issues like - brilliant and super-human childhood; brave deeds to win beautiful and ideal wives; stories of controlling animals, conversing with and taking help from them; faithful friends and brothers; devils; magical instruments, divine support, comments and satires; fire of revenge; cow protection; tests by gods; boons and curses, etc. - attached to them.

All the elements add to the effect of moulding the minds of the audiences of these performances. The virtue of being an age old tradition, stands for the authenticity of these stories. The effective presentation style of folk artists makes the impact deeper and more real. The individual and personal incidents of this folk tradition help in making a general and collective impression on the people. Power is not all about military prowess, but is also about the authority over the ways the society is shaped. 'Where instruction and rhetoric failed, punishment began'.⁶⁷ The culture is an important tool in the hand of politics for the near – total naturalization of social order.

IV. Politics of Sati – Memorials

An ideology can be ingrained into individuals by multiple ways. The people in society are usually made to internalize certain values through the mediation of beautiful architectural structures that are orderly and intelligibly erected. A transparent analysis of the sati – memorials of Rajasthan, makes us believe that society is a huge web of power politics. 'The structure is successful because it creates truth, and it is in this recognition that individuals can succeed.'⁶⁸ These memorials ingrain certain trends in society conforming to the Rajput definition of pride and honor, which in turn serve as strong pillars supporting the state edifice.

66 Ibid, pp. 80.

67 Nicholas B. Dirks, *op.cit.*, pp. 10.

68 Michel Foucault, *op. Cit.*, pp. 98.

The simplest form of sati memorials found in Rajasthan consists of carved outlines of the hand prints left on walls by satis before their deaths⁶⁹ – an expression of the common folk belief that super-natural power is contained in the palm of a woman about to become a sati. Pillars, sometimes square, but more generally rectangular, are the principal form of free-standing memorials, and may be found standing alone, in rows, or on platforms reached by steps. In the form of the linga, there are also round pillars, which we found only in cenotaphs. The most elaborate memorials, typically located near bodies of water, consist of pillars inside cenotaphs (chhatris) surmounted by one of several styles of roofs. With the exception of a more specialized system with Nandi, centered linga, and square memorial (aligned from east to west), the memorial pillars in these cenotaphs are typically located at their exact centers. The earlier memorials and cenotaphs for the nobility were mostly made of red sandstone, but white marble dominates in later examples. Most cenotaphs reflect later Islamic architectural influences such as the dome, but some earlier ones have multifaceted peaked roofs with sides resembling steps. Curved eaves and curved cornices, structural forms probably derived from Bengali folk architecture, also surmount some of the cenotaphs in Rajasthan. More rarely, cenotaph roofs assume the form of sikharas.⁷⁰

The principal human figures carved on memorials are the deceased male and the woman or women (both wives and concubines) who became satis with him. Attendants, musicians, and dancers may be portrayed as well. The male figure is often represented as a Rajput warrior, with turban and mustache. Some males are standing, and may then be in the namaskar (two palms together) pose. It was also a common practice to depict the Rajput male on a horse. Standing or mounted males might hold a sword and, less frequently, a shield as well. If the memorial is a royal one, an umbrella is often placed over him, and it may be held by a servant. An alternate depiction of one or two servants standing nearby with a whisk and umbrella (both being emblems of royalty) also occurs.

69 G.N. Sharma, *op.cit.*, pp. 128.

70 William A. Noble and Ad Ram Sankhyan. 'Signs of divine: Sati Memorials and Sati Worship in Rajasthan', in Karine Schomer, Deryck O. Lodrick and Lloyd I. Rudolph. (eds), in *The Idea of Rajasthan: Explorations in Regional Identity*, Vol. I, New Delhi, Manohar, 1994, pp. 346.

The female figures are most often in the namaskar pose, which expresses devotion to the attainment of a spiritual after-life and devotion to one's husband. Free-standing statues of satis with their right hand raised in blessing also exist, but only in temples. A distinctive type of representation found in both Rajasthan and Gujarat shows the sati wife holding her deceased husband in her arms.⁷¹ This may be a symbolic representation of the immortal wife, now a goddess, bearing her husband to the supernatural realm. But it could simply be a depiction of the devoted wife, sacrificing her life out of a desire to be with her husband, and then bearing him to the super-natural realm.

The iconographic conventions of sati memorialization in Rajasthan are characterized by symbolism and motifs that are widespread in Hindu culture, and which have thrived elsewhere as well. Thus 'the umbrella, which is both carved on pillars and structurally repeated in the cenotaph roofs protecting memorials, has a long history as a symbol of royalty and the sacred.'⁷² While the utilitarian advantage of shade provided by these roofs is obvious, their added symbolic dimension is no less important.

Another symbol found in the sati memorials of Rajasthan is the linga, the phallic emblem associated with Shiva. Some lingas have four faces carved into their sides, facing the four quadrants, and thus symbolize the all-seeing Siva who is at the center of all things. Other lingas, which are modified miniature sikharas, surmount square memorials whose sides face the four quadrants.⁷³ The principal significance of this iconographic feature is related to the fact that, as a symbol, the linga functions as an axis mundi (an axis through which the world is thought to be centered) where the earthly and secular realm is linked to the supernatural, divine realm. However, the linga has other complex symbolic associations as well. 'Conjoined with its female counterpart, the yoni,⁷⁴ it commemorates men and their satis through the union of the male and female principles, and is linked to the Hindu system of opposites. It is also a symbol of creation and, as a representation of Shiva, is associated with universal creation and destruction.

71 Ibid, pp. 347.

72 G. N. Sharma, *op.cit.*, pp. 129.

73 Ibid, pp. 131.

Most memorial pillars in Rajasthan, as elsewhere in India, have carved on their upper section representations of the sun and the moon. The sun may be shown with distinctive rays, and occasionally has a human face, while the moon may be represented either full or crescent-shaped and recumbent. The two may also be represented together, the sun's orb either large or as small as a dot in the hollow of the recumbent moon.⁷⁵ Symbolically, the moon in its recumbent form represents the essence of femaleness, the womb, while the sun, the prime giver of light and warmth, is the fertilizer and nurturer and, when symbolizing the bindu (center) of the Hindus, is the ultimate and eternal supernatural center of creation and destruction. 'As sun and moon symbolism is frequently associated with sacred pillars, mountains, and trees',⁷⁶ the presence on sati memorials further reinforces the concept of these memorials functioning as axes mundi.

Among the secondary symbolic motifs used in sati memorialization are footprints, a pan-Indian way of representing the departed's last connection with the earth. Lotuses, as traditional emblems of enlightenment, and swastikas, representing the extension of cosmic evolution from a fixed center to the four quadrants, also occur.

Vegetation, in the form of trees and plants, is also present, signifying association with the tree of life, the most common and universal representation of the axis mundi. Another symbol, more frequent as a ritual object in sati temples than carved on memorials, is the trisul (trident). It too functions as an axis mundi, and represents the conduit through which the earthly existence is transformed into the supernatural and through which sakti (female energy) flows. All these, and other motifs such as coconuts, eyes, head-cloths, and sari lengths, are pan-Indian, but are combined in ways that reflect regional patterns characteristic of sati memorialization in Rajasthan.

We can well imagine the role of instructive features of Hinduism in arousing a sense of devotion for sati. Almost the entire gamut of regional philosophical objects have been

⁷⁵ William A. Noble and Ad Ram Sankhyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 34.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 350.

exploited to enslave the mentality of people. The exhibition in the form of the sati memorial is a highly visible mode of controlling the collective mentality. The art in the service of power is a perfect image of instrumentation.

Inference

The ultimate institution of power is humans beings. Unless the authority is given by people themselves, no system can hegimonize itself on the subjects. In order to gain legitimacy in true form, it is necessary to make people believe in an ideology. Believe not just by their minds, but by the core of their hearts. The people should not just put their hearts into anything but actually live the beliefs. Once the masses start living a thought, it takes up a structural form, which in turn completes the cycle of a self replicating system. The system moves on without any external aid and people are enmeshed into it. They forget the ways to think or act otherwise. All this, can just support a particular form of state structure. Though once the cycle is complete, the state or the people in command also get enmeshed in this intricate network. Disciplinary power is an impersonal apparatus which ensnares all who are involved in it. Nobody is outside it. This apparatus has emerged as an effect of the coming together of a wide range of disparate historical currents. Also, this form of power builds from bottom up. It is because of the disciplinary control of the individuals at the ground level that the state is powerful, not vice versa.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Power is like the wind: we can not see it, but we feel its force. Ceremonial is like snow: an insubstantial pageant soon melted into thin air. The invisible and ephemeral are not the easiest subjects for scholars to study. For, this conceals more than it indicates their real importance. The relationship between pomp and power is much more complex and varied than any simple formulation might suggest. The whole notion of power as a narrow, separate and discreet category seems inappropriate and unsatisfactory. The idea that splendour and spectacle is but superficial and cosmetic window – dressing appears equally ill-conceived. Power is moving around the social spaced. It is no longer an exclusive property of repressive apparatuses. It has invaded our sense of the smallest and most intimate of human relations. It is constituted by the official and unofficial agents of social control and cultural production. At the same time, there is a major recognition of the degree to which power itself is a cultural construct. Force, in turn is only a tiny part of power. Much of the problematic of power today is a problematic of knowledge making, universe construction and the social production of feeling and of reality.

The expression of mass culture should be replaced by cultural technology. This excludes the idea that culture arises spontaneously from masses themselves. The cultural technology fuses the old and familiar into a new quality. In all its branches, the products which are specially designed for mass consumption are industrially manufactured, more or less, according to a plan. The individual branches are similar in structure or at least fit into each other, ordering themselves into a system almost without any gap. This is made possible by contemporary technical capabilities as well as by economic and administrative concentration. The cultural technology shapes its consumers by speculating the conscious and unconscious minds of people. The masses are not primary but secondary. They are an object of calculation, an appendage of machinery. The consumer is neither the king, nor the subject of cultural production, but its object. The culture industry misuses its concern for the masses in order to duplicate, reinforce and strengthen their mentality, which it presumes is given and unchangeable.

The operation of power and culture generating system constitute the human psyche in such a way that people seem to take a strange delight in asserting their superiority over others. The pleasure people derive from the feeling that one of the groups to which they belong is superior to others, is a reflection of the subtle creations of power politics. The praise and love people shower on them is their real merit (in accordance with the values imbibed by them). Often enough the virtues which such group collectives attribute to themselves are dominated by communal fantasies. The loss of power is tacitly experienced as a loss of their value as human beings. The lessening of peoples' love for itself which before had a strong integrating function may turn into self-denigration if not self hatred.

The divine rites of Rajput kings to beguile and enchant the people, drew from the beliefs of society itself. The state is a superstructure of society and thus it cannot afford to be separate from it. The Rajput state related to society by accepting the norms and getting such genealogies designed which are respectable and acceptable for people. Only then it could rule the local population. It could not afford to alienate itself from society. The coronation and succession rituals also followed this rule. The sacred and revered instruments of Hindu mythology and symbolic system were drawn from all the corners of empire to invest the right to govern in one chosen Rajput individual. The activities of the sovereign involved him in catalyzing such forces which would carry his and his dynasty's name into every part of his domains. The donations to temples, Brahmans, Charans, etc. and his investments in charitable institutions like inns, hospitals, etc., acted as the publicizing devices, set to continuously speak of his fame. They keep on generating good will and gratitude for ages to come. The spectacles of festivals like Gangour, Dashehra, etc, act as an ultimate and final impresser of authority and hierarchy on the minds of people. It is in these mass ceremonies the consensus is gained and legitimacy is established. All these functions forged a strong bond between the ruler and the ruled.

Once the king's authority is established over his subjects, the job is not over. The most serious danger to his position arises from his close circles only – the court society. The ruling class is needed by the monarch in order to support him in administration of state.

Thus, it should be powerful and efficient. But, its growth should be limited to safeguard the sovereign's supremacy. Various devices were employed for this purpose. On handing over the reins of jagir to any new incumbent, the political system makes sure that the jagirdar is reminded of his inferiority and his dependent position on king. To prevent the ruling elite to join hands against the king and subvert him, differences were created amongst them through hierarchy. The nobles were enmeshed in different layers and were competing with each other, eager to replace each other. This created rivalry amongst them. This is accomplished successfully by means of etiquettes, dress code, appointment traditions, prerogatives, etc. This classificatory system was based on the rule of merit. The more services and sacrifices one made to strengthen the set political system, the higher one will go on the hierarchical ladder. Thus, a rat race was conspired to direct the nobility in one direction only, which was beneficial by the state. It prevented the people to look in the opposite direction and thus prevent the rise of forces detrimental to the Rajput state structure.

The state is a part of society, but society is also a part of state. As society can shape the form of state structure, state can also give a certain shape to society. They both impact each other and take their nature from one another. The forces of the state generate such currents which cover the entire dominion and make people think and act in a specific way only. There are such rituals like worship of dead warriors as deities, worship of weapons, stories of jhunjhars, etc. which can not escape making an impact on the followers of such practices and mould them into typical Rajput personalities. The folk literature made the impression further deeper. The folk culture of narration of stories of Pabuji, Galang, Gogaji and others was the way, the highest form of living was made to descend and become the part of lives of masses. It became a part of lives of people. It began to live in their hearts. Thus, silently and unknowingly it made the people to tread on the so called ideal path. The sati memorials also operated somewhat in the same way. All these activities of society nurtured the state. Though, the ways of propagating them do not become visible to us very clearly, but had these activities been detrimental to state, their continuance for such a long time would not have been possible.

Power exists not as an essential thing or elementary force, but, rather as a relation. If power is every where, this is not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. Power is self – replicating and infectious. It cannot be stripped off of social relation. Power is the point on which convergence is taking place. Culture as emergent from social relations of power and domination, culture as a form of power and domination, culture as a medium in which power is both constituted are resisted: it is around this set of issues that an interesting body of thought around the eighteenth century Rajput State and Society has been rediscovered.

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